

# 2021 Public Policy Platform



## Funding for Community Programs

Protect current funding and ensure full funding of mandates (linked to Fight for \$15 Legislation). Secure additional funds to ensure a stable, quality system of community supports funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) that addresses the needs of all individuals, regardless of age and severity of disability. Supports shall be provided to assist individuals to live fulfilling and respectful lives in their communities.



Ensure funds necessary to ensure providers and people who self-direct can access a qualified, competent, and committed workforce of Direct Support Professionals.

## Access to Services



Examine capacity concerns of our current community living and meaningful day systems and advocate to increase access to services of choice in communities of choice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Advocate that funding levels and policies shall ensure access to services and choices of people with complex needs to be supported in communities and settings of a person's choice.

## Waiting List

Seek funding to meet the needs of individuals on the DDA Waiting List. Maryland is the wealthiest state in the nation (US News, May 16, 2019) yet thousands of children and adults with I/DD continue to wait for critical services. The Autism Waiver registry waiting list currently stands at 6,038 children long. Although 100 Slots were added to that waiver during the 2020 session, the waiting list grows faster than slots are added. There are currently 1,300 Autism Waiver slots and people on the waiting list wait eight and a half years on average before they are able to access needed autism waiver services.



Advocate for a change in the way in which children on the Autism Waiver are evaluated for eligibility to improve timeliness and access to needed services.

## Transitioning Youth



Ensure families are involved in the transition process and have access to reliable and consistent information for a seamless transition to adult life, starting at 14.

Advocate for meaningful high school opportunities that train, prepare, and educate students for successful transitions to adult life, outside of school.

Fully fund all Transitioning Youth (TY) who exit the school system at age 21 and 22 so they have the supports they need to participate in their community, jobs, life-long learning, and/or higher education to ensure meaningful adult life and opportunities.

Ensure TYs are supported to successfully and timely secure day supports of their choice and/or successfully enrollment in post-secondary education.

Advocate for programs that support students in post-secondary opportunities (university and college supports).

## Education and Children's Services

Ensure students with I/DD have access to inclusive, quality, safe, free and appropriate public education (preschool, primary, secondary, and post-secondary), and receive appropriate accommodations to participate in all aspects of education life.



Ensure children with I/DD are fully included in neighborhood childcare, before-and-after school programs, and camps regardless of the nature or level of their disability.

Advocate for family-centricity to include training and education opportunities for parents and opportunities for peer-to-peer and family-to-family connections for support and resource sharing.

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## Employment

Increase opportunities for individuals with I/DD to access competitive, integrated employment at fair wages.

Ensure funding is sufficient to provide quality community supports with an “employment first” focus.

Note: “Employment first” does not mean “employment only.” People who are not prepared to work or who choose to access community activities during the day instead of work should have the supports they need to meaningfully participate in those activities.



## Access to Housing

Increase affordable and accessible housing so people with I/DD can live in the community. Accessible housing includes physical access, as well as access to transportation for jobs and social opportunities.

People with I/DD have the right to live in accessible, affordable, and diverse housing in the community of their choice.

## Law Enforcement and Justice

Support police training efforts that reduce stigma, increase safety, and inspire relationships of acceptance and support for all Marylanders, including Marylanders with I/DD.

Advocate for enforcement of rights of people with disabilities in the community, and that law enforcement and court personnel receive training on the ADA.



## Civil Rights

Close the remaining state institution and oppose the expansion of State Residential Centers (SRCs) and new admissions including respite care.

With consideration to the fact that some individuals in society require the assignment of a guardian to ensure health and safety, The Arc shall advocate for the rights of individuals to have alternatives to guardianship fully explored and exhausted, if possible, prior to a guardianship assignment.

Advocate for individuals under guardianship to have information on what rights they maintain and what rights guardianship impacts.

Advocate for a review of guardianship for less restrictive alternatives periodically in our guardianship statutes.

Advocate for training for businesses on the ADA and ways in which business can be accommodating to all people regardless of disability.

Advocate for training and enforcement of the ADA in employment, including the honoring of reasonable accommodation requests of employers (current and potential).

Advocate for full, unfettered physical access to the community. People with I/DD should have full access to bathrooms and other public accommodations.

## About The Arc Maryland

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. We do our work through public policy, advocacy, public awareness, and training and membership support.

The Arc Maryland is part of a national network through The Arc US of more than 650 state and local chapters. The Arc is on the front lines to ensure that people with I/DD and their families have the support and services they need to be fully engaged in their communities.

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