



The Arc of Pennsylvania Commends Governor Wolf's Budget Initiatives

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Harrisburg, PA: The Arc of Pennsylvania is elated with Governor Wolf's proposed improvements to intellectual and developmental disability services in the 2017-2018 state budget. Governor Wolf's proposed budget includes initiatives that will increase the opportunities for Pennsylvanians with disabilities to thrive in their communities. The proposed \$26.2 million in waiting list funding will ensure 820 high school graduates receive supports so they can transition to community living and employment instead of "graduating to the couch". Additionally, it will provide funds to serve 1,000 people currently waiting for emergency services through a new Community Living waiver option.

Executive Director Maureen Cronin states that "The Arc of Pennsylvania enthusiastically supports the disability funding increases in the Governor's proposed budget, particularly the commitment to young adults graduating from high school. This is the type of investment Pennsylvania needs to ensure our disability service system supports individuals and families while using taxpayer dollars efficiently. Investing in services for young adults after they graduate means they will have a better chance at securing employment, creating a community network, and building skills - instead of needing higher-cost services later. The proposed waiting list initiative is a huge relief to families who have children graduating soon as well as adults currently waiting for services. This is the most forward-thinking budget for people with disabilities in at least a decade, and it is clear the Governor heard the concerns of people with disabilities, families, and advocates."

President of the Board, Ken Oakes, particularly notes the proposed budget's approach to improving cost-efficiency of disability services. "The Governor's budget proposal promotes community inclusion, which is not only what individuals actually want but is also between three to five times less expensive than living in institutional settings. The proposed budget makes a clear effort to ameliorate underfunding and cuts to intellectual and developmental disability funding that have weakened the community service system over the past few decades." The Arc of Pennsylvania has also supported the Department of Human Services' recent plans to close Hamburg State Center and combine state departments, administration initiatives that promote fiscal responsibility.

The Arc of Pennsylvania appreciates how leadership in the General Assembly has shown strong commitment to Pennsylvanians with disabilities and their intent to ensure individuals have the support they need to seek employment, build community connections, and keep families strong. The Arc of Pennsylvania looks forward to working with the General Assembly to ensure the final enacted budget is one that empowers the most vulnerable in our communities.

For 68 years, The Arc of Pennsylvania has worked to ensure that children and adults with autism and intellectual/ developmental disabilities receive the supports and services they need, are included in their community, and have control over their own lives. The non-profit organization is part of The Arc US and is affiliated with 33 local chapters. The Arc of Pennsylvania advocates for quality services and to protect the rights of our constituency, provides information and resources to families, and increases public awareness of disability rights issues.

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Editor's Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.

The Arc of Pennsylvania
www.thearcpcpa.org