



2025

Annual Report

Facilitating a shared regional process that aligns resources, addresses needs, and produces sustainable solutions.



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Letter from the President & CEO: **A Year of Alignment, Action, and Impact**

The mission of **Align Southern Indiana** is made possible by the unwavering commitment of many. This year, we've seen firsthand how collaboration can create lasting change – not only through the programs we champion but through the people who make them possible.

Together, we have made significant strides toward our mission: actively facilitating a shared regional process that aligns resources, addresses needs, and produces sustainable solutions – all to ensure that Southern Indiana reaches its potential as one of the best places to live, work, and play.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we've been able to expand the number of three-year-olds being prepared for kindergarten, increase our support for early childhood providers, and grow programs aimed at preventing addiction in our communities.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to ensuring every child is ready for kindergarten, expanding programs that develop collaborative leaders, and convening on the important topics that shape our region's future.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers, Alignment Teams, and community partners who bring vision and energy to our mission. Shifting the status quo is never easy or quick – but meaningful, generational change takes time.

Join us as we continue to align people, ideas, and resources to build a brighter Southern Indiana. The best results are yet to come.

Dr. Rita Shourds

President & CEO, Align Southern Indiana



Building a Strong Start: Every Child Ready for Kindergarten

At Align Southern Indiana, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to start school ready to learn and succeed. Through the **Regional Training Center (RTC) model**, we're helping early childhood educators gain the skills, support, and confidence they need to prepare young learners for lifelong success.

The RTC serves as a hub for peer training, technical assistance, and shared learning opportunities. Educators participate in cohort-based programs that improve teaching practices, strengthen classroom environments, and ultimately, enhance outcomes for children.

This year, 11 programs across our counties participated, representing 45 classrooms and more than 2,100 children. Over \$1.7 million has been invested in improving facilities, resources, and professional development. Thirty-six classrooms alone received nearly \$400,000 in improvements.

When educators grow, so do their students – and the ripple effect reaches far beyond the classroom. By aligning local providers, schools, and regional partners, we are helping to ensure that every child in Southern Indiana has the foundation they need to thrive.

Statistics:

11 PROGRAMS **45** CLASSROOMS
2,127 STUDENTS SUPPORTED



\$1.7 M
INVESTED IN
PROGRAM

\$400K
IN CLASSROOM
IMPROVEMENTS

Supporting Early Childhood Providers: **Building Educators, Strengthening Classrooms**

Early childhood educators play one of the most important roles in shaping our region's future. Align Southern Indiana is proud to support these professionals through **targeted training and collaborative learning opportunities**.

Throughout the year, providers participated in quarterly sessions focused on improving instructional quality, classroom management, and child development. In addition, our annual Mental Health Symposium and Provider Fair offered critical resources to help educators address student well-being and connect with community partners.

This year's efforts reached more than 200 providers, featured over 20 exhibitors, and impacted 500 children across Southern Indiana. The outcomes speak for themselves – stronger programs, better-prepared teachers, and happier, healthier classrooms.

As Allison Clayton, Early Childhood Education Manager at St. John's Lutheran School, shared: "These quality events each year and the support we receive as providers are crucial to ensuring our students have the best environment in which to learn."

By investing in those who teach, we strengthen the entire ecosystem of early learning – one classroom, one child, and one educator at a time.

"The support we receive as early childhood education providers is crucial to ensuring our students have the best environment in which to learn."

Allison Clayton

Early Childhood Education Manager,
St. John's Lutheran School



A Drug-Free Region: Prevention, Partnership & Purpose

Building a stronger Southern Indiana means addressing the challenges that hold families and communities back. Through our efforts to create a drug-free region, Align Southern Indiana is focused on **prevention, education, and support** – aligning partners to address root causes before they take hold.

This year, Align encouraged local public-school districts to participate in the Indiana Youth Survey, which helps schools identify the most pressing addiction-related issues among their students. With data-driven insights, schools can better match prevention programs to local needs. Nine districts participated, and more than 2,000 students were surveyed – giving leaders a clearer understanding of how to create healthier, safer learning environments.

This collaborative approach, which has served over 400 students to date, is helping Southern Indiana take proactive steps toward reducing substance abuse and improving youth wellness. By aligning data, partners, and community willpower, we're creating a culture of prevention that starts young and strengthens over time.

As a result of the INYS data, Align has collaborated with Our Place Drug & Alcohol Services to provide this information:

Statistics:

8,058

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS
FROM...

320

CLASSROOMS

45

SCHOOLS

5

COUNTIES



Raising Our Children's Kids (ROCK): Supporting Families, Strengthening Futures

When grandparents or relatives unexpectedly become primary caregivers, they often face enormous challenges, such as navigating legal systems or managing emotional stress. Align Southern Indiana's **Raising Our Children's Kids (ROCK)** program helps these families find stability, support, and connection.

In collaboration with Our Place Drug & Alcohol Education Services, ROCK offers a six-session support group led by trained professionals. Participants receive guidance on guardianship laws, mental and physical health, and available community resources. But more importantly, they find understanding and encouragement from others walking the same path.

This year, 50 grandparents participated, helping dozens of children receive the love and consistency they need to thrive.

One family shared: "Knowing there are other families going through similar things as we are with raising our grandson has made such a difference to us. We've made new friends, and the information we've gained through the ROCK lessons is invaluable."

Through compassion and connection, Align is helping families find strength – *together.*

Statistics:

50
PARTICIPANTS

6
SESSIONS

Dozens
OF STUDENTS SERVED





Regional Leadership Development: Leading Together for a Stronger Region

Collaborative leadership is at the heart of regional success. Align Southern Indiana's leadership development programs equip emerging leaders with the tools and mindset to guide our region forward – fostering innovation, adaptability, and shared decision-making.

This year's Regional Leadership Study Day took participants to Evansville, Indiana, where they met with the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership to learn how coordinated planning is shaping 50 miles of riverfront development. Participants returned home inspired by what's possible when regions align around a shared vision.

These experiences build more than leadership skills; they create networks of collaboration and trust that strengthen Southern Indiana's capacity to solve challenges collectively.

*“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.”*

Helen Keller

2025 Youth Summit: Inspiring the Next Generation of Collaborative Leaders

Southern Indiana's future depends on the young leaders who will one day guide its communities. Align Southern Indiana's **annual Youth Summit** at Indiana University Southeast gives high school juniors and seniors the tools, confidence, and inspiration to lead collaboratively.

Through hands-on activities, networking, and leadership challenges, students explore what it means to make decisions through shared perspectives and teamwork. At the close of the event, each student receives a \$500 renewable scholarship from IUS – an investment in both their education and their future leadership.

This date, approximately 400 students have taken part in the summit, earning more than \$60,000 in scholarship support. The lessons they carry forward will shape how they lead – with empathy, inclusiveness, and collaboration.



Statistics:

400

STUDENTS SERVED TO-DATE

\$60,000

IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

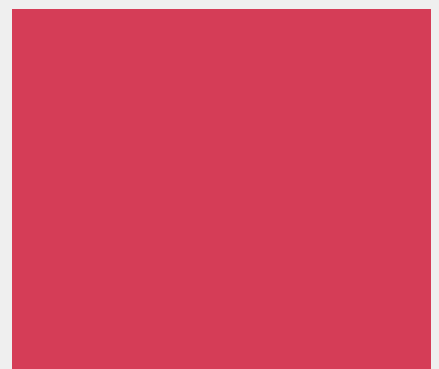
Financial Overview: Despite Challenges, Align Sustains Momentum

Like many nonprofits, Align Southern Indiana faced financial challenges in 2025. Total unrestricted contributions decreased from \$183,186 in FY2024 to \$84,354 in FY2025. Operating expenses remained steady at \$147,679 – a sign of disciplined management and continued investment in program impact.

While contributions declined, our operational strength remains solid. With \$294,232 in unrestricted cash on hand – roughly two years of operating expenses – Align is well-positioned to sustain momentum while focusing on rebuilding its donor base and diversifying funding streams.

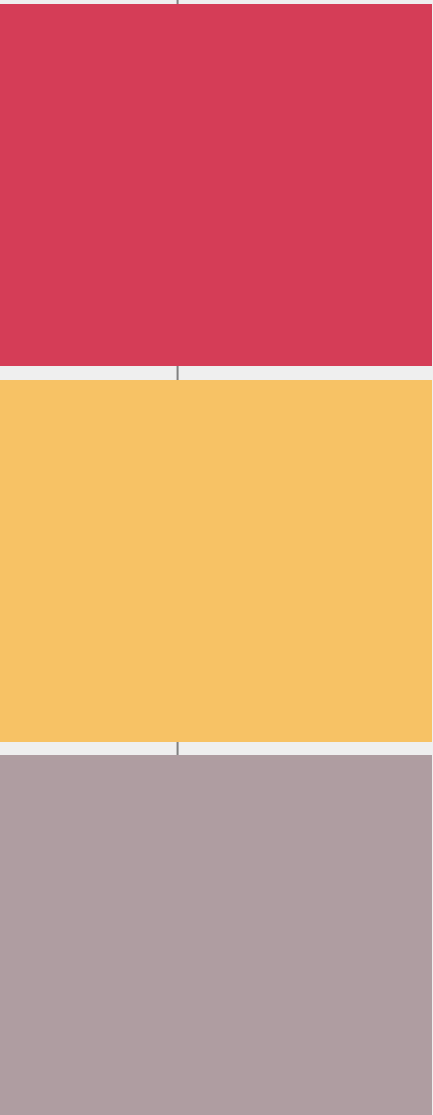
Over the last two years, Align received \$78,582 in grant funds designated for operating expenses, with the remaining \$215,650 generated through contributions before FY2024. Thanks to strong financial stewardship, Align continues to operate from a place of stability and purpose, allowing us to expand impact through programs in early childhood education, addiction prevention, and youth leadership.

As we look ahead, **Align remains committed to strengthening both its programs and its financial foundation.** Together, with renewed partnerships and continued generosity from our community, we will ensure this vital work continues – aligning people and resources to create lasting change.



Statistics:

- \$294K** UNRESTRICTED CASH ON HAND
- \$1.7M** INVESTED IN EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVES
- 2** YEARS OF OPERATING EXPENSES SECURED



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