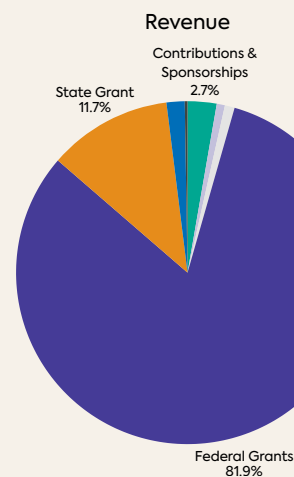
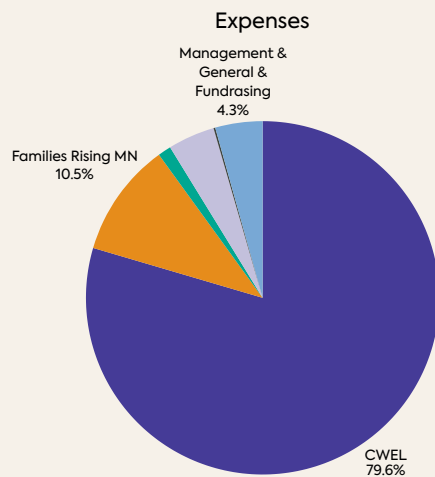


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FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



We invested strategically in our programming.

96% of our expenses went to programs: CWEL (80%), the Adoption Subsidy Resource Center (10%), Public Education (4%), and other programs (less than 1%). The remaining dollars were spent on management, general, and fundraising.

Federal and state grants made up the majority of our revenue.

Our revenue came from seven sources across the year, with the vast majority being federal grants to administer CWEL (82%), followed by state grants (12%), contributions and scholarships (3%), conference and memberships (2%), training income (1%), other grants (1%), and miscellaneous income (less than 1%).



WHAT IT MEANS FOR FAMILIES TO RISE



When families rise:

Every child in foster care has the opportunity to grow up in a loving family, and children have a strong sense of cultural and personal identity.

Every family is supported as they navigate adoption, foster care, or kinship care.

Every professional has the tools they need to thrive in their careers and serve children and families.

Every community is centered in the decisions that impact them.

At Families Rising, we are proud to champion the well-being of children and families; fight for equitable outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities; advocate alongside people with lived experience; and drive change for child welfare professionals.

Our programs

Families Rising Minnesota

A statewide network of support services for adoptive, foster, and kinship care families, funded by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Training Center

Virtual and in-person training sessions for caregivers and professionals, funded through Families Rising.

Adoption Subsidy Resource Center

Resources for adoption assistance, training for foster and adoptive parents and workers, and advocacy around adoption assistance, funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Center for Workforce Equity & Leadership

A workforce development center advancing race equity and social justice in child welfare, funded by the Children's Bureau through 2025.



WE HELPED FAMILIES RISE BY:

Supporting foster and adoptive parents

Support groups & retreats in Minnesota

Our Minnesota-based program, FRMN, provided relationship-based support to foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers across the state through peer support groups, individualized outreach, and accessible resources. Caregivers shared that our work reduced isolation and increased their sense of connection and confidence.

Caregivers frequently described the impact of peer connection in simple but powerful terms, sharing feedback such as “I am not alone.”



In-person gatherings and retreats remained a meaningful highlight of the year. Caregivers repeatedly emphasized the importance of having space to pause, connect, and learn alongside others who understand the realities of foster, adoptive, and kinship parenting.



Training sessions for parents

We provided both national and local training programs. In Minnesota, we provided caregivers with practical tools they could use immediately in their homes and communities.

Training and individualized support focused on:

- School advocacy
- Managing challenging behaviors
- Navigating public systems
- Strengthening connected parenting

Additionally, we expanded our offerings of recorded and on-demand training to increase accessibility, allowing caregivers to engage with learning at times that fit their schedules.



WE HELPED FAMILIES RISE BY:

Supporting foster and adoptive parents

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Providing financial resources

Families Rising's Adoption Subsidy Resource Center is the **lead resource on adoption assistance** in the US and Canada. While we primarily educate, advocate, and empower families to ensure they get a proper level of support, we also support workers and administrators so they can become subject-matter experts in adoption assistance.

A key part of our work surrounds the **US federal adoption tax credit**. Our tax credit expertise helps parents and professionals understand and advocate for the credit, especially if their tax preparer isn't familiar with it.

We saw **two critical, exciting changes** to the tax credit this year:

1. Tribal nations can now make a special needs determination. We worked with NICWA to help craft their comments to the IRS on how that will be different from state special needs determinations.
2. Families can now access a partial refundability of the adoption tax credit, something we have advocated for for 15 years. This refundability will enable more families to use the credit they are otherwise eligible for, including low- and fixed-income families.

We know this resource is essential to families, as evidenced by roughly 30,000 web views of our pages for these programs and over 800 direct interactions with families and professionals. We also trained over 750 individuals in person and via webinars.

In addition to training and advocacy from the Adoption Subsidy Resource Center, our Families Rising Minnesota team responded to **caregivers' practical needs** through financial guidance and basic needs support. Caregivers shared how meaningful this assistance was, especially during times of strain. One caregiver shared, *"Thanks so much! As a single foster and adoptive mom of 6 right now, this helps so much!"*



WEAREFAMILIESRISING.ORG



WE HELPED FAMILIES RISE BY:

Building a robust child welfare workforce

Recruiting through a new narrative

CWEL partnered with a creative agency to uncover the most effective ways to reach the future workforce, filling vacancies. We compiled and shared key insights, and these will be used in a forthcoming media campaign in 2026.

Advertising social work programs in Colorado

We provided targeted communications assistance to our Colorado site partner to enhance recruitment strategies and strengthen engagement through coordinated messaging and outreach.

Offering financial support for students in social work programs

Through CWEL, we sent 210 social work students to school with Title IV-E educational stipends, in partnership with the University of Louisville. Additionally, CWEL expanded the workforce pipeline by awarding stipends to over 100 social work students and strengthening agency-university partnerships to support onboarding of future professionals.

Developing leaders and teams

CWEL developed 16 New Jersey child welfare leaders through the RiseUp Fellowship, partnering with New Jersey DCYF to deliver the cohort-based program that resulted in organizational change projects, foundational learning, and individualized leadership coaching. We also coached 15 supervisors in Rhode Island, with powerful results: 93% reported a deeper understanding of how strong relationships with staff improve leadership and retention.

Retaining staff through a Clinical Bridge

CWEL helped create a Clinical Bridge in Colorado, enabling professionals pursuing clinical licensure to remain in their agencies while advancing their careers.





WE HELPED FAMILIES RISE BY:

Creating space for community and connection

Families Rising held an **in-person conference** in Orlando, Florida. Attendance was impacted by the political landscape and federal funding freezes. Still, **350+ people gathered** for the 2-day event, including adoptive, foster, and kinship parents, child welfare professionals, and others committed to achieving permanence for children in foster care.

Participants could choose from **48 educational sessions** focused on effective parenting techniques, supporting children with disabilities and other challenges, recruiting, preparing, and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship families, and related topics.



Looking ahead, the 2026 virtual conference is shaping up to be an event that challenges virtual training fatigue with dynamic session delivery and active engagement.



WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2026, the Adoption Subsidy Resource Center looks forward to ensuring that state budgets do not result in cuts to **adoption assistance payments**. The team will continue helping families obtain all the benefits they can through the adoption tax credit.

In Minnesota, our focus is on stability, growth, and deepening impact for foster, adoptive, and kinship families across the state. One of our top priorities in the state is moving into the year with a **fully staffed, regionally distributed team**. With new staff onboarded in both Northern and Southern Minnesota, we look forward to strengthening continuity, expanding our local presence, and ensuring caregivers have consistent access to relationship-based support wherever they live.

We are also excited to host another **annual caregiver retreat**. These gatherings have consistently been among the most meaningful aspects of our work, offering caregivers time to rest, learn, and connect with others who share a lived experience.

The Minnesota team is preparing to **reapply for the DCYF RFP** with a refreshed and strengthened approach. The experiences of 2025, particularly our adaptability during funding interruptions, increased use of hybrid supports, and deeper emphasis on caregiver voice, have given us clarity about what works. We are looking forward to re-articulating our work with renewed focus on relationship-based support, cultural responsiveness, and sustainable service delivery.

Our training department will be hard at work **expanding on-demand training opportunities**. Caregiver and professional feedback have reinforced the importance of flexible learning options accessible at any time. We look forward to establishing a new learning management system, called Families Rising Academy, with relevant, timely resources.

Sadly, our workforce center, CWEL, was **defunded by the federal government** at the end of 2025 due to our steadfast commitment to recognizing the diverse needs of our child welfare workforce and serving them equitably. While this news was difficult, we at Families Rising remain deeply committed to the mission and values that have guided CWEL's work and to finding new ways to continue supporting children, families, and the dedicated professionals who serve them in 2026.

Together, these priorities reflect a year ahead rooted in stability, learning, and continued commitment to the caregivers, professionals, and families who rely on Families Rising as a trusted source of connection and support.



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THANK YOU

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