

Legislative Policy Priorities

THE ARC OF PENNSYLVANIA

End the Waiting List

Nearly 15,000 Pennsylvanians with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to endure years on the emergency waiting list, living in heightened crisis situations, and without access to the services they need. **The Arc of Pennsylvania calls for funding to support all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and autism, who are waiting for critical services.**



Increase Funding for Infant Toddler Early Intervention

Pennsylvania's Early Intervention Program plays a critical role for children with disabilities from birth to age five and their families. Rates for Early Intervention Services have not increased in over 10 years. **The Arc of Pennsylvania asks the General Assembly to provide adequate funding (4% increase) that will cover growing costs to provide these critical services.**

Fund a Living Wage for Direct Support Professionals

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide in-person supports that empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and autism, to live, work, and thrive in the community. **The Arc of Pennsylvania supports an increase in the state budget to fund a living wage for over 35,000 DSPs that serve Pennsylvanians with intellectual and developmental disabilities each day.**

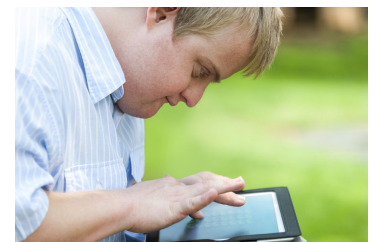


Close State Centers

People with disabilities want to live and work in their communities, alongside their family and friends. The 1999 Supreme Court decision (Olmstead) affirmed a person's right to receive community integrated services rather than live in segregated institutional facilities. **The Arc of Pennsylvania calls on the Legislature and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to end admissions to state centers and establish a plan for the closure of the four remaining state-run institutions by relocating all residents to community living.**

Technology First

For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and autism, access to both generic and specialized technology can support 1) inclusion in neighborhood schools, 2) success at community integrated employment, 3) increased independence in your home and community, and 4) aid in safety and self-determination. **The Arc of Pennsylvania seeks an Executive Order or Legislative Action that establishes Pennsylvania as a Technology First State. A Technology First state embraces technology as a first source of support when addressing outcomes in service planning for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**



Protect Victims with Intellectual Disabilities

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, individuals with disabilities are seven (7) times more likely to be sexual assaulted than a person without a disability. **The Arc of Pennsylvania strongly supports legislation that gives victims with disabilities a voice in the judicial process.**

Hire People with Disabilities

The vast majority of people with disabilities who are of working age, remain unemployed or under-employed. People with disabilities must have access to the resources to seek, obtain, and be successful in competitive employment. Businesses must be responsible members of their community, recognizing and hiring from this talent pool of workers. **The Arc of Pennsylvania urges the Department of Human Services and the Department of Labor and Industry to continue their work to fully implement an Employment First policy and including a commitment from businesses to hire and provide accommodations, as appropriate, for their workers with disabilities.**



Burden of Proof on School Districts, Not Parents

Pennsylvania has no statute or regulation that assigns the burden of proof to school districts when there are disagreements between schools and parents having a child receiving special education services. Few parents go into a due process hearing with the resources or knowledge to properly present their child's case against seasoned professionals representing school districts. **The Arc of Pennsylvania supports legislation to place the burden of proof in special education matters on school districts rather than parents.**



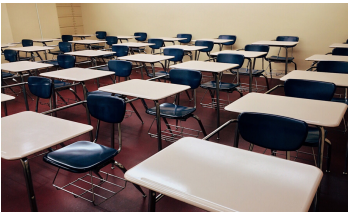
Expand Hate Crimes Law

In Pennsylvania, a hate crime is defined as a criminal act motivated by ill will or hatred towards a victim's race, color, religion or national origin. People with disabilities are not covered under the current law. **The Arc of Pennsylvania supports the addition of mental and physical disability to the definition of hate crimes against actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of another individual or group of individuals.**



Adequately Fund Public Schools

Our education system must ensure that all children have access to a high quality inclusive education system in their neighborhood school. With one of the widest gaps between the highest and lowest spending school districts of any state in the country, our students and educators are experiencing inequity at outrageous and damaging levels. **The Arc of Pennsylvania calls on the state legislature to adequately fund public schools so that all students graduate with the skills they need to succeed in adult life.**



Require Public Buildings Install Adult Changing Stations

Having access to a restroom is a basic human need. For adults who manage mobility limitations or incontinence, adult changing stations provide a safe, sanitary, and comfortable space for assisted changing. For caregivers, they provide a secure and convenient platform that reduces the risk of back strain and other injuries. Travel access to the community is limited when adult changing tables are not available. **The Arc of Pennsylvania supports legislation that requires at least one adult changing station in buildings built with public monies.**



The Arc of Pennsylvania promotes the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.