

The Arc of the United States

Strategic Framework for the Future of The Arc  
2010 - 2019

A  
Clear Path  
Forward



## Mission

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

## Core Values

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The Arc of the United States, and chapters at the state and local level, share a commitment to six core values, which influence and inform our work. They are:

### **People First**

The Arc believes that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have strengths, abilities and inherent value; are equal before the law; and must be treated with dignity and respect. The Arc represents, supports and acts on behalf of individuals and their families regardless of the level of disability or membership in The Arc. The Arc believes in self-determination by empowering people with the supports needed to make informed decisions and choices.

### **Democracy**

A democratic process involving members, through affiliated chapters, is utilized to take positions on important issues, policies and programs.

### **Visionary Leadership**

The Arc leads by promoting its mission and core values and by developing position statements. We lead with integrity, accountability and by open, honest and timely communication. We work with individuals, organizations and coalitions in a collaborative fashion. There is a valued partnership with volunteer and staff leadership at all levels of the organization that provides mutual support for their respective roles.

### **Community Participation**

The Arc works toward and believes in the community imperative that all people have the fundamental moral, civil and constitutional rights to live, learn, work, play, and worship in safe and healthy communities of their choosing. The Arc has a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals.

### **Diversity**

The Arc values and insists upon diversity in its leadership and membership. The Arc actively pursues and welcomes diverse groups (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender, and level of disability).

### **Integrity and Excellence**

The Arc conducts its business with integrity. The Arc reflects quality and excellence in all its work.

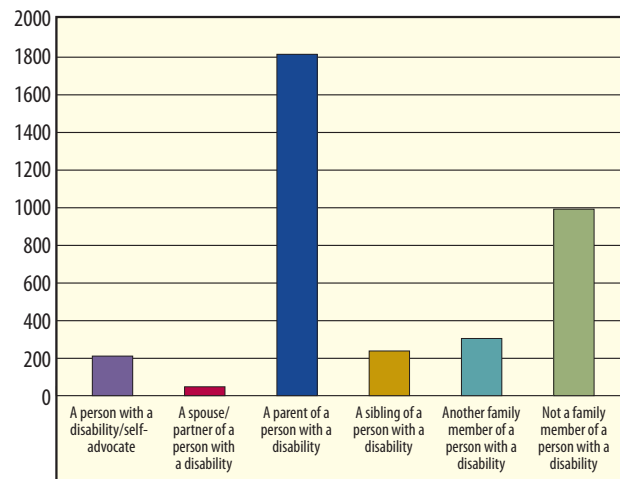
## Our Vision for People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are included and participate as full members of the community. Infants, children and youth with I/DD experience the security of family, while living and learning with their peers. Adults with I/DD lead lives of their own choosing, fully integrated in the community; have the opportunity to engage in productive work for fair wages; participate in civic and community affairs; have good health; and enjoy meaningful relationships.

People with I/DD have access to the full range of home and community-based supports and services necessary to control their own lives; their families have access to needed family supports. Families enjoy the freedom and peace of mind that comes from knowing that their loved ones have the supports they need to live a full and satisfying life.

Valued and accepted, people with I/DD enjoy the respect, dignity, equality, safety, and security accorded to other members of society. As self-advocates, they have a powerful and united voice on the issues that affect their lives and well-being, and they enjoy the broad support of family members, friends, colleagues, and community members. People with I/DD and their families fully embrace The Arc as their preferred partner for advocacy, services and supports.

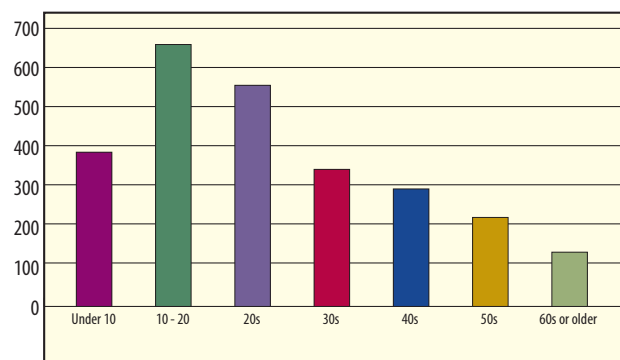
### The Arc's Members, Leaders and Volunteers



Of the constituents surveyed, 71% are individuals with a disability or a family member of a person with a disability.

Note: 3,396 respondents, Grant Thornton Stakeholder Survey 2008

### Age of Family Member With a Disability



The Arc is a resource for people with I/DD and their families at all stages of life, which is reflected in the age breakdown of the survey respondents' family members with a disability.

Note: 2,593 respondents, Grant Thornton Stakeholder Survey 2008

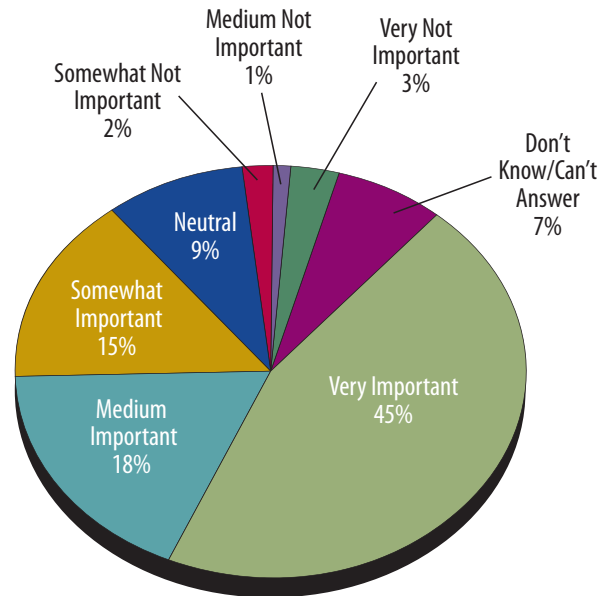
## Our Vision for The Arc of the United States and Our State and Local Chapters

The Arc is the nation's leading advocate for all people with I/DD and their families and the premier provider of the supports and services people want and need. The Arc actively involves people with I/DD; their parents, siblings and other family members; caregivers; colleagues; neighbors; and friends as leaders and activists in a movement dedicated to the inclusion of people with I/DD in all aspects of society. The Arc assures that the human rights of people with I/DD are attained, and that sufficient resources are available to meet their needs, in every community in our nation.

The Arc is the standard bearer for best practices in supports and services for people with I/DD and has a demonstrable record of success in achieving the outcomes people want for their lives. Welcoming people of all races, ethnicities and socio-economic status, and providing both a sense of purpose and of belonging, The Arc is the resource of first choice for people with I/DD and their families regardless of the diagnosis and at all stages of life.

The Arc is active, vibrant, well-known, and respected in communities throughout the United States. With state and local chapters throughout all 50 states and the District of Columbia, The Arc is regularly sought out by elected and appointed government officials, media, business, academia, and other nonprofits as the authoritative source of information and advice about the needs, issues and concerns of people with I/DD. The Arc is an effective, responsive and sustainable organization that is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs, desires and circumstances of people with I/DD and their families. It enjoys substantial philanthropic support from individuals, corporations and foundations on par with other successful national nonprofits.

### Importance of The Arc to People With Disabilities and Their Families



Of the stakeholders surveyed, nearly 80% believe that The Arc is important to people with disabilities.

*Note: 3,361 respondents, Grant Thornton Stakeholder Survey 2008*

## Summary of Goals

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**The Arc's goals over the next ten years are to assure that:**

- I. Infants, children and youth with I/DD have access to the supports and services they need to live in their family homes, to succeed in school and to partake in all of the experiences of childhood.
- II. Adults with I/DD have the opportunity to lead lives of their own choosing, to be free from poverty, to be employed, to reside in the community, and to live independently with ready access to whatever services and supports they need.
- III. People with I/DD have the opportunity to participate in civic activities, volunteerism and community service, religion, art, culture, and recreation alongside their peers without disabilities.
- IV. Individual members of the public value, respect and accept people with I/DD as equal members of society.
- V. Quality health education, health promotion and health care are widely available and accessible, enabling individuals to avoid known environmental causes of I/DD and to prevent secondary health problems for people with I/DD.
- VI. The Arc is a powerful advocate for people with I/DD, leading a vibrant, engaged and growing movement of people with I/DD; their family members, friends and colleagues; and the nonprofit organizations that serve them, committed to the full inclusion of people with I/DD in society.
- VII. The Arc is a catalyst advancing best practices among all community-based service providers and the preeminent provider of inclusive services and supports for people with I/DD and their families.
- VIII. The Arc is a household name, well-known and respected as an effective, responsive, well-managed, responsibly governed, and sustainable nonprofit federation.



*Be Included in the Classroom*



*Experience Meaningful Relationships*



*Receive Personalized Attention*



## About The Arc and How We Work

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The goals and strategies described in this plan will be achieved through the collective action of The Arc of the United States and its network of state and local chapters.

## About The Arc of the United States

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As an organization, The Arc of the United States uses and will continue to use a variety of means, or methods of action, to advance the organization's mission, vision, goals, and strategies. **These include:**

### Federal Public Policy Advocacy

The Arc of the United States is extensively involved in federal public policy advocacy to protect and promote the rights of people with I/DD, as well as to provide the financial resources necessary to support their full participation in community life. The Arc's federal public policy advocacy staff continually advocates for positive public policy outcomes for people with I/DD, their families and the systems that serve them through actions which include:

- Developing a Public Policy Agenda and affirmatively pursuing enactment of that Agenda through federal appropriations, substantive legislation, regulations, and policy directives;
- Monitoring and influencing policy developments within the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government;
- Participating in litigation as needed to protect and promote the legal rights of people with I/DD;
- Educating policy-makers, including elected officials and their staff, about the status, needs and interests of people with I/DD and their families;
- Educating the media about the impact of current policy, as well as proposed policies, on the lives of people with I/DD and their families;
- Educating and mobilizing The Arc's extensive network of volunteer and staff leaders, employees, volunteers, individuals with disabilities, their families and friends, and concerned citizens in support of, or opposition to, specific legislative and regulatory proposals and actions; and
- Collaborating with other disability organizations, as well as organizations outside the disability community, in furtherance of common interests and objectives, including by organizing, participating in and serving as leaders for coalition efforts.

## State Public Policy Advocacy

State and local chapters of The Arc are actively engaged in advocacy at the state and local level. The Arc of the United States will support and maximize the impact of their work, as well as advance the strategies described in this plan with methods of action that include:

- Building a knowledgebase of state and local policy advocacy efforts and actions;
- Promoting the transfer of knowledge among and between states that are working to address similar problems;
- Working with state chapters to develop and coordinate the implementation of national strategies for state policy reforms on critical issues impacting people with I/DD in multiple states;
- Keeping chapter leaders well-informed about the latest public policy developments; and
- Providing training and technical assistance for chapters, their volunteer and staff leaders, and activists.

## Targeted Advocacy Campaigns

Many of the goals and strategies described in this plan are inextricably intertwined and the change necessary to achieve them will require multi-faceted approaches, blending together a variety of methods and tactics. The ongoing crisis of lack of access to services and supports, and the related waiting lists, is a prime example. The Arc will:

- Formulate and execute a coordinated advocacy campaign to make services and supports for people with I/DD readily accessible on demand, including:
  - Research;
  - Coalition building;
  - Media and public education;
  - Litigation;
  - Lobbying; and
  - Grassroots organizing and action.

## Promoting Chapter Excellence

Many of the strategies described in this plan involve actions and events that take place at the local level in the course of interaction between individuals with I/DD, their family members and the public and private organizations that affect their lives. Chapters of The Arc are the nation's largest provider of services and supports for people with I/DD, including advocacy services. The Arc of the United States will advance the goals and strategies described previously through methods of action that include:

- Assembling and making available through websites information and resources for use by board and staff leaders and staff and volunteers of state and local chapters;
- Providing training, professional development and volunteer development through conferences, meetings, conventions, webinars, and other venues; and
- Providing training and one-to-one technical assistance for board members and staff of chapters.

## Communication and Public Education

Broad support, both within and from outside the disability community, will be critical to achieving the goals and executing the strategies described in this plan. To achieve this level of public support, an aggressive program of communication and public education will be required with methods of action that include:

- Directly providing timely, credible and accessible information to opinion leaders, decision-makers and members of the public through websites, social networking sites, radio, television, print, and other media;
- Utilizing the communications capacity of The Arc's extensive network of state and local chapters to maximize reach into communities across the country;
- Monitoring coverage in the media of people with I/DD and the issues and concerns that impact their lives;
- Obtaining coverage through news, features and opinion articles; and
- Clear messaging about the status, needs and concerns of people with I/DD.

## Advancing Knowledge

Knowledge is critical to achieving the goals and executing the strategies described in this plan. To identify, marshal and harness the knowledge and information that is critical to success, methods of action will include:

- Building cooperative working relationships with individual researchers and research institutions, including the university centers on disability;
- Compiling data, information and research from available sources; and
- Supporting or sponsoring additional research where needed to fill gaps or further inform strategy and action.

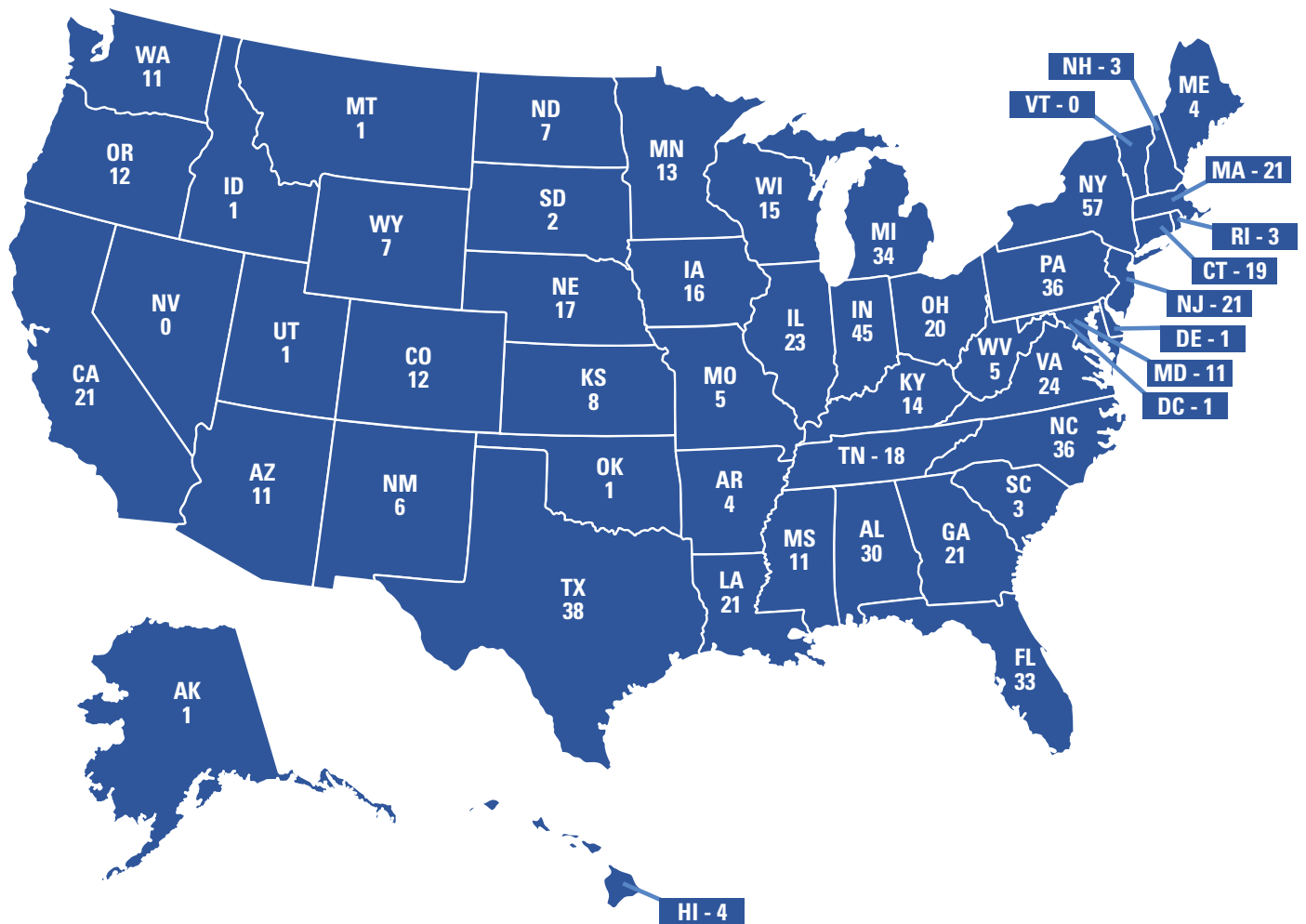
## About State and Local Chapters of The Arc

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The 730+ state and local chapters of The Arc provide the primary vehicle through which The Arc of the United States works to advance its mission to promote and protect the human and civil rights of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in all aspects of the community throughout their lifetimes. While there is variety from place to place, state chapters take the lead when it comes to state-level public policy advocacy and government relations; some are also involved in direct-service activities as well. Local chapters are on the front lines providing individual advocacy, programs, services, and supports for people with I/DD and their families. While some chapters may work exclusively with adults with I/DD, others work with individuals and their families at all stages of life. Their work touches on all aspects of community life, including education, employment, health care, housing, recreation, and more.



## Chapters of The Arc by State



Numbers indicate how many chapters of The Arc there are in each state (as of May 5, 2010).



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