



# FOUNDATIONS

## For the Future

Our Impact 2023



**The Arc**<sup>®</sup>  
Maryland

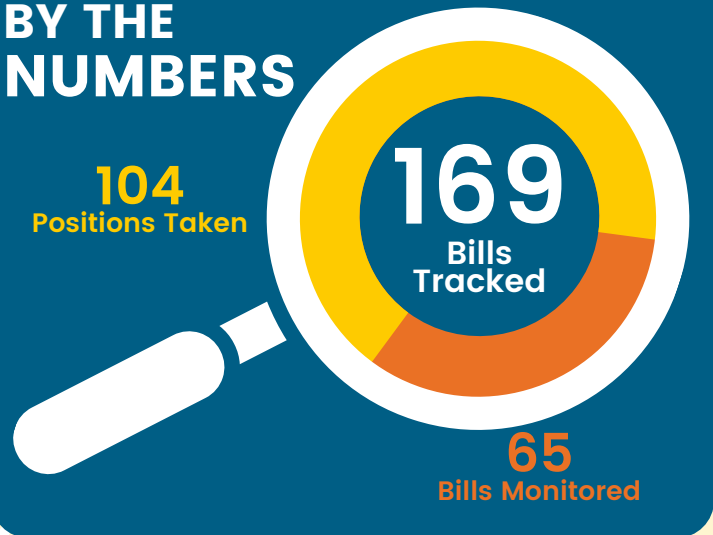
# PUBLIC POLICY

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

With Maryland's 2023 Legislative Session functioning hybrid in-person and virtual, our Public Policy Team pivoted to stay at the forefront of disability-related legislation.

Through weekly meetings with our Governmental Affairs Committee, constant communications with advocates, providers, partnering organizations, and legislators, we successfully advanced several pieces of legislation to benefit Marylanders with IDD and their families!

## BY THE NUMBERS



## PASSED LEGISLATION

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS



### Medicaid Waiver Programs – Waitlist and Registry Reduction (End the Wait Act) SB0622/HB1149 | Support with Amendment

This bill clarifies intentions of the 2022 “End the Wait Act”. Amendments clarify how funding in the dedicated purpose account may be used to fund new community services and also how some funds may also be used to address provider capacity issues.

### Special Education - Judicial Actions - Attorney's Fees and Related Costs HB1237 | Support

This bill authorizes a court to award reasonable attorney's fees and related costs to the parent of a child with a disability who is the prevailing party in a special education proceeding.

Expert witness fees can cost families thousands of dollars out of pocket, and are currently unrecoverable under state law. This bill has failed in previous legislative sessions, and we credit the momentum and success this year to new delegate Aaron Kaufman's tenacity as well as grassroots advocacy to drive the bill home. The passage of this bill (now law!) creates a more equitable legal arena in special education cases for families in Maryland.

### Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration (SERVE) Act of 2023

#### SB0551 | Support with Amendment

This establishes a paid Service Year Option Program for students exiting high school.

Amendments (that The Arc Maryland and fellow members of the DD Coalition requested) were added to the bill to allow students exiting school with a Certificate of Completion to participate. Another amendment will ensure that reasonable accommodations will be made for students who cannot meet the minimum work hours requirement due to their disability.



To read the 2023 Legislative Wrap Up Report, go to [www.thearcmd.org/policy](http://www.thearcmd.org/policy)



# ADVOCACY

## RATES, REGULATORY AUDITS AND THE END OF APPENDIX K

Many Marylanders with IDD and their families have relied on waiver flexibilities for their services, which The Arc Maryland and our DD Coalition partners worked to influence and thereafter, have worked to thoughtfully unwind. Through regular meetings with Maryland Department of Health leadership, The Arc Maryland continues to connect the concerns of the community to key decision-makers, trouble-shoot issues, and develop/share solutions. Our advocacy and work with our valued partners has resulted in increased awareness of the needs of our community, additional funding for community services and supports, and positive changes to the DDA HCBS Waivers.



One of the best days of the year for advocates to build and strengthen relationships with legislators is Calendar Day! This year, over 100 advocates joined us online for Advocacy Training sessions to enhance their communications with legislators before meeting virtually with their representatives. The Arc organizations then hand-delivered each of Maryland's 188 legislators The Arc calendar featuring the stories of individuals supported by local chapters of The Arc in Maryland.

## CALENDAR DAY



**188**  
Legislators



connected with  
The Arc at the  
beginning of  
Session 2023



## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DAY

On February 22, 2023, people with IDD, their families, Direct Support Professionals, provider organization employees, and legislators across the state built the foundations for a better future during Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature! Over 600 advocates joined together in person with thousands more on Facebook and youtube to learn about priorities of the disability community for Maryland's 2023 Legislative Session, share tips on effective advocacy, and get energized to meet with their representatives to discuss issues that matter to them!



"Community for All means that everyone is treated equally, regardless of the support that they need. I believe in Community for All."

Mat Rice, Executive Director, People On the Go of Maryland





# PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING®

The Arc Maryland inspires Marylanders to build foundations of their own through Partners in Policymaking®, an initiative now in it's 5th year since returning to Maryland after a 10 year hiatus. To date, 543 Partners have graduated from this program and have gone on to impact change on the local, state, and national levels. Each class takes a year long journey of learning the interworkings of government and policy, and refine their skills to advocate.

*"Partners helps me practice how to say what I want. It teaches us how to be independent, and also teaches skills that help me reach my goals"*  
Nelson Cropper, 2022 Partners Graduate



Pictured here are Partners in Policymaking 2023 Class members in DC, and 2022 Graduate Elise Horne (Charles County)



## 31 Graduates Paving the Way for Change



Pictured to the left are the members of the 2022 and 2023 Partners in Policymaking Classes. In 2022, parents of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities represented two thirds of the class and people with IDD represented a third of class members. There were a total of 22 capstone projects presented - all setting the foundation for disability policy advancements.

## EMPOWERING PARTNERS

*"People with intellectual and developmental disabilities need to understand advocacy and have a chance to demonstrate it. It is important to educate the next generation who will be in charge of carrying the movement forward."*

-Aileen O'Hare, Former Empowering Partners Facilitator



Empowering Partners exists to grow and strengthen self-advocacy groups across Maryland. Empowering Partners began as a pilot in June 2021 as an outgrowth of the Partners in Policymaking® program. With guidance and funding support from both The Arc Maryland and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, and programatic support from local chapters of The Arc and People on the Go of Maryland, self-advocate facilitators are leading their own self-advocacy groups and empowering their group members to be more effective advocates on local, state, and national levels.

To date, Empowering Partners has assisted with the reemergence of 7 self-advocacy groups across Maryland, with 2 more on the horizon! The Arc Maryland currently employs 5 facilitators with IDD to lead their groups. More than 65 total self-advocates are regularly attend their local groups and attendance/participation is growing.

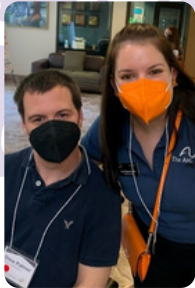


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## STATEWIDE CONVENTION

2022

Each year, Marylanders with IDD, family members, support staff, and provider organizations join together to strengthen the community at The Arc Maryland Statewide Convention! In 2022, over 250 attendees learned about **The Power of Family** as we made our return to Ellicott City for the in-person event.



We kicked off the big day with a panel of advocates who discussed the power of families in advocacy and the strength of having diverse perspectives in our movement as we work together to move the dial forward. Other highlights of the day included breakout presentations in exciting topics and awards ceremonies honoring 41 individuals and businesses for their work in advocacy, volunteerism, direct support, and more.



### Breakout Sessions on:

-  Finding Your Voice
-  Health & Lifestyle
-  Life in the Community & Milestones



96%



Respondents Strongly Agreed the Event had a Positive Impact on the Lives of People with IDD & Families



"I was very happy with the variety in presenters and information this year. I had multiple sessions that I wanted to attend, and left feeling like I had learned something that folks I support could benefit from or would help them grow in their ability to advocate."  
Anonymous, '22 Convention Attendee

## WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

On March 21st, The Arc Maryland and our partners invited advocates with Down syndrome and their families to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day in Annapolis! Throughout the afternoon, party goers heard from advocates with Down syndrome and legislative leaders, had a dance party, and received proclamations from the House, Senate, and Governor declaring March 21st World Down Syndrome Day in Maryland once again!



Prior to the celebration, legislators were each given a copy of our publication, *I Am*, which highlighted seven Marylanders who exemplify the many ways that people with Down syndrome thrive in the community through work, education, hobbies, and more. They also received socks, a WSD tradition!



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