



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



NEW YORK
ALLIANCE FOR
INCLUSION & INNOVATION

LIVING OUR MISSION

OUR MISSION

It is the mission of the NY Alliance to serve as a catalyst for positive change and leading resource for individuals with disabilities, their families, and the organizations supporting them.

OUR VISION

The NY Alliance envisions a society where individuals with disabilities are contributing citizens with equal rights and the ability to live full, productive and meaningful lives.

WE LIVE OUR MISSION BY WHAT WE DO IN OUR:

Advocacy, Education, Training & Learning, Technical Assistance and Advancing of Public Policy.





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Michael Seereiter

The New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation (NY Alliance) continues to deliver on its mission to serve as a catalyst for positive change and leading resource for its members, people with disabilities, parents, family members and all stakeholders. We strive to ensure our impact, whether in the advocacy and public policy arenas, providing innovative technical assistance, or support to not-for-profit providers, is positive, powerful, and meaningful.

As usual, the NY Alliance's strength is rooted in its membership. Along with strong allegiances in the field, we were able to achieve so much in this past year as a result of our heightened advocacy in Albany. Significant investments are flowing into our sector, and we have a renewed sense of invigoration of our field. We recognize this is "just the beginning" but we truly believe it's a good start. It's impressive and inspiring.

NY Alliance remains committed to invigorating the fundamentals of the system and ensuring that federal and state funders continue to invest in them. It will be necessary if leaders in New York expect the field to successfully meet the expectations of individuals served and their families. We see those fundamentals as:

- Establishment of a true person-centered system philosophy;
- Acknowledging our system's need to instill dignity of risk and offering person-centered supports that honor that dignity;
- Offering individuals and families a greater array of choices and honoring the informed decisions that serve as the basis of those choices;
- Helping people supported achieve a greater sense of purpose and belonging as part of their community; and,
- Orienting our system to achieve greater success in aligning the way in which we assure quality with the expectations of those receiving supports and their families.

Such fundamentals will be achieved through collective advocacy, strong voices, and the passion that only New York's intellectual and developmental disabilities espouse. NY Alliance is proud to be a leader in our field, honored to stand amongst our mission-driven members and we remain dedicated to ensuring the success of our system of supports and services on behalf of people.

ADVOCACY



Effective advocacy is important because it draws attention to the causes most important to our members and it is key to influencing policy and legislation that impacts the lives of individuals with disabilities.

LEGISLATION SUPPORTED BY THE NY ALLIANCE

The NY Alliance took action by providing testimony to the NYS Legislature.

- **Testifying** on the 2022-23 Executive Budget for OPWDD during the Mental Hygiene Budget Hearings before NYS Legislature's Joint Fiscal Committee,
- **Testifying** at a public hearing before the NYS Senate on the evaluation of workforce challenges in New York's intellectual and developmental disabilities service system, and
- **Testifying** on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities before the NYS Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities and the Assembly Labor Committee and the Subcommittee during a public hearing regarding employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

NY Alliance strongly supported one of the most significant pieces of legislation to pass the Senate and Assembly this year. The bill (**S.7107-B and A.8586-B**) **authorized supported decision-making for people with I/DD** in New York State. The bill was signed into law and is significant in its meaning as a civil rights measure with a newly created Article in New York Mental Hygiene Law.

NY Alliance supported further corrections to New York State law to remove old, archaic, hurtful language. The most recent legislation (**S.6195 and A.7433**) **updates sections in NY Social Services Law to remove the "R" word.**

NY Alliance supported legislation (**S.7578-C and A.8548-C**) to **update the statute related to preferred source program.**

NY Alliance supported an Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) reform bill (**S.4486-B and A.7889-A**) which focuses on OMIG Medicaid audits and review. Specifically, the legislation **requires OMIG to follow new procedures and practices in provider audits.**

NY Alliance supported legislation to require OPWDD to Create an Employer Training and Certification Program. The bill (**S.7746 and A.8915**) **requires OPWDD to establish a voluntary training and certification program for employers that have taken the EmployAbility Pledge** to promote strategies that employers can implement to increase diversity in their workforce through hiring individuals with disabilities.

We are a strong leader and active partner in our statewide advocacy. We have cultivated partnerships important to our advocacy and provided awareness and education on effective advocacy.

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ADVOCACY IN NEW YORK STATE

The guide was created to foster grassroots efforts by our members and the field at large.

The [Guide to Advocacy](#) provides helpful information on:

- New York State government structures,
- Contacts in the Executive and Legislative branches of government,
- Key Terminology,
- Legislative and State Budget processes and procedures,
- Tips on how to communicate with legislators and other information.

The guide is intended to be a resource for people new to the advocacy world and a reference for those who have been successfully advocating for years.



NEW YORK DISABILITY ADVOCATES (NYDA)



The NY Alliance collaborates with organizations and entities who share our mission. We are an active partner of [New York Disability Advocates \(NYDA\)](#), a statewide coalition of 7 provider associations representing 300+ non-profit organizations. Together, we successfully secured the first meaningful Cost of Living Adjustment in over a decade and secured one-time bonuses for Direct Support Professionals.

EDUCATION, TRAINING & LEARNING



Providing education and training is an important component of our mission.

Education, training and learning is important to the professional development of leaders and to the advancement of the workforce.

NY Alliance signature events such as conferences provide our members and the field with premiere educational opportunities. Conferences include our Annual Conference, Leadership Conference, Housing Symposium, Complex Needs Symposium, Risk Management Conference and Data and Finance Summit.

It's at these key events where innovations are highlighted, strategies are identified and opportunities for networking exist.

Likewise, NY Alliance provides advanced hands on training, state of the art technical assistance and unique educational opportunities through our webinar offerings.

A SAMPLING OF WEBINARS OFFERED

Risk Resilience Toolkit Webinar Series

- How to Become the Resilient Leader Your Mission Requires
- BCP Tabletop Training Exercises: Easier Than You Think
- The Business Continuity Plan: Your Questions Answered
- Resilience Roadblocks: 5 Concerning but Common Practices That Inhibit Resilience
- Managing Your IT Needs

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- I Can't Find Diverse Candidates: Strategies for Developing Inclusive Hiring Practices
- Creating An Inclusive Workplace Starts With YOU

Unique Offerings Specific to Rising Needs

- Surviving the Great Resignation: Leading a Successful Transition Back to the Office
- Cultural Humility: Changing Lenses for Changing Times
- Moving Forward: Integrating Grief, Loss, and Bereavement into Daily Life
- SSDI & Work: Even more Myths, Truths, and Tales from a Benefits Planner
- Special Needs Trusts and Estate Planning
- Telephone Triage for RNs, DSPs and Other Support Staff
- Hot Topics in Audit & Compliance

ADVANCING PUBLIC POLICY



The NY Alliance effects change by influencing public policy. It's a crucial role of any statewide organization to form the principles, legislation, rules and regulations that govern and guide the system of supports and services to people with disabilities. Using facts and data, we continually inform and guide New York's public policies to ensure that government is responsive to the needs of our member agencies and the people they serve.

NY ALLIANCE PROVIDED COMMENT ON

- the [5.07 Statewide Comprehensive Plan](#) for Services,
- NYS DOH [1115 Waiver Amendment](#), and
- proposed regulations on [Certified Residential Opportunities \(CRO\)](#).

NY ALLIANCE I/DD POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

NY Alliance drafted ten Policy Briefs on specific areas of need. They are recommendations for advancing change in policy.

The Policy Briefs were shared with members for continued advocacy and with key government officials including the Governor's Office, the Commissioner of OPWDD and State lawmakers.

- [Serving People with Complex Needs](#)
- [Implementing a Direct Support Professional Credential](#)
- [Person-Centered Thinking Evolution](#)
- [Regulatory Reform](#)
- [Commission on the Future of New York's System of Supports & Services for People With I/DD](#)
- [Rate Reform](#)
- [Diversity & Racial Equity](#)
- [Better Access to Affordable and Independent Housing](#)
- [Use of Assistive/Enabling Technology to Support People](#)
- [Advocacy for Discrete Standard Occupational Classification for DSPs](#)



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & PRACTICE



RESOURCES INCLUDE

- Financial Literacy Webinar Series on the Direct Support Professional Workforce Incentive Payments
- Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT)
- NYS Department of Health Person-Centered Planning Statewide Training Initiative
- Housing Navigator Training Course
- Statewide Learning Community and Regional Housing Collaborative Grant
- Transitional Navigation Services from Foster Care to Community
- COVID-19 Mortality Rates for Persons with I/DD
- NY Alliance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee
- NY Alliance Preferred Product Partnerships
- NY Alliance Risk Resilience Toolkit

Read more about these resources on the following pages.

The NY Alliance offers a variety of technical assistance to members and provides access to best practices and models for replication for successful outcomes.

We have nurtured partnerships and collaborations that formulate resources and expertise to help organizations thrive.

Our years of experience and in-house expertise has enabled us to successfully receive grants and other funding sources to implement groundbreaking initiatives that offer valuable tools and resources to our members and the field.

FINANCIAL LITERACY WEBINAR SERIES ON DSP WORKFORCE INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

The NY Alliance and Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT) presented a [series of webinars](#) providing answers to the important questions surrounding workforce incentive payments paid out across the state to Direct Support Professionals. The three technical assistance webinars posted to YouTube have amassed over 8,000 views to date.

Answering your questions about the workforce incentive payments



THE REGIONAL CENTERS FOR WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION (RCWT)

The Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT), in partnership with other well-known entities, offers an extensive array of services and supports to the direct care workforce. Some 3,500 individuals have participated in RCWT events and trainings. Their YouTube channel has garnered more than 21 thousand views and their website has entertained more than 41 thousand users.

RCWT has held several virtual events that featured internationally acclaimed leadership speaker Drew Dudley; life coach and founder of Building Men & the Building Men podcast, Dennis Moralda; and Psychologist, Performer, Poet, Mykee Fowlin.

Providing training for the direct care workforce, RCWT's top five workshops were:

- Difficult Conversations,
- DSP Evaluation Support,
- Strategies for Retention,
- Rising Above Workplace Conflict, and
- The Language of our Work.

RCWT is the proud recipient of the 2021 Moving Mountains Award given by ANCOR, NADSP and the University of Minnesota.



Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation

Visit the RCWT website:
workforcetransformation.org
for free training information
and helpful tools and resources.



HOUSING NAVIGATION TRAINING COURSE

Held two times each year, this 30+ hour course provides relevant education and resources to individuals interested in becoming a Housing Navigator. Housing Navigation is a focused, outcome oriented, and time limited service that helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) obtain and maintain stable, long-term housing of their choice in the community. Housing Navigator services include but are not limited to the following:

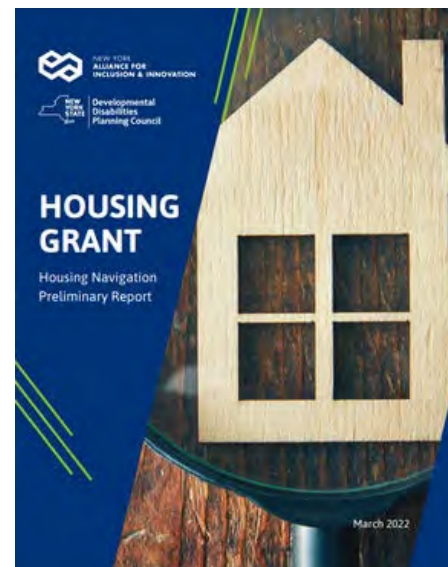
- Assist in creating a housing plan that include choice in location, type of home; and living arrangement,
- Implementation of the Housing Plan, and
- Creation and Implementation of a Housing Sustainability Plan.

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STATEWIDE LEARNING COMMUNITIES & REGIONAL HOUSING COLLABORATIVES

The Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) [Statewide Learning Community and Regional Housing Collaborative](#) Grant aides in increasing knowledge and capacity in non-certified housing, from creating affordable housing to supports and services within the “home”.

Through this initiative, Master Housing Navigators (MHN) in each of the five OPWDD regions provide support and education on non-certified housing to Regional Housing Collaboratives and people with I/DD. MHNs assisted 30 people, during the first 3 years of the grant, in the creation and implementation of a home in the community. An e-community of more than 1400 stakeholders consisting of developers, financial and fiscal reps, Housing navigators, individuals, local government, non-profit agencies, parents, and family members are provided ongoing information. The [Housing Grant report](#) describes this initiative and serves as a model.





NYS DOH PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING STATEWIDE TRAINING INITIATIVE

The NYS DOH Person-Centered Planning Statewide Training Initiative promotes a person first approach via virtual training sessions and virtual learning institutes.

The **Virtual Learning Institute** is a dynamic virtual learning experience that fosters personal, team, and organizational development. The Institute builds skill sets that emphasize creativity, facilitation, and shared leadership to design innovative service and support solutions aligned with the purpose of the HCBS Final Rule. The Learning Institute is a 2 hour 6-week series.

The **Virtual Training Sessions** present a unique set of concepts, skills, ideas, and discussions related to person-centered thinking, planning, and practice in six sessions. Each session involves two hours of instructor led presentation and interactive group discussion.

TRANSITIONAL NAVIGATION SERVICES FROM FOSTER CARE TO COMMUNITY

The Transitional Navigation Services from Foster Care to Community Grant is specific to Erie County in New York State. Foster care youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, transitioning to adult life without necessary support and services could become homeless and in other unstable housing. This initiative provided education to foster care stakeholders in housing navigation and fostered an on-going collaborative partnership between foster care services.

PUBLICATION: COVID-19 MORTALITY RATES FOR PERSONS WITH I/DD

COVID-19 Mortality rates for persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is a research publication co-authored by the NY Alliance and published in the International Journal of Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences. This research studied COVID-19 mortality rates for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It was used to promote awareness and was the subject of presentations presented at the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) Annual Conference. This research was also used to inform advocacy.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) COMMITTEE

Diversity is necessary in helping organizations evolve, innovate, and problem-solve issues of disparity in our workforce. The NY Alliance convened a DEI Committee to explore and discuss the cultural landscape of the work we do and assist members in their own exploration. With direction from the Committee, an Executive Leadership Session was held bringing members together in a safe space for open dialogue leading to the development of the NY Alliance's statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and actionable priorities for the Association.

RISK RESILIENCE RESOURCES TOOLKIT

Funded by the NY Community Trust, the [Risk Resilience Resources Toolkit](#) provides organizations who support individuals with I/DD in the NYC region with the tools to create a Pandemic Response Toolkit. A customized Risk Resilience website is available for sharing disaster preparedness and business continuity planning resources. The website and its resources are available to all NY Alliance members.

PREFERRED PRODUCT PARTNERSHIPS

The NY Alliance continues its collaborations through our Preferred Product partnerships. The services and resources these organizations provide to our members are high value and assist our community of not-for-profit providers to carry out their missions.





WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

We do what we do because we envision a society where individuals with disabilities are contributing citizens with equal rights and the ability to live full, productive, and meaningful lives.

NY Alliance President & CEO Michael Seereiter (pictured on the right) speaks with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) on the Willowbrook Era and its impact on our society, as well as DDPC-supported project, the 'Regional Housing Collaboratives'.



#THEPATHFORWARD #REMEMBERINGWILLOWBROOK



#IDDPRIORITY #NYNEEDSDSPS

NY Alliance President & CEO, Michael Seereiter **discusses the future of work at WMHT Town Hall** stating jobs in our field are devalued despite the level of care and competency required and demonstrated.

He reminded us that we have a responsibility to deliver supports and services to individuals with disabilities and that government has a duty to sufficiently fund those services and supports.

We do what we do because we know the value of and appreciate the myriad supports and services the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

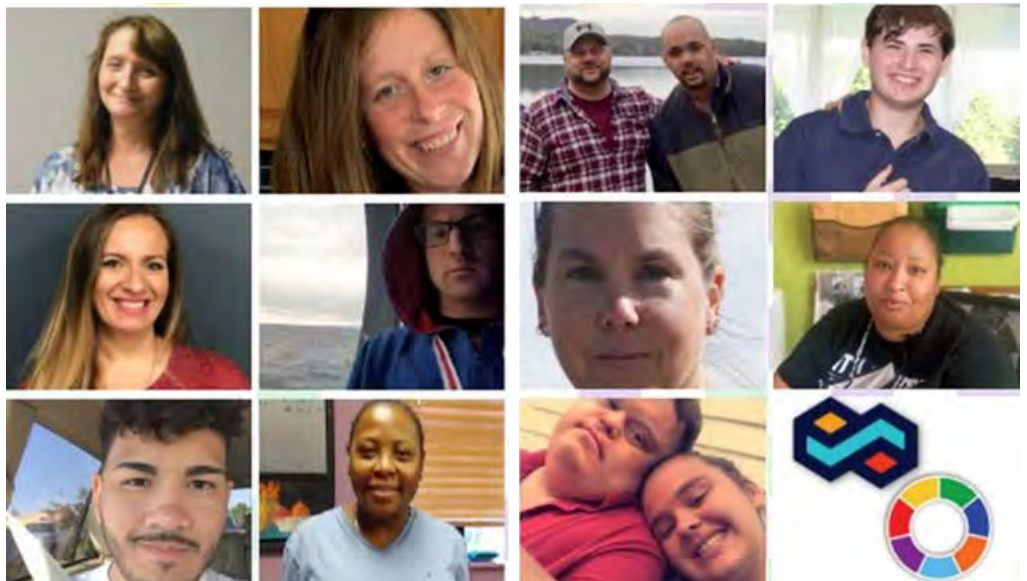
NY Alliance celebrates DSPs all year long and we are pleased to honor their commitment to the work they do during National DSP Recognition Week each September.

In 2021, 12 DSPs from all regions in New York State received our annual DSP Award acknowledging their dedication to providing supports and services to people with I/DD.



Building with THE BEST!

2021 DSP AWARD RECIPIENTS



2021 DSP Award Recipients include (pictured from L to R): Jean Drake, Courtney Sarpriacone, Matthew Peppin, David Lieberman, Rebecca Champlin, Nick Goddard, Amber Bayly, Shanika Rogers, Daniel Finan, Katie Thomas, Annie Smith and Arline Carreiro (not pictured).

#DSPRW2021 #NYNEEDSDSPS #STRENGTHTOGETHER

ANNUAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

NY Alliance was excited to celebrate the unique and extraordinary contributions made by leaders, policy and change agents, public officials, self-advocates and advocates in the community at our Annual Conference held in April 2022. It is an honor to recognize and acknowledge the significant ways these individuals have impacted the field.



FREDDA ROSEN

Leadership **Award**



SENATOR JOHN MANNION

Distinguished Public Service **Award**



JAMES HAYES

Public Policy and Social Justice Advocacy **Award**



MAX DONATELLI



BJ STASIO

Community Advocacy **Award**

WHO WE ARE

The NY Alliance is a statewide membership association representing not-for-profit provider agencies who deliver supports and services to people with disabilities. We are a catalyst for positive change and a leading resource in the field of disability supports and services.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kirk Lewis, Schenectady ARC, Chair

Joy O'Shaughnessy, East End Disability Associates, First Vice Chair

Russ Hahn, Intandem, Second Vice Chair

Evelyn Alvarez, Heartshare, Secretary

Ken Stall, COARC, Treasurer

Mary Brady, YAI

Dan Brown, Racker

Robert Budd, Family Residences and Essential Enterprises (FREE)

Mindy Cervoni, Community Services for Every1

Ron Colavito, ACCESS: Supports for Living

Doug Digesare, The Arc Erie County

Janelle Farris, Brooklyn Community Services

Ellen Gutmaker, Arc of Onondaga

Sam Laganaro, New Horizons Resources

Sarah Louer, Mountain Lake Services

Candace Opalka, Liberty ARC

Patrick Paul, Anderson Center for Autism

Steve Towler, AHRC New York City



WHO WE ARE

NY Alliance staff represents a wide range of talent and experience in the field of developmental disabilities as well as membership organization expertise.

NY ALLIANCE TEAM

Michael Seereiter, President & CEO

Ann M. Hardiman, Chief Innovation Officer

Kathleen P. Mayo, Chief Administrative Officer & Vice President of Government Affairs

Ryan Cox, Vice President of Finance and Analytics

Carol Napierski, Vice President of Program Development and Grant Management

Kirsten Sanchirico, Vice President of Workforce Advancement

Monica Robinson, Associate Vice President of Workforce Advancement

Jennifer Ivery, Senior Director of Communications and Project Management

Lisa A. Mount, Senior Director of Events, Business Relations & Administration

Kate Connally, Senior Director of Branding, Product Design & E-Learning

Mawluddin Ayubi, Accountant

STAY CONNECTED TO THE NY ALLIANCE

Social Media & Web

Facebook: [@NYAlliance](#)

Twitter: [@NewYorkAlliance](#)

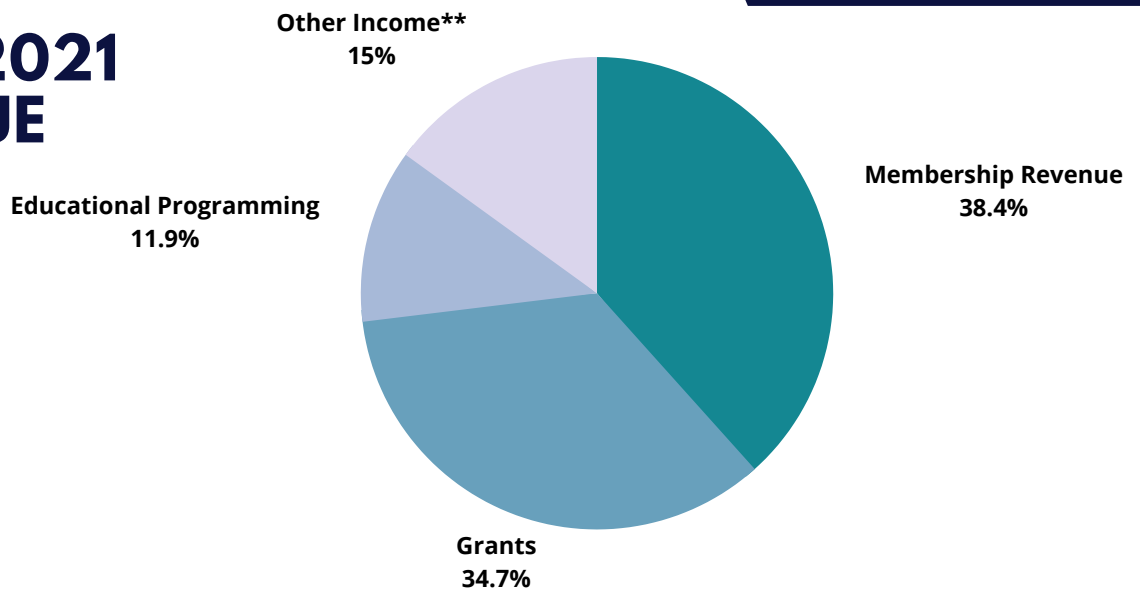
Instagram: [@nyaii1](#)

Website: [nyalliance.org](#)

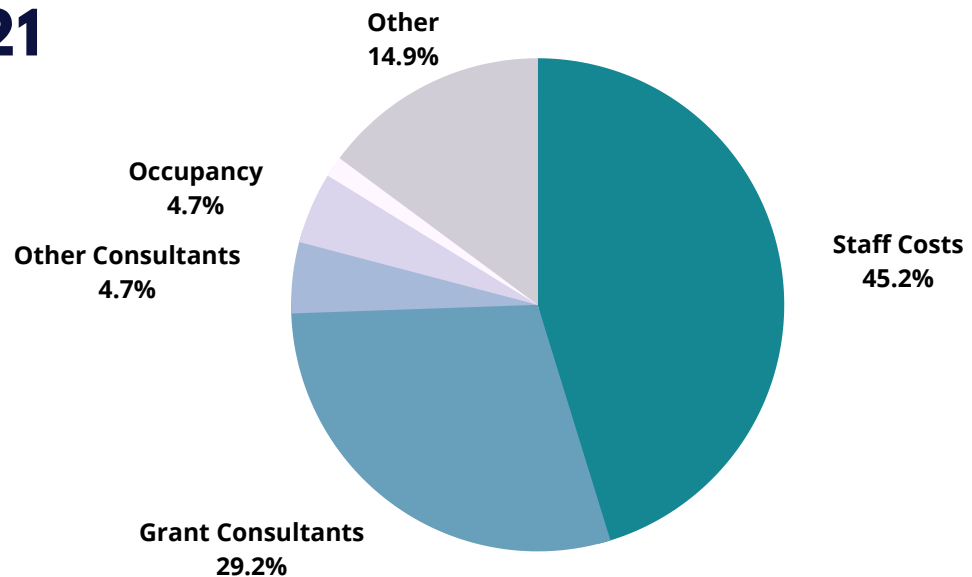
This report reflects Board Members and employees as of the date of publication.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2020-2021 REVENUE



2020-2021 EXPENSES





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