

APPALACHIAN CHILDREN COALITION

Serving those who serve children through collaboration, partnership, and advocacy



OUR MISSION

We are committed to delivering a future where every child has equal access to the support services and care they require to succeed at home, in school, and in their communities. Because every child deserves a limitless future where they can achieve their dreams.

WHO WE ARE



For children born in Appalachian Ohio, access to physical, mental, and behavioral health treatment can be hard – if not impossible – to come by. That's why there's the *Appalachian Children Coalition (ACC)*. ACC was

founded in 2020 to serve as a powerful advocate for Appalachia's underserved children.

We are an alliance of mental health and educational professionals and local organizations working to address the needs of rural Appalachian children, share resources, and make strategic investments in the community that improve the health and well-being of young lives.

WHAT WE DO

- ✓ **Advocate for Appalachian children through outreach to state and federal policymakers, legislators, and agency officials.**
- ✓ **Build collaborative partnerships among child-serving entities and organizations in the region.**
- ✓ **Serve as a communication hub so all child-serving entities have access to the same information and resources.**
- ✓ **Make strategic investments in organizations and activities that promote the health and well-being of children in our region.**
- ✓ **Promote a sufficiently-sized and well-prepared mental health workforce to serve Appalachian children.**

OUR WORK

We engage lawmakers in Ohio and Washington, DC to ensure that the voices of the children of Appalachia Ohio are heard and promoted at the state and federal legislative levels. Urgent priorities to be addressed by lawmakers are...

Increased Crisis Care. This region needs – and deserves – more crisis services and supports including crisis stabilization services, therapeutic foster care, CASA services, and a set of wraparound services for children whether they may be on the continuum of crisis.

More Behavioral Health Specialists. State and federal policymakers must do more to incentivize the education, recruitment, and placement of behavioral health specialists qualified to work with Appalachia Ohio students with special needs.

Equal Access to Affordable Broadband. We are partnering with advocates from across the region to address – and remedy – the lack of broadband access to increase home internet access for more Southeast Ohio students.

Knowledge as a Decision Tool. Better data and information on Appalachian children and families is necessary to inform investment and program decisions that will have the greatest impact on child outcomes.





WHY APPALACHIAN OHIO



Concentrated Poverty. In Ohio, the top twelve counties with the highest rates of child poverty are centered in Appalachia. Child poverty increased in every Appalachian county from 2000 to 2013, and nearly one in three Appalachian children under the age of six live below the poverty level.

Increased Exposure to Drugs. In 2017, Appalachian counties had an opioid overdose death rate 72% higher than non-Appalachian counties. Babies in Appalachian Ohio are almost twice as likely as the Ohio average to be diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), a condition that occurs in newborns exposed to opioid drugs in utero. Nine of the top 10 counties with the highest rates of NAS in Ohio are in Appalachia.

Limited Mental and Health Care Access.

Ohio has six children's hospitals, but inexplicably none are in any of the 32 Appalachian counties. Only one residential treatment facility exists in the region, meaning our children are forced to travel up to 200 miles away for care. The region also has the greatest shortage in child mental and behavioral health workers.

Wrong Side of the Digital Divide. Access to broadband in Appalachian Ohio is a fraction of what it is in the rest of the state. Over 29,000 students across Appalachia's 24 counties do not have adequate home internet access, putting them at a disadvantage from school to telemedicine.

Giving Gap. A significant gap exists in philanthropic resources for Appalachia compared to the rest of the state – at only \$770 spent per year per Appalachian Ohioan versus \$6,663 outside the region – resulting in a lack of badly needed children's programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Appalachian Children Coalition
5 Depot Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
info@appchildren.org
www.appchildren.org

