

Budget Policy Brief

From The Arc of Pennsylvania

March 2017

Priority
Invest in the
disability
community
system



Key issues

Cost-efficiency: It is more cost-efficient to serve a person with disabilities in the community instead of in facilities. Medicaid is the sole funder of these services and it is important to use funding efficiently and effectively. The chart below depicts this comparison.

Community: People with disabilities **want** to live, work, and thrive in their communities alongside their family and friends.

Sustainability: Pennsylvania needs both investment in the disability services system and options for individuals with disabilities who want to pursue competitive employment. Key to this sustainability is strengthening the disability services workforce and increasing the consistency of Direct Support Professionals for the individuals and families they serve.

Recommendations

The Arc of Pennsylvania recommends passing the following budget initiatives:

- \$ 26.2 million in community waiver funding to create a new waiver option for 1,000 people from the emergency services waiting list and 820 high school graduates.
- \$54.7 million to provide rate increases from the renewal of the waiver program. This includes increasing the wages of Direct Support Professionals, who currently make \$4/hour less than living wage for working families in Pennsylvania and face a high turnover rate.
- \$109.7 million to provide for increases in utilization and costs.
- \$642,000 in autism intervention and services to provide waivers to 50 adults with autism.
- \$25 million increase in special education funding.
- \$11 million increase in Preschool Early Intervention to serve an additional 1,100 children.

