

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) is a statewide member network that strengthens services and support for youth and families. We share a vision of Texas where all youth and young adults are valued, their strengths are recognized, and they have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

MESSAGE FROM FEDORA GALASSO, TNOYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



2023 was a dynamic year for TNOYS and our member network. Together, we celebrated the organization's rich history while building on the vision that has guided TNOYS and strengthened youth-serving systems for over 40 years. At a time when Texas' most vulnerable youth and young adults (YYA) face increased obstacles to their health, safety, and future, we advocated for influential policies during the 88th Texas Legislative Session, launched over 150 hours of training to strength youth-serving providers, invested in over 160 emerging YYA leaders and our 120+ members, and much more. Across our achievements, TNOYS remained grounded in our strategic priorities:



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Our team continued to embed DEI across everything we do. From developing our 88th Legislative Session policy agenda through an equity lens to centering lived experience across our training, TNOYS ensured the voices of youth, young adults, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals were amplified in our work.



Youth Voice/ Youth- Adult Partnership: TNOYS continued to solidify our [Youth Engagement Roadmap](#), a stepped approach to authentic youth-adult partnership. We graduated our first Texas Emerging Leaders Board cohort, our fourth cohort of the reimagined Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC), and expanded the roadmap to include an alumni program to further engage YYA who have cultivated new skills with us.



Cross-System Collaboration: YYA are often multi-system involved, and TNOYS has long worked to build bridges across the youth services field. In 2023, we led the way on 13+ statewide and national workgroups that represent seven systems areas. Additionally, we were proud to leverage our cross-systems expertise to connect thousands of stakeholders to diverse capacity building opportunities.



Research and Performance Driven Programming: TNOYS consistently values and incorporates input from YYA and professionals to develop and provide access to cutting-edge programming. In 2023, this input played a crucial role in the creation of new resources, such as TNOYS' [policy agenda](#), [issue-specific one-pagers](#) for the 88th Texas Legislative Session, and the new manual [Meeting the Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing CSE](#). Community voices also informed TNOYS' Blueprint Youth Engagement (BYen), an innovative training series launching in 2024.

I am excited to share TNOYS' Annual Report, which is a snapshot of all we have achieved with our members and partners. As always, we are especially grateful to the outstanding organizations that make up our network's membership. Thank you for the important work that you do. We look forward to continuing to deepen and expand our efforts together in 2024.

Sincerely,

Fedora Galasso, MPAff, MSSW
Chief Executive Officer



139
youth, young adults, and
professionals contributed to
TNOYS research



32
testimonies
before
the Texas
Legislature



\$150
million in new funding impacted
by TNOYS legislative advocacy



\$60,000
in mini-grants
supported
TNOYS
members

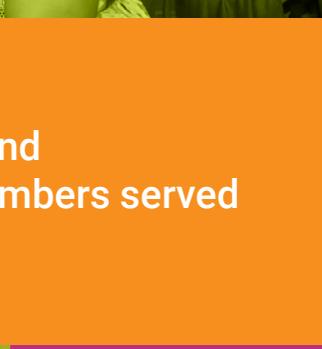


2,000+
event and
training
attendees



160+
youth voices
amplified

120+
organizational and
professional members served



15,000+
views on content elevating the
concerns of TNOYS members
and YYA



POLICY

With a \$32 billion budget surplus in consideration, TNOYS fought tirelessly for stronger, better funded resources throughout the 88th Texas Legislative Session. We published our policy agenda and advocated for bills to prevent systems-involvement, strengthen systems, and equip young people to thrive in adulthood. In total, TNOYS registered a position over 90 times and worked with 19 YYA and providers to tell their stories in legislative testimonies.

Beyond session, TNOYS served as an expert on 13 workgroups and coalitions addressing child welfare, youth homelessness, health and mental health, and much more. Additionally, we outlined actionable guidance to better meet YYAs' health needs in the new brief [Equitable Healthcare for Youth and Young Adults](#). We're grateful to Episcopal Health Foundation, Journey to Success Campaign, and many others for supporting this work!

Youth and Provider Voice During the 88th Texas Legislative Session



To kick off the 88th Texas Legislative Session, 72 TNOYS members and 90 YYA raised their voices for change during TNOYS Day of Action for Youth (DAY) at the Texas Capitol. Thanks to the collaboration of TNOYS members, partners, and YYA advocates, TNOYS helped pass 23 influential bills this session. Highlights include:

Supported a pilot alternative education program to help YYA earn a high school degree or enter the workforce.

Increased Family and Youth Success (FAYS) and Community Youth Development (CYD) program funding by over \$18 Million.

Fully funded foster care rates and increased rates for kinship care.

Eliminated local curfew ordinances to protect YYA experiencing homelessness.

Increased funding and opportunities to increase the mental health workforce.

PRACTICE

TNOYS trained over 2,000 youth-serving professionals in 2023, with highlights that include workshops to address and prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY) and the training *Building Alliances with Youth to Reduce and Prevent Children without Placement (CWOP)*. TNOYS also offered resources, guidance, and support through one-on-one technical assistance.

Additionally, 2023 rang in the 40th Anniversary of TNOYS' Annual Conference on Services to Youth and Families. Guided by the theme *Unearth Your Brilliance*, professionals and YYA from every Texas region learned cutting-edge skills across 40+ workshops and inspiring keynotes.

Thanks to support from the Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team, TNOYS released the manual *Meeting the Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing CSE* to empower homeless services providers to combat CSEY in their day-to-day work. This innovative resource was developed thanks to the expertise of over 120 YYA and professionals, and aims to take on Texas' intersecting crises of CSEY and youth homelessness.

Statewide Training & Technical Assistance

156
training
hours
provided

37
workshops
presented
by YYA

471
attendees
at TNOYS'
Annual
Conference

30
technical
assistance
engagements

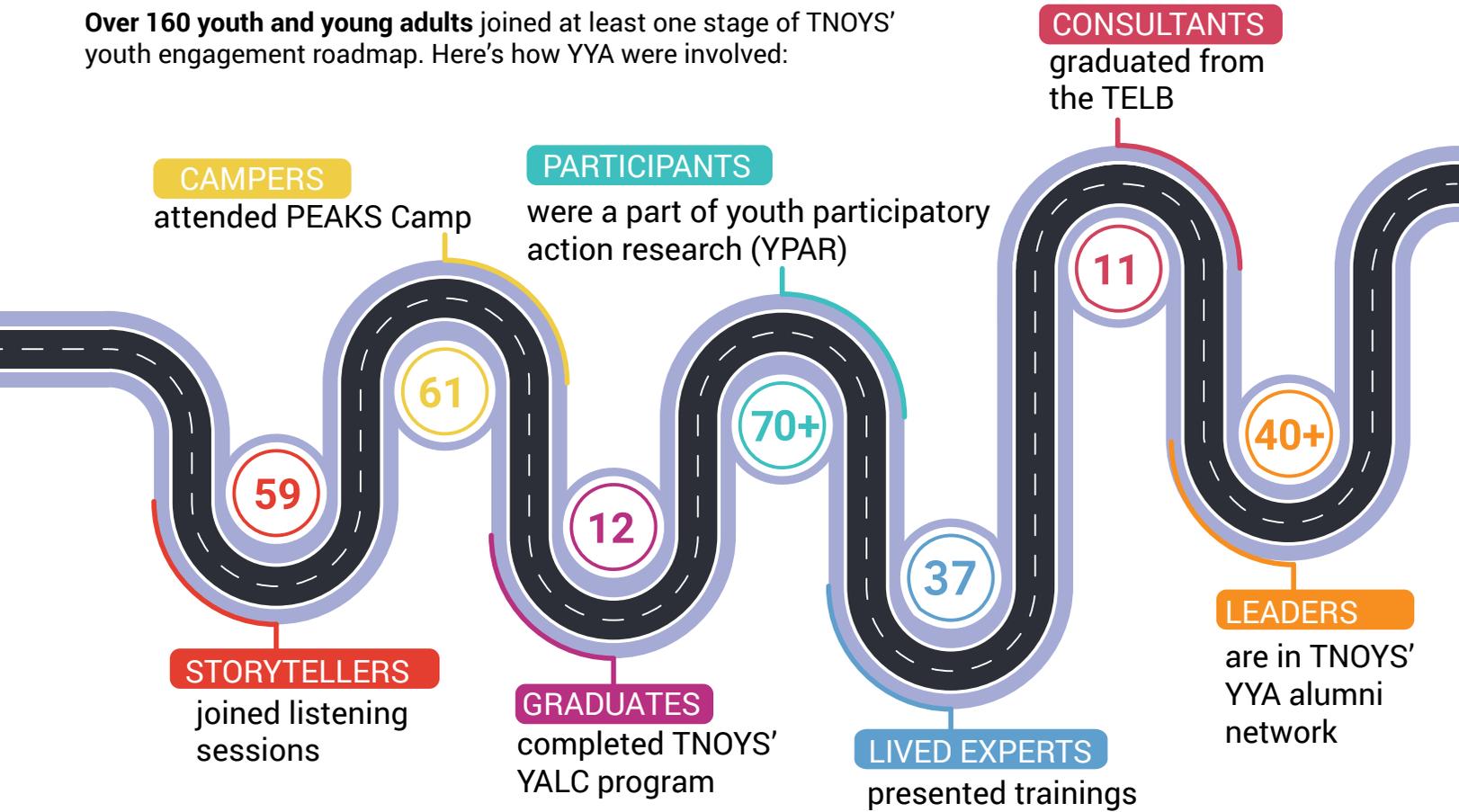
PARTNERSHIPS

With backing from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, TNOYS was thrilled to add the Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB) to our Youth Engagement Roadmap. TELB members advocated for stronger supports for Opportunity Youth and Young Adults statewide, influencing local “Communities of Practice” and engaging in statewide and national events like the Opportunity Youth Forum Covering.

2023 was also the third year of TNOYS’ reimagined Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC). YALC members advocated for change through presentations to legislators, youth service workers, state agency leaders, and many other influential stakeholders, and conducted Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) with 59 YYA. Additionally, after a three-year hiatus, TNOYS’ PEAKS Camp returned, supported by the Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). TNOYS was excited to once again host children in foster care for a week-long camp of learning, relationship building, and fun in the great outdoors.

Youth Engagement Roadmap in Action

Over 160 youth and young adults joined at least one stage of TNOYS’ youth engagement roadmap. Here’s how YYA were involved:

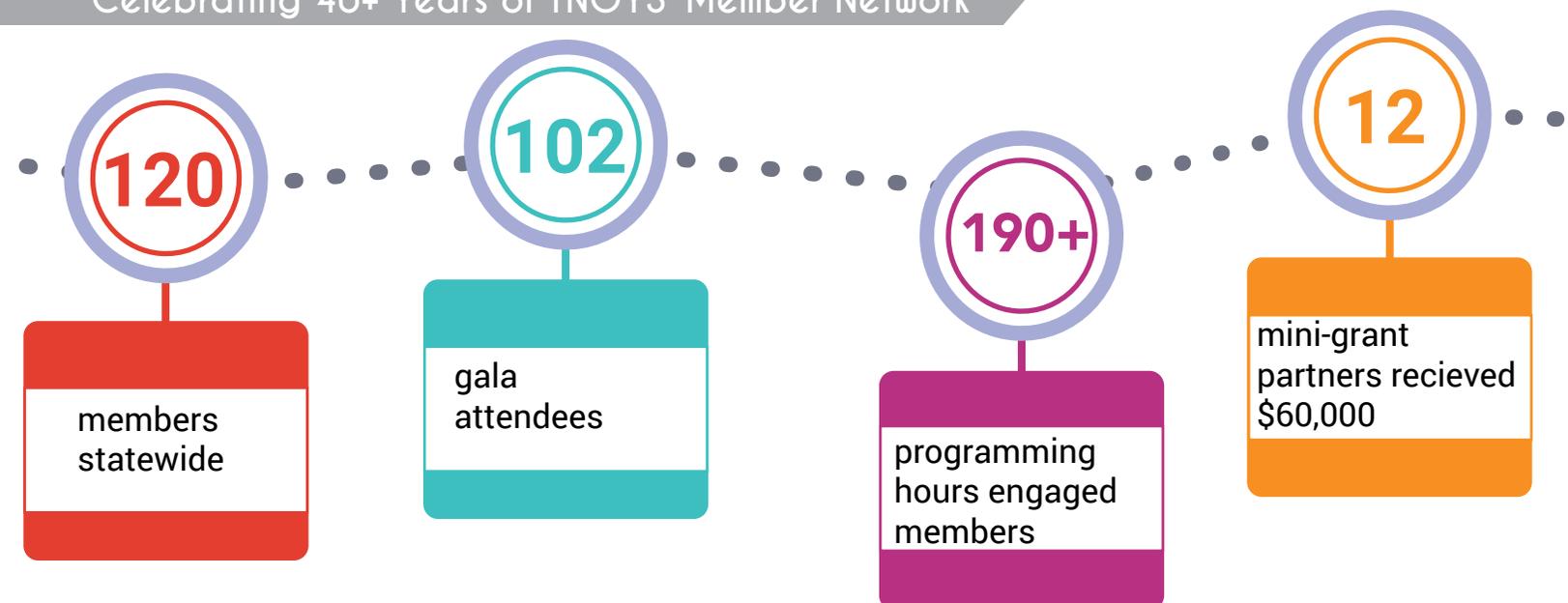


STRENGTHENING YOUTH SERVICES THROUGH OUR MEMBER NETWORK

TNOYS’ work would not be possible without our dedicated members, and in 2023 we were excited to celebrate our network’s remarkable impact over four decades. After the COVID-19 pandemic put 40th-anniversary celebrations on hold, TNOYS recognized our members and history at the 40 Years of Brilliance anniversary Gala in June 2023.

Throughout the year, TNOYS and our members teamed up to strengthen systems through workgroups, legislative session advocacy, and collaboration on T&TA. Notably, members were instrumental to the *We Are Vaxxed TX* campaign supported by Texas A&M University Sponsored Research Services to boost COVID-19 vaccination rates among vulnerable young people. We’re grateful to everyone who joined us this year to make a positive impact on thousands of YYA.

Celebrating 40+ Years of TNOYS’ Member Network



SPOTLIGHT ON TNOYS YOUNG ADULT PARTNER: RONALD SMITH



Ronald Smith's journey with TNOYS began when he was facing housing instability and a deep sense of uncertainty. As Ronald explains, "I didn't have much of anything, just faith in myself." Introduced to TNOYS through Houston's HAY Center, Ronald joined the Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) program after early experiences with the juvenile justice system, child welfare involvement, and homelessness.

The YALC not only equipped Ronald with key life skills like communication, project management, and leadership, it also ignited a passion for youth-led systems change. Highlights include his powerful testimony during TNOYS Day of Action for Youth and throughout the 88th Texas Legislative Session, paving the way for big policy wins such as HB 1819 to combat the criminalization of YYA experiencing homelessness. For Ronald, the "icing on the cake" was accepting the YALC Positive Perspective Award, which each year recognizes a YALC member for their inspiring attitude and growth as a leader.

Today, Ronald has newfound stability, confidence, and is off the streets— accomplishments that he says would not be possible without TNOYS. In addition to a new job in teaching, Ronald is continuing to strengthen systems through TNOYS' YYA Alumni Network. Looking back on his growth with TNOYS, Ronald is filled with a sense of hope for what's next.

"TNOYS gave me the strength and courage to bet on myself. That's the power of TNOYS... to start uncertain and end with certainty and excitement for the future."

– Ronald Smith, YALC Alum

SPOTLIGHT ON TNOYS MEMBER ORGANIZATION: FORT BEND FAMILY PROMISE

Fort Bend Family Promise (FBFP), a TNOYS member since 2018, has long been a crucial support for youth, young adults, and families experiencing homelessness in Missouri City and the Houston area. FBFP clients have access to program assistance, housing navigation, and the Youth Empowerment Planning (YEP) Program, a "three piece approach" to ensuring clients achieve stable housing.

TNOYS membership has opened many doors for FBFP to amplify their impact for youth and families. FBFP has seized many opportunities through TNOYS' Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness, exclusive meetings and committees, and members-only events. They've also secured over \$50,000 in funding through TNOYS mini-grants, including for 2023's *We Are Vaxxed TX* project to empower YYA to protect themselves against COVID-19. Additionally, Program Manager Sharmene Atao explained that FBFP benefits from TNOYS' Annual Conference and the chance for both their staff and YYA clients to learn, build connections, and contribute to solving community problems. Looking ahead, FBFP is eager to continue leveraging TNOYS' events, trainings, and opportunities to further strengthen their incredible work in Missouri City and beyond.

"FBFP's foundation is in supporting youth, and this is what drew us to TNOYS. We greatly value TNOYS' commitment to not only model authentic youth-adult partnership, but to connect both FBFP and our YYA clients to resources, new partners, and support."

– Sharmene Atao, FBFP Program Manager



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TEXAS NETWORK OF
YOUTH SERVICES