



The Arc[™]

Pennsylvania

Spring 2021 - Volume XXI, Issue 1

Pennsylvania Message

THE ARC OF PA'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN



By Rhonda Beach Tyree, Strategic Planning Facilitator

Strategic planning sometimes gets a bad rap for wordsmithing. But often one word makes all the difference. Consider, for example, the word “with” in The Arc of PA’s mission statement:

“The Arc of PA’s mission is to advocate with and for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to promote and secure their rights.”

My greatest impression of this planning process is how actively the self-advocates on the Board of Directors and on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee drove this process and how authentically their colleagues honored their voices. As a mother, my experience of disability is second hand. My son has autism, and his disability wisdom is primary. What an honor it was to serve as facilitator for an organization that so centrally positions the voice of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their organizations’ leadership helm.

Listening to and learning from stakeholders overall was such an integral part of The Arc’s ten-month planning process. Through strategic study of stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and many existent reports, the Board of Directors deepened their understanding of the needs, issues, and aspirations of the PA disability community. Before rushing to solutions, they studied community perspectives on issues like stigma, racial disparities, Pandemic impacts, advocacy needs, service gaps, etc.

When they turned to strategic planning, they worked hard on establishing organizational clarity and language. Yes, words mattered to how they clearly represented their intentions for all readers, especially self-advocates who are at the core of

Can you guess what the Board of Directors adopted as their overarching priority?

“Ensure that the development and implementation of all strategies are informed through elevated voices of self-advocates.”

Go figure!

why The Arc exists.

I smile to recall the enthusiasm that erupted when Sarah Holland (Board President) called the final vote on their strategic framework. The Board of Directors unanimously adopted their strategic planning products - the Board of Directors’ Strategic Framework, the Executive Director’s detailed Strategic Plan, and an Organizational Overview.

Their Organizational Overview is a carefully crafted two-page document that will have enduring value in providing



President's Message Sarah Holland



I am excited to share that The Arc of Pennsylvania embarked on a comprehensive and dynamic Strategic Planning Process. This process allowed both Board of Directors, additional stakeholders, and partners to provide voice to our future direction. As Pennsylvania embarked on our planning process, we were able to leverage and align our strategic plan with The Arc of United States.

In the next three years we will be focusing on several areas:

➤ **Building the movement:** Mobilize a more powerful state and local movement to be activists for change.

- **Speak the truth to anyone who will listen:** Speak truth to anyone who will listen, work with people with IDD and their families to amplify their stories.
- **Advocate:** Tirelessly advance the interests of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and their families before the government.
- **Extend our reach:** Expand and sustain our presence as a critical part of the fabric of every community where people with IDD live.
- **Innovate:** Capitalize on the collective knowledge and creativity of local chapters and partners to envision, pilot, and implement new and

improved programs.

- **Leverage organizational capacity:** Ensure adequate organizational resources for sustainability.

This strategic plan will position The Arc of Pennsylvania to remain a leader in advocating for individuals with IDD and their families. An important focus of this plan is to ensure that stories of individuals with IDD and the voices of those that are most affected are included to provide an integral voice to the development of the work of The Arc of Pennsylvania.

— Sarah Holland



The Arc
Pennsylvania



Inclusive. Dedicated. Determined.

GO GREEN

The Pennsylvania Message is now available via email. Please send your full name, local chapter, and email address to:
skeithknox@thearcpcpa.org
to receive your electronic copy.



Visit the Arc of PA online thearcpcpa.org





Executive Director's Message Sherri Landis



What were you doing this time last year? In the Fall and early Winter of 2019, The Arc of PA was fighting efforts to delay and stop the closing of the state centers at White Haven and Polk. We were providing testimony, sharing information with legislators, and collaborating with other disability organizations.

When I had a moment to breathe, I thought of all the other issues I would focus on once this was resolved. Little did I know, one year later, we're in the middle of a Pandemic! The Arc of PA is busy assuring that people with IDD have access to vaccinations, to needed medical care, and the support they need in medical facilities. We are collaborating with special education stakeholders to solve issues that students are facing with the implementation of IEP's and inclusive education. And, advocating for a state budget that addresses the waiting list, in spite of a very challenging financial environment.

In the midst of all this, The Arc of PA completed a Strategic Plan. This issue of the PA Message provides highlights of the plan.

Someone asked me, "How will The Arc of PA look different?" Before I answer that question, let me share what will not change.

- First and foremost: The Arc of Pennsylvania is led by people with IDD, their families, and committed disability advocates. In fact, our Board of Directors are people with IDD, parents and siblings, and other advocates. They oversee the functions and operations of this organization.
- Secondly, The Arc of PA continues its advocacy to close state centers, to advance employment, to support inclusive neighborhood schools that work for all students. We work so that home and community-based services are provided by qualified professionals and are accessible to more and more people that need them.

- Third, The Arc of PA is a strong network of local chapters, our state chapter, and a national chapter. Our goal is the same ... to promote the rights of people with IDD. We will continue to do this work, using our latitude and influence through partnerships and going it alone when needed.

So how will we BE DIFFERENT?

- We will elevate the voices of people with IDD. Self-advocates will be involved in advising policy makers, decision makers, and in the daily operation of The Arc of PA. The Arc of PA has broken down many barriers in education, employment, and the community. But now we focus on the current and future generation of leaders. In other words, "we will be passing the mic and turning up the volume!"
- We will advocate to dismantle racial and ethnic disparities for Pennsylvanians with IDD. We will ensure that every aspect of our work includes racial and ethnic diversity, and we will work with local chapters to do the same.
- We will build the movement! While we continue to be a statewide organization, there are still some areas of the state that need the advocacy that can be provided by a local Arc chapter. The Arc of PA will seek partners in unserved counties of the state. We will expand the reach of The Arc movement.

Your board of directors dedicated time to listen to our membership, our chapters, and our partners. They spent evenings on ZOOM outlining a plan to move our organization forward! Learn more about our plan in this issue of the PA Message . Hold onto to your hats!

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John Goryl, Dauphin
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Jessica Capitani, Dauphin
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Joshua Stranix, Schuylkill
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Sherri Landis, Executive Director

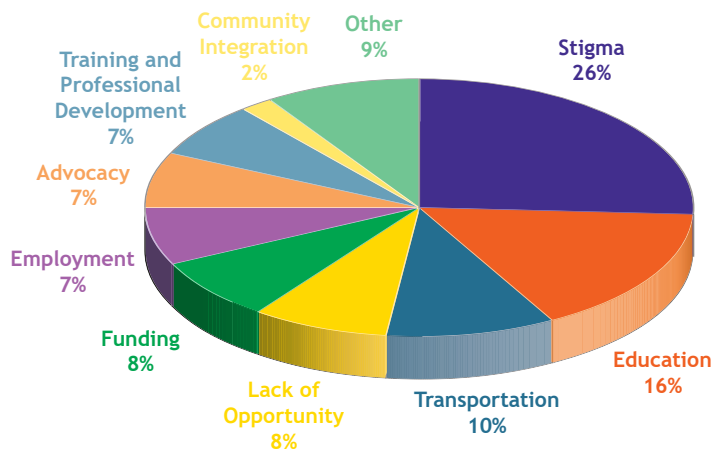
Josh Fields

Communications Manager, Editor

Achieve with us.

organizational clarity. On page one of the document, you will find The Arc of PA's organizational identity answering what we do (mission), why we exist (vision), who we serve (customers), what we cherish (core values), and how we perform (guiding principles). On page two, the state chapter lays out its organizational direction - a strategic framework with one overarching priority and six strategic priorities aligned with The Arc of U.S.

What are the biggest barriers that people with disabilities experience to inclusion in PA schools, work and in communities?



Barriers to Inclusion

- ◆ Stigma 26%
- ◆ Education 16%
- ◆ Transportation 10%
- Lack opportunity 8%
- Funding 8%
- Employment 7%
- Advocacy 7%
- Training & PD 7%
- Comm integration 2%
- Other 9%

Source: Membership Surveys (100+ respondents)

Caption: The above chart is pulled from one of the surveys used to guide our strategic planning process. It shows that stigma is viewed as the largest barrier to inclusion for people with disabilities. This data reinforces the need for The Arc of PA to continue to elevate the voices of the IDD community, and continue to advocate for inclusion in communities, schools, and places of work.

Looking for a professional facilitator?

Contact
Rhonda Beach Tyree
 from *The Compact: Educational Design Consultants* at
[rltyree@yahoo.com!](mailto:rltyree@yahoo.com)



Your Voice Matters



Suite 403 – Pennsylvania Place • 301 Chestnut Street
 Harrisburg, PA 17101 • 717-234-2621 www.thearcpa.org

SNAPSHOT OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN



In this article, you can learn more about our 2021-2024 strategic plan!

Our Organizational Identity

What we do (Our Mission)

The Arc of PA's mission is to advocate with and for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to promote and secure their rights.

Why we exist (Our Vision)

The Arc of PA's vision is for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be valued members in inclusive communities throughout their lifetimes.

Who we serve (Our Customers)

The Arc of PA's primary interest is serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

The Arc of PA has a constituency of individuals, families and local chapters.

Strategies and Objectives:

1. **Build the movement** - Mobilize a more powerful state and local movement to be activists for change

1a. Support self-advocates in leading the movement as true leaders and decision makers.

1b. Build and strengthen local chapters, especially in unserved areas of PA.

1c. Strengthen chapter connections between local chapters and The Arc of PA, and among local chapters.

2. **Speak truth to anyone who will listen** - Work with people with IDD and their families to amplify their stories

2a. Elevate the stage for all self-advocates' voices in amplifying truth.

2b. Increase educational opportunities for self-advocates and families.

2c. Become the "Go To" system of communication relied on for current, easily accessible, comprehensive resources.

2d. Conduct a statewide media campaign about The Arc and disability awareness.

3. **Advocate** - Tirelessly advance the interests of people with IDD and their families before the government

3a. Lead through focused priorities with wide-reaching advocacy.

3b. Model and work to dismantle racial and ethnic disparities for Pennsylvanians with IDD.

4. **Extend our Reach** - Expand and sustain our presence as a critical part of the fabric of every community

continued on page 10

THE ARC OF PENNSYLVANIA'S 2021 VIRTUAL ADVOCACY POLICY CONFERENCE

June 7th and June 8th, 2021
A VIRTUAL EVENT!

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

REGISTRATION IS OPEN at www.thearcpa.org

Schedule of Events — Day One:

June 7th, 2021 — The Arc of PA's Board of Directors & Annual Membership Meeting

5:30-6:30 pm The Arc of Pennsylvania Board of Director's Meeting

6:30-7:30 pm Annual Membership Meeting

- Appointment of New Officers & Board Members
- State of the State Chapter Presentation
- Launch of New Website
- New 3 Year Strategic Plan
- ANNOUNCING! Leadership Academy

SAVE THE DATE!

The Arc of Pennsylvania's Annual Advocacy and Policy Conference

When:

Monday, June 7, 2021

The Arc of PA Board Meeting: 5:30 pm

Annual Membership Meeting: 6:30 pm

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Opening & Welcome: 9:00 am

Workshops: 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Where: **VIRTUAL**

Registration is required

Stay tuned for more information!



Schedule of Events — Day Two:

June 8th, 2021 — “Advancing Employment for People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities: Making Connections for the 21st Century Workforce”

9:00 am-9:30 am — Opening & Welcome

*Ms. Sarah Holland, President,
The Arc of PA*

9:30 am-10:00 am Session 1 — “Impacting Stigma: Employment for People with IDD”

*Mr. Kenneth Oakes, President,
The Arc of United States*

*Ms. Meredith Sadoulet,
Board Member, The Arc of
United States & VP, Comcast*

10:15 am-11:00 am Session 2 — “Preparing for the 21st Century Workforce: Where Does PA Stand Now in Employing People with IDD”

*Mr. Steve Suroviac, Chairperson,
Employment First Oversight
Commission, Acheiva*

*Mr. Zachary Hicks,
Commissioner, Employment
First Oversight Commission*

11:15 am-12:00 pm Session 3 - “Building Public/Private Partnerships to Maximize Talent Resources for the 21st Century”

*Ms. Carrie Amann, PA
Workforce Development
Association*

*Mr. Doran Condon, PA
Workforce Development
Association*

1:00 pm-2:30 pm Session 4 - “Meeting the 21st Century Needs of Pennsylvania’s Business & Industry”

*Mr. Steve Martynuska,
Diversity Consultant, Sheetz*

*Mr. Gene Barr, PA Chamber of
Business & Industry*

*Ms. Shannon Austin, PA Office
of Vocational Rehabilitation*

*Ms. Kristin Ahrens, PA Office of
Developmental Programs*

3:00 pm-4:00 pm Session 5 - Being a 21st Century Workforce - Self Advocate Panel Talks Employment

*Ms. Nicole Turman, The Arc
of PA, ADEPT Program*

Self-advocate panelists:

Ms. Abbie Werner,

Ms Laura Stalter,

Mr. Jay Bedhard,

Mr. Jerry Madesky,

Mr. Mickey Haag,

Mr. Travis Walls

4:00 pm-4:15 pm - Legislator of the Year Awards

Representative Kerry Benninghoff

Senator Art Haywood

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

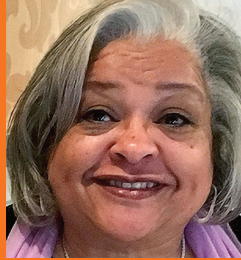
**REGISTRATION IS OPEN
at www.thearcpa.org**

**This is a NO COST event!
Donations are greatly appreciated!**

THOUGHTS FROM A NEW BOARD DIRECTOR, LINDA WISE

What a perfect time for me to become a member of the Board of Directors for The Arc of Pennsylvania. The Strategic Planning Committee was beginning to develop our new Strategic Plan and I was invited to become a member of that planning committee. As an active member of the Strategic Planning Committee, I was able to participate in a hands-on learning experience that allowed me to learn much more about The Arc of Pennsylvania and its organizational culture than I could have ever learned from all of the available policy and procedural information combined. My participation in the Strategic Planning Committee has afforded me more insight into the specifics of The Arc of Pennsylvania's mission and mandate.

While I am proud of the work that we did to ensure that diversity is always a prime consideration, the document



always uses clear, concise, unpretentious language that is understandable to all, is easy to understand with measurable, achievable outcomes, and that we remain mindful of the significant impact that COVID-19 is having on all aspects of our lives, especially Service Delivery. I was most impressed with the process itself. Throughout the entire process, the leaders and all members of this planning committee demonstrated attributes, that were conducive to productive outcomes. They were all respectful of the process and each other, encouraging, patient, engaging, sensitive, compassionate, and still able to ask the hard questions about our plans to move this agency forward. This document is truly a collaborative effort. All of the committee members were clearly committed to the process of developing our new and exciting Strategic Plan. I am delighted to have had this opportunity to help with our plan for the future.”

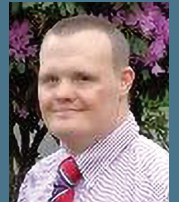
Mike Marsh asked me to be part of the committee, and I accepted and that's how I got started. At first it was overwhelming, but I managed through somehow. I had to find ways to help my brain to figure out ideas. There was SO much information that I did not always understand. It was hard for me to get ideas and what to talk about, but along the way I did and was able to contribute.



I am excited about a self-advocate group. I know that SAUI (Self Advocates United as 1) does a lot of stuff for us, but I mentioned that The Arc of PA could form a self-advocate group to do some of that work together. I want to talk about our issues, and policies, and good practices. Self-advocacy and leadership are a big part to me. With this group, we can talk about those things as well.

— Sara Wolff,
Board Director

I was honored to be a part of the strategic planning process. Sarah Holland asked if any Self-Advocates would be a part of the Strategic Plan, and I said right away, 'I'd volunteer!'



I think for me, I am excited about the advocacy campaigns because as a public speaker and self-advocate, it is important to get the word out about new legislation and issues, and to help better explain topics to us.

— Joshua Stranix,
Board Secretary

“

I am gratified that The Arc of Pennsylvania recognizes the disparity in access and support that affects communities of color in Pennsylvania. Historically, there has been, and continues to be, health and economic disparities that disproportionately affect communities of color,



and those disparities carry over into the world of people with disabilities. I'm so glad that The Arc of Pennsylvania recognizes this critical need and will be acting to reduce these disparities and increase access to services, information, and support for communities of color.

— Laura Princiotta,
Board Director

”

“

The strategic planning process went very well. My voice was heard, and we were speaking up with the disability community. I am so excited about this new plan. We will be listening to self-advocate voices and their stories. It is so important to spread our stories throughout with The Arc and our local chapters.



We are committed to this process – we will try and try again to make sure we are successful.

We DO have a voice!

— Zachary Hicks,
Board Director

”

“

I was involved by Zoom meetings, and I gave my input for the strategic planning process. What I think is super exciting in the plan, is



that there could be more self-advocates leading in the local chapters. Because it would help get other individuals with IDD more involved with Arc.

— Chris Schwenk,
Board Director

”

“

I am most excited about the overarching priority being to elevate the voices of self-advocates. That everything else we do is guided by that priority makes a difference. We can ensure that we are not just advocating for people with disabilities, but with them, as it should be.



— Jessica Capitani,
2nd Vice President

”

LEARN MORE, DO MORE

Stay Informed with PIE - The Policy Information Exchange (PIE) covers policy issues for Pennsylvanians with disabilities, their families, and advocates. The Arc Pennsylvania manages PIE for the PA Developmental Disabilities Council.

Email us at pie@thearcpa.org to receive electronic alerts and the quarterly newsletter.

where people with IDD live.

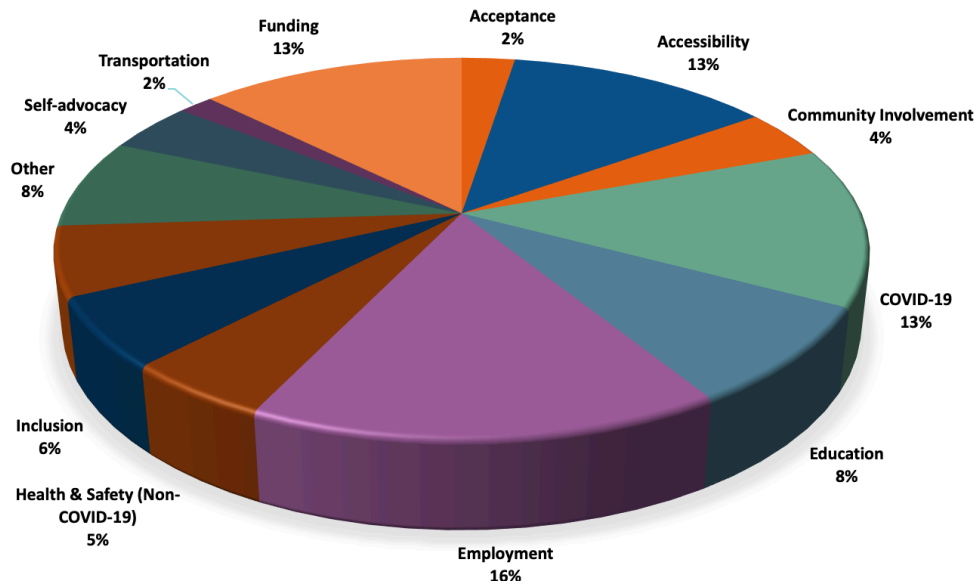
- 4a. Reach and support underserved populations (i.e., communities of color, Hispanic and Asian populations).
- 4b. Expand the Arc's influence and latitude through partnerships.
- 5. **Innovate** - Collaborate with local chapters and partners to develop new and improved programs.
 - 5a. Inform membership of new research, promising practices, and state of the art possibilities.
 - 5b. Lead technology related advancements for The Arc and for people with IDD.

5c. Innovate strategies to build capacity to support individuals with IDD to live, work, recreate and develop meaningful, everyday lives that are fully integrated into their communities.

- 6. **Leverage Organizational Capacity** - Ensure adequate organizational resources for sustainability.
 - 6a. Ensure state chapter sustainability.
 - 6b. Promote Board leadership development.
 - 6c. Build staffing/ organizational infrastructure.



BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT IS THE NUMBER 1 ISSUES THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RIGHT NOW?



Our community submitted responses outlining the number one issue impacting the disability community. This chart outlines some of the key issues we plan on addressing as we implement our strategic plan!



In Touch is an electronic newsletter that is emailed every 2 weeks. It shares the most up to date information about legislative and governmental actions, resources, and events. If you'd like to receive it, email Shirley Keith Knox at skeithknox@thearca.org.

FROM OUR STRATEGIC PLAN...

OUR CORE VALUES

Diversity
People First
Community
Self-determination
and self-advocacy

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Equity
Meaningful participation
Visionary leadership
Public interest
Collaborations
Excellence

Donate Now



MAKE EMPOWERMENT POSSIBLE

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead



Pennsylvania

The Arc Pennsylvania
1007 Mumma Road,
Suite 100
Wormleysburg, PA 17043
717.234.2621
www.thearcpa.org

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The Pennsylvania Message is published by The Arc of Pennsylvania.

The Arc of Pennsylvania is affiliated with The Arc of the United States. We have 30 local chapters serving 50 counties and over 12,000 members.

THE ARC OF PENNSYLVANIA SEEKS TO DEVELOP CHAPTERS IN UNSERVED PA COUNTIES

Are you interested in starting a local Chapter in your county?

Did you know... "People who are familiar with The Arc are much more likely to access services?"

Source: Snapshot: Results of The Arc's Long Range Planning National Stakeholders Survey (4000+ respondents)

Which Counties are Unserved?

Warren, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Forest, Elk, Cameron, Clinton, Lycoming, Sullivan, Wyoming, Mifflin, Juniata, Huntingdon, Bedford, and Lawrence Counties

What are the Benefits of Becoming a Local Arc Chapter?

- Join 30 (PA) and 625 (United States) local chapters with a strong local, state, and national identity
- Obtain guidance and support for mobilizing at the grassroots level



- Impact quality and quantity of local services
- Assistance in organizing to raise voices with elected officials and decision makers
- Regular and UpToDate communications
- Join other local chapters to advocate for key issues
- Increasing community services and supports
- Reducing the waiting list
- Inclusive education
- Increasing training and fair wages for quality direct support professionals
- Advancing employment opportunities for people with IDD

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact *Katie Yost*, Manager, Government & Chapter Relations at kyost@thearcpa.org or by calling 717.234.2621.

MISSION STATEMENT

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