



POLICY AND ADVOCACY PRIORITIES THE ARC OF ILLINOIS

Since 1950, The Arc of Illinois has been committed to empowering persons with disabilities to achieve full participation in community life.

Our 2019 policy and advocacy priorities include supporting legislation, policy and systems change and advocating for:

❖ Fair Budget & Balanced Approach

The Arc of Illinois supports a balanced approach to addressing the state budget. We believe Illinois must increase investment in I/DD home and community based supports through increased wages and rates as well as continued investment in DD grants including Life Span, The Autism Program, Epilepsy, Best Buddies and Respite. The Arc will continue advocate for increasing the wages and benefits of Direct Support Professionals with the They Deserve More Campaign.

❖ Waiting for Services

The Arc believes that no one should wait for services and supports that provide the opportunity for community living. All waiting lists, especially the PUNS waiting list should be eliminated by the timely provision of services and supports for persons with I/DD in the most integrated setting under a person-centered plan.

❖ Rebalancing

The Arc believes that state funding for persons with I/DD must follow the needs and desires of the people it serves. A funding model that recognizes community supports as the preferred model must be implemented statewide and develops a short-term transition plan for shifting federal and state funding from state developmental centers to community living is crucial in making this goal a reality.

❖ Employment First

The Employment Task Force's recommendations should be implemented in order to make Employment First a reality in Illinois. The Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act should be better implemented in Illinois ensuring that transition age youth have competitive integrated jobs before other options and people in subminimum wage understand their options for community employment. We believe Illinois needs to increase investment in supported employment, begin funding customized

employment, support training for transition age youth and families and expand access to transportation services, while improving how DRS, DDD, ISBE and schools work together to support families. All employment and day services should reflect the federal HCBS settings rule.

❖ **Accessing Services**

We continue to advocate for a more transparent and easier system for individuals and families to navigate. This includes improving the administration, tracking and engagement of those currently on the PUNS waiting list or eligible but not aware of the list. This also includes improving the Medicaid eligibility system to work better for people with I/DD.

❖ **Health Care**

We will continue to oppose the expansion of Medicaid managed care to intellectual and developmental disabilities home and community-based services and have significant concerns about the consolidation of the Medicaid managed care. We will work with Healthcare and Family Services to advocate for network adequacy and an increased understanding by the Department and MCOs about working with people of all ages with I/DD. In addition, we support improvements in the system so that people with I/DD who have behavioral support needs can have access to the appropriate services.

❖ **Assistive Technology**

We will work with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project and the Coleman Institute on a legislative resolution on the rights of people with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access. We will advocate to ensure that individuals on the waiver can access assistive technology that encourages independent and further flexibility in supports.

In addition, we will work on national disability advocacy issues with The Arc of the United States including:

- Protecting the Medicaid guarantee
- Supporting a federal budget that includes programs and funding for the Councils on Developmental Disabilities, family support funding, protection and advocacy organizations, transportation and special education
- Opposing any removal of rights and any limiting of access for people with disabilities
- Rebalancing efforts