



SELF-ADVOCATE MENTORING & SUPPORT POLICY

WHEREAS, The Arc of Pennsylvania is a statewide family & self-advocate-driven non-profit organization that provides advocacy and resources for citizens with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities and their families, and

WHEREAS, the bylaws of The Arc of Pennsylvania require that no fewer than 3 members of the board be self-advocates, defined as someone with a cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, and

WHEREAS, any non-profit organization is strongest and most effective when the members of its Board of Directors regularly attend meetings of the Board (and other certain functions) and actively participate, and

WHEREAS, it is generally recognized that self-advocates may require a range of supports in order to travel, attend meetings, and to participate in meetings in a meaningful way.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following be the policy of The Arc of Pennsylvania:

Self advocates on the Board of Directors shall be offered support in and above what may otherwise be offered other Board members in order to ensure their attendance of board and committee meetings, as well as their active and meaningful participation. The following will guide such support:

1. Travel Reimbursements: Notwithstanding any other policy of The Arc of PA, self-advocate board members shall be offered reimbursement for travel, lodging and meals. Generally, the guidelines in the board/volunteer reimbursement policy shall apply unless a variation is needed for a reasonable accommodation (i.e., the distance limitation for lodging). Also, reimbursements may be provided upon request for self-advocates on the board for the purpose of attending committee meetings.
2. Mentoring – Self-advocates shall be offered a mentor. A mentor will be a board member who volunteers or is appointed to commit themselves to assisting the self-advocate in the following:

- Knowing when and where the next board meeting will be held
 - Making sure travel and lodging arrangements have been made
 - Assisting with reading and understanding written materials sent to board members in advance of the meeting and/or items on which a vote will be taken.
 - Participating during the meeting itself, if requested and/or necessary.
3. Personal attendant: If a self-advocate needs a personal attendant in order to attend a board meeting or committee meeting and no other publicly-funded program provides funding for the attendant, then The Arc of PA shall financially support the personal attendant, including their travel, lodging, and meals. The personal attendant may sit-in any and all meetings along with the self-advocate.
 4. Communication – Any materials provided for board members shall be provided in an alternative format (i.e., large print, Braille, etc.) if needed. If communication-related assistive technology is needed for a self-advocate's participation and no publicly-funded program provides funding for it, The Arc of Pennsylvania shall financially support the self-advocate's effort to access the communication device.
 5. Timeliness of Materials – Materials shall be sent in a timely manner so that self-advocates have sufficient time to review it with their mentor and understand it before the day of the meeting.

The Board Development Committee shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time and recommending changes to the full Board of Directors.

Resolved by the Board of Directors this 28th day of January in the year 2006.

President

Secretary

Achieve with us.