2022 Public Policy Agenda

The 2022 session of the Indiana General Assembly kicked off on January 4th. This will be a short 10-week session as the session must end by March 14th; however, we are hearing it could end sooner than that. This does not provide much time for legislators to fully dive into certain issues as they already have a lot on their plate with major agenda items regarding education, tax reform, public health, and business and workforce issues.

The Arc of Indiana will focus on several legislative priorities, including:

- Supporting efforts to bring oversight, professionalism and a steady workforce stream to the Direct Support Professional (DSP) industry;
- Establishing an advisory council for the state’s new Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program for students with disabilities; and
- Monitoring actions taken to move long term services and supports into risk-based managed care.

DSP Industry

We had a major victory during the 2021 legislative budget session when legislators made a $80 million investment in the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce, moving DSP wages to a statewide average of $15.00 an hour. The Arc of Indiana and legislators know there is still more work to be done to address the DSP workforce crisis. We want people with disabilities (self-advocates), families, DSPs, providers of home and community based services, the state Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services and legislators to be at the table to form and execute a plan to attract and retain high quality individuals to the DSP profession.

Education Scholarship Accounts (ESA)

Legislators created a new program, the Indiana Education Scholarship Account Program (INESA), in the 2021 session to assist families who have an eligible child enrolled in special education services. To be eligible for an ESA account a student must:

- Have a disability that requires special education services and have an individualized education plan (IEP), service plan (SP), or a choice special education plan
- Choose NOT to enroll in a public school or receive an Indiana Choice Scholarship
- Meet the annual income qualification, currently 300% of the federal poverty limit, or receive free or reduced lunch

This new program, managed by the state treasurer’s office, allows eligible parents/guardians to establish an education scholarship account (ESA) that can be used for their child’s education expenses. The program, geared toward students receiving special education services outside of a public school setting, will be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

The Arc of Indiana and other special education advocates have been working with the treasurer’s office on the implementation of these new accounts. By establishing an ESA Advisory Council, we can continue to be a resource to the treasurer’s office and families as they go through this new option for special education.

Managed Care

As the state moves forward with conversations about moving into managed care for long term care services and supports, The Arc of Indiana will continue to monitor these discussions. Managed care is a health care model that encourages home and community-based living, but puts limits on spending and prioritization of services while restricting choice of care. Most managed care models are created as a way to cut down on health care costs. We do not want to see adverse effects, including losing access and quality of care in order to save state funds.

Valentine’s Day at the Statehouse

We are excited to announce that our annual Valentine’s Day at the Statehouse event will be back in person for the 2022 legislative session. Mark your calendars for Monday, February 14, 2022. The theme this year is The Arc is Where the Heart Is. Watch for details and the agenda for the day to be released in our weekly legislative updates and on The Arc of Indiana’s Facebook page.
Self-Advocates of Indiana

President’s Report

Niki Hinkle, President
Self-Advocates of Indiana

I am pleased to report on Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI) as the newly elected SAI president. SAI has been remarkably busy with multiple meetings over the last quarter. We met with Peggy Welch, Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) chief advocacy officer and other stakeholders to discuss how to increase awareness of M.E.D. Works (Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities) within FSSA personnel, including job coaches, benefits counselors, as well as with self-advocates and family members.

M.E.D. Works is a work incentive program for individuals who receive more income than the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefit rate. It also includes Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries. M.E.D. Works allows these individuals to keep their Medicaid coverage and continue to work.

In September five SAI members completed the Charting the Life Course Ambassadors Series. As part of the course, SAI members shared trajectories on their personal vision, SAI’s organizational capacity building, and barriers to implementation.

Charting the Life Course was created by families to help individuals and families of all abilities and all ages develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live. It is being utilized by Indiana’s Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) to assist families and individuals in planning their programs and services and to think about life experiences that will help move them toward an inclusive, productive life in the future.

We continue meeting with the DRRS Advisory Council each month and spent the last three months talking about how to increase employment opportunities for individuals with IDD. In addition, SAI just wrapped up work with the Supported Decision Making task force to develop a plan to increase access to decision-making supports. Supported Decision Making is an alternative to guardianship that empowers individuals with disabilities to use available supports to make their own choices and live a more self-directed, independent life.

Shawn Fulton, immediate past president, has been busy representing SAI on several projects and awareness opportunities including serving on the Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services (IPAS) Commission to assist in finalizing their three-year strategic plan. He also presented at INARF’s annual conference on how having a strong self-advocates group connected to a provider agency contributes to the provider’s bottom line. INARF is the principal membership organization in Indiana representing providers of services to people with disabilities.

Find information about SAI at saind.org.

Spotlight on Niki Hinkle

Nicki Hinkle was 18 years old when she started attending Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI) meetings with her aunt, Darcus Nims, founder of SAI. “I was able to witness how passionate my aunt was about self-advocacy and quickly realized that I wanted to become a member of SAI. After my aunt passed away, I wanted to continue her legacy and I got more involved. Through my experience coming to board meetings, I began to form friendships with many of the self-advocates. I consider some of the members of SAI amongst my dearest friends. It is an honor to now follow in my aunt’s footsteps as president of SAI. I am enthusiastic about the growth of self-advocacy throughout Indiana as we add more chapters to our ranks.”

M.E.D. Works Can Help Maintain Medicaid Health Coverage While You Work

M.E.D. Works – Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities – is a Medicaid health coverage option which allows individuals with disabilities who are working to potentially maintain Medicaid health coverage and home and community based services Medicaid Waiver coverage.

The program is designed to make it easier for adults with disabilities to work and keep the health coverage they need. Individuals will pay a monthly premium on a sliding fee scale based on their monthly gross income.

Individuals on M.E.D. Works can make up to 350% of the Federal Poverty Level and qualify financially for M.E.D. Works. If the individual with the disability is married, the spouse’s income is not considered for eligibility, but it is considered for monthly premium costs.

Individuals eligible for M.E.D. Works will be enrolled in the Hoosier Care Connect program unless they are also Medicare recipients. In this case they will be covered in fee-for-service or “traditional” Medicaid.

To qualify for M.E.D. Works, individuals must be:
• Between the ages of 16 and 64
• Determined disabled by the Social Security Administration
• Working *
• Meet income and resource guidelines

*Individuals who lose employment involuntarily due to being fired, laid off or close of the business can maintain M.E.D. Works eligibility for up to 12 months in certain circumstances.

For additional information about M.E.D. works, please contact The Arc of Indiana at 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100 and ask to speak with a family advocate.
Message from The Arc of Indiana CEO

Is anyone else ready to move into 2022? After the last two years, which have gone by quickly but have certainly presented challenges never thought imaginable, I am ready to welcome in a new year! This past year The Arc of Indiana has seen some changes in staff, and we are glad to welcome several new teammates, including growing The Arc Advocacy Network team who work to help families and people with disabilities on a daily basis. All of this growth is due to the increasing demand for our advocacy and assistance, as well as the increased utilization of The Arc Master Trust. We continue to be blessed with dedicated teams in these two specific departments of The Arc of Indiana.

Continuing to tout our advocacy areas of growth, we are extremely excited as we launch The Arc of Indiana Academy to again be a great resource for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families to gather information and gain knowledge in specific areas of interest. These efforts are only made possible by the significant financial commitment of the Mission Circle members of our Circles of Support. In addition, our other Circles of Support members are making resources possible, and we hope to continue to grow those efforts throughout 2022.

We cannot talk about transitioning into a new year without discussing the legislative session. Although the 2022 legislative session is a short session, we will be busy pushing for some significant changes to improve policies that benefit people with disabilities and their families. We were so thankful to receive overwhelming support this past legislative session to increase wages for direct support professionals (DSPs). However, at the same time nearly all other industries also raised wages to improve workforce efforts. We knew that wages are only one piece of the workforce puzzle, and we will continue to move conversations forward regarding training, certifications and registries to professionalize and improve the DSP network.

To stay informed, please be sure to sign up for our legislative updates, Action Alerts and our weekly e-newsletter by visiting arcind.org/get-involved/sign-up.

As we go into a new year, we do have to take a moment to look back on 2021 and reflect on some major successes. The already mentioned increase in Medicaid rates to help with wages for DSPs certainly is a bright point but it has also been a wonderful year celebrating our 65th Anniversary. To see how far we have come over the years and the major impact The Arc of Indiana has made in the lives of people with IDD and their families is humbling. I continue to be in awe of our boards, staff and partners who have made change possible.

2022 has the potential to be a great year. With the investment of American Rescue Plan dollars, the state is poised to invest in some key areas that also will have a tremendous impact on the lives of people with IDD and their families. Those dollars must be invested wisely and used effectively to move positive policy changes forward.

I am optimistic about the many conversations we are having with partners around the state, especially when it comes to employment opportunities for people with disabilities. There is a major workforce shortage in nearly every industry, and people with disabilities can be the solution. We are making valuable connections and want to see those connections continue to grow in the year ahead.

Thank you for being a part of The Arc of Indiana’s network. Nothing we do is possible without your support. Please know we are extremely grateful not just to those of you who support us financially but also to those of you who share and promote our materials. We want to connect with more families and people with IDD, and you make that possible.

Let’s make 2022 a great year!

The Arc of Indiana Honors Outstanding Legislators

The Arc of Indiana honored outstanding state legislators for their service and commitment to Hoosiers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) at their annual legislative awards breakfast on January 6, 2022.

State Representative Tim Brown (R-District 41) was honored for his longtime commitment to people with IDD with the Lifetime Achievement Award. State Senator Ryan Mishler (R-District 9) was honored as the 2021 Legislator of the Year and State Representative Ann Vermilion (R-District 31) was honored as 2021 Freshman Legislator of the Year.

The Arc of Indiana CEO Kim Dodson said, “Throughout the years, Representative Brown has been a great friend to The Arc of Indiana and a true champion for Hoosiers with IDD. As chairperson of the House Ways and Means Committee and lead crafter of the state budget, he has invested numerous times and millions of dollars into direct support professional wages, the state’s First Steps program and other services to improve the lives of Hoosiers with disabilities.”

Representative Brown also led the effort to provide cornerstone funding to help establish the nation’s first training institute and teaching hotel which houses The Arc’s Erskine Green Training Institute.

Dodson said, “As chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Mishler helped pave the way for the historic $80 million investment in direct support professional wages in 2021 and Representative Vermilion has been a fierce advocate for Hoosiers with disabilities since day one as vice chair of the Family, Children and Human Affairs Committee and member of the Public Health and Elections and Apportionment committees.”

“The Arc of Indiana greatly appreciates the service and commitment of these outstanding leaders,” Dodson said.
Announcing – The Arc of Indiana Academy

We are excited to announce the launch of The Arc of Indiana Academy, featuring The Arc of Indiana Advocacy Training Program and Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) Workplace and Independent Living Support Subscription.

Visit The Arc of Indiana Academy at thearcacademy.org

ADVOCACY TRAINING PROGRAM

The Advocacy Training Program offers a wide array of videos on topics impacting people with disabilities and their families. Individuals seeking a deeper understanding of these topics can complete comprehensive training modules and earn a certificate in that area of learning. Our goal is to empower families and people with disabilities with the information and tools they need to be strong advocates for their loved ones and themselves.

The Arc of Indiana Academy also hosts the Living Well Video Series. These short, one-minute videos are designed to provide quick, factual information to help families, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), providers and others take steps that lead people with IDD to live their best life.

EGTI WORKPLACE AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT SUBSCRIPTION

Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI), founded by The Arc of Indiana Foundation, is the first of its kind postsecondary vocational training program in the country. Opened in 2016, EGTI provides training to people with disabilities in hospitality, food service, healthcare settings, and inventory supply. Over the years, EGTI staff have developed a variety of supports to increase the overall independence of EGTI students within different environments. Through a subscription to EGTI’s Workplace and Independent Living Supports, people supporting individuals with disabilities will have access to workplace, community and independent living supports, including video tutorials of how the support was used and templates to download and edit to best fit the individual you are supporting.

Advocacy Training Program Modules

- Steps to Independence
- Charting the LifeCourse
- Team Meetings
- Employment
- Guardianship & Alternatives
- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Advocacy Leadership
- Voting
- ... and more to come!

We are pleased to provide The Arc of Indiana Academy thanks to leaders in the disability field who have joined together in Circles of Support to sustain and grow our advocacy efforts, with special thanks to our Mission Circle members:

- Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana
- Indiana Professional Management Group (IPMG)
- KCARC/The Arc in Knox County
- New Star
Changing Your Medicaid Waiver Case Management Agency

A service provided under Indiana’s Medicaid Waiver program for home and community based services is case management.

Effective January 1, the following six case management agencies are authorized to provide case management to people receiving services through the Family Supports Waiver and Community Integration and Habilitation Waiver.

- CareStar of Indiana carestar.com/case-management
- Connections Case Management connectionsin.com
- Inspire Case Management inspirecm.com
- IPMG gotoipmg.com
- The Columbus Organization columbusorg.com
- Unity of Indiana unityofindiana.com

Individuals and families who previously received case management services from another agency were required to select a new agency by December 14, 2021. Those who did not were auto assigned to a new agency.

It is important to know that Medicaid Waiver recipients can choose a new case management agency at any time, for any reason. Here are some tips.

Choosing a Case Management Agency

When choosing a case management agency, you may want to speak with representatives from the authorized agencies to learn who may be the best fit. Some general things to consider include:

- Is the agency representative eager to talk to you?
- If you leave a message, how quickly is your call returned?
- Do they ask about you or your loved one?

Many families aren’t sure what to ask prospective case management agencies. Here are some suggestions:

- Do you have case managers who are experienced in my or my loved one’s disabilities?
- Are case managers assigned to specific regions so they know what services may be available in my community?
- How are caseloads distributed so that my case manager doesn’t get overwhelmed with too many cases?
- What sets your company apart?
- Can I contact my case manager on nights or weekends?
- How can you help me learn about formal services and community resources that meet my/my loved one’s needs?
- How will you help coordinate formal services and community resources from different providers to ensure everyone is on the same page?
- How will you ensure the person centered individualized support plan focuses on my/my loved one’s needs, interests, and vision for a good life?
- How often will you communicate with me and my family?
- If my case manager leaves, how and when will I be notified? What will be the transition plan?
- What is your staff turnover rate?
- If I want to change my case manager, what is your policy for doing that?

Remember, you always have the right to change your case management agency. You may do this in two ways. You may call your local Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) office to request a list of the authorized case management agencies – sometimes referred to as a pick list. You may also contact your current case management agency to request a pick list. Contact the agencies to find what you think is the best fit for you or your loved one. Once you’ve decided on a new agency, return the pick list to BDDS or your current case management agency with your new choice marked.

Questions? We’re here to help. Contact The Arc of Indiana at 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100 and ask to speak with a family advocate.

The Arc of Indiana Resources

The Arc of Indiana works every day to empower families with information and resources to assist them in their journey of raising a child with a disability to lead a full and meaningful life, and to empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be self-sufficient and independent to the greatest extent possible. A wide variety of resources are available on our website, YouTube channel, and our newly launched, The Arc of Indiana Academy Advocacy Training Program.

Website – arcind.org

We encourage you to visit and share the “Supports and Services” section of our website at arcind.org/supports-services where you will find information across the life span. Whether your loved one is an infant, preschooler, school aged or an adult; or you are a person with a disability or a professional connected to the world of disabilities, we hope this will be the place you go to first for information on programs, services, resources and support.

Categories include:
- Infants & Toddlers
- Early Childhood
- School Age
- Transition from School to Adulthood
- Adults
- Future Planning
- Employment

Medicaid Waivers
- State & Federal Programs
- Natural Supports
- Links to Additional Resources

YouTube – youtube.com/TheArcOfIndiana

Our YouTube channel includes a number of playlists with information and resources across the age span.

Playlists include:
- Programs, Services and Supports Across the Age Span
- Pathways to Employment
- Employment
- Future Planning
- The Arc Master Trust
- Indiana’s Medicaid Waiver Program
- In-Depth Info on Key Topics
- Learn about The Arc

The Arc of Indiana Academy Advocacy Training Program – advocacy.thearcademy.org

Our new Advocacy Training Program, a part of The Arc of Indiana Academy offers a wide array of videos on topics impacting people with disabilities and their families. Individuals seeking a deeper understanding of these topics can complete comprehensive training modules and earn a certificate in that area of learning. Complete details on this new resource on page 4.
Erskine Green Training Institute Graduate Spotlights

Patrick Oneal

Patrick Oneal, a West Lafayette native, graduated from Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) in October 2018 where he trained as a patient transporter at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital (IUHBMH). Immediately following graduation, Patrick was offered a full-time patient transport position at IUHBMH requiring him to relocate to Muncie. With the support of his family, Patrick located a rental home near the hospital, allowing him to accept the job offer.

Three years have passed and Patrick has remained a valued, reliable employee. According to his supervisor, Jami Whitehead, Patrick is one of the first employees they call when there are shifts to be covered as he is an extremely hard worker. He is willing to arrive early, work late, and is always focused on the patient’s needs.

Throughout his time at IUHBMH, Patrick has had the opportunity to serve as a preceptor/instructor to eight EGTI students training in the patient transporter program. As a preceptor, Patrick is responsible for serving as an exemplary model of how the job is to be done and providing constructive feedback to trainees.

Not only has Patrick found long-term success in employment, but he also just achieved another milestone – he purchased his first house! Thanks to the confidence Patrick obtained through EGTI, his path towards independence is bright.

Noah Upchurch

Noah Upchurch graduated from EGTI in October 2019 where he trained as a front desk agent at the Courtyard Marriott, home of EGTI. One month later, Noah was hired as a front desk agent at the Courtyard Marriott, home of EGTI. Two years have passed, and Noah is not only still employed, but he has also transitioned into the hotel’s full-time night auditor and manager on duty. There are many achievements to celebrate, but being offered an advancement in employment is a testament to Noah’s character and skills.

Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI), founded by The Arc of Indiana Foundation in 2016, provides postsecondary vocational training in hospitality, food service, healthcare, and inventory distribution. Housed within the Courtyard Marriott in Muncie, Indiana, the program provides a personalized training experience for each student. During the 10–13 week training sessions, students attend class, master key job skills, and gain valuable work experience through an internship.

In addition to hands-on job training, the curriculum addresses critical soft skills like appropriate workplace etiquette, teamwork, taking direction, and effective communication skills.

EGTI’s programming is designed for individuals whose academic, social, communication and adaptive skills are affected due to a disability. Upon completion of the program, students leave with a certificate, resume, practiced interview skills and a list of open positions in the community they are returning to after graduation.

More importantly, they leave connected to the EGTI team and other resources, including an alumni group, for ongoing support and information.

Visit EGTI at egti.org.
The Arc of Indiana Master Trust

Indiana’s leading special needs trust, serving Hoosiers of all disabilities since 1988.

Pooled special needs trusts allow an individual access to financial resources to enhance their life while safeguarding public benefits that provide access to vital services.

Administered by a non-profit, a pooled trust combines the assets of many individuals for investment purposes while maintaining individual accounts for the beneficiary.

The Arc of Indiana Master Trust, now entering its 34th year, serves families and Hoosiers of all disabilities, including people with physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and other developmental disabilities. We are proud to offer an experienced, professional option for special needs trust administration at an affordable price, allowing resources to be saved and easily used for qualified disability and personal expenses.

The Arc Master Trust offers two trust programs:

Trust I, established in 1988, helps families provide for the financial future of their loved one without affecting eligibility for government benefits.

Trust II, established in 1995, allows people with disabilities to save their own money in a trust while maintaining eligibility for government benefits.

The Arc Master Trust is committed to excellent, personalized service at an affordable price. Trusts are established with a one-time enrollment fee and an annual renewal fee until the trust is funded. Once the trust is funded, the fee shifts to an administration/maintenance fee.

Safeguarding the assets of trust beneficiaries is of primary concern. Trust funds are safely and securely on deposit with The National Bank of Indianapolis, and a trust advisory committee and The Arc of Indiana board of directors provides advice and oversight.

Complimentary consultations and presentations can occur virtually, at an individual’s home or a setting in the community. We also welcome visitors to our location in downtown Indianapolis. The trust staff is happy to provide training to organizations or companies ranging from small groups to larger, more formal settings.

Contact Melissa Justice, Chief Trust Officer, at (317) 977-2375 or (800) 382-9100. Visit The Arc Master Trust at thearctrust.org.

Using Your Trust

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Request a Disbursement

Request a disbursement through INtrust, our trust management system, or call, e-mail or fax your trust account manager.

2. Requirements

Provide any required documents or receipts by submitting them through INtrust, our trust management system, or by mailing or faxing them to your trust account manager.

3. Payments

Payments are processed twice a week on Tuesday & Thursday.

Using Your Trust

What happens once you fund a trust through The Arc Master Trust? We strive to make the process as simple as possible.

Beneficiaries or a designated person can make requests through our online portal, INtrust, or contact us by email, fax, phone or mail. In most cases, this is all that is required. We are committed to helping beneficiaries use their trust funds quickly and easily without jeopardizing their government benefits.

The Arc Master Trust I and Trust II can be used for pay for disability related and non-disability related expenses. While it is impossible to draft an all-inclusive list of what goods and services can and cannot be purchased with a special needs trust, following are items that are routinely covered. It is important to remember that purchases must be made for the sole benefit of the beneficiary at the sole discretion of the trustee.

Goods


Services

Cell Phone Services * Internet * Cable TV * Hair Care * Transportation * Auto and Renter’s Insurance * Eye and Dental Care * Entertainment Expenses * Tuition to Camps, Classes, etc. * Athletic or Recreational Fees * Auto Repair/Maintenance * Attendant Care * Rehabilitation * Pet Grooming/ Veterinarian Bills * Tickets to Concerts, Movies, Sporting Events, etc * Music Lessons * Maid Services * Home Modifications/Improvements * Field Trips/ Day Trips, etc. * Therapeutic Massage * Vehicle modifications to make accessible * HVAC Services * Attorney/Accountant/Financial Planning * Seminar/Training/Conference Expenses
Congratulations to all of our 2021 Impact Award recipients. Thank you for making an impact on the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Ilene Younger Qualkinbush
Achievement Award
Marissa Manlove, Noble/The Arc of Greater Indianapolis

Betty Williams Achievement Award
David Kent Orton, Noble/The Arc of Greater Indianapolis

The Arc of Indiana CEO Award
DDRS Director Kim Opsahl

The Arc of Indiana President’s Award
Mayor Dan Ridenour, City of Muncie

Self-Advocates of Indiana President’s Award
Michelle Percy, Carey Services

Champion Award
Sandy Allman, Bartholomew County Public Library

Outstanding Professional Award
Kim Harvey, Best Buddies Indiana

Outstanding DSP Award
Brandon Duncan, Stone Belt Arc

Darcus Nims Self-Advocate Award
Michaela (Mikey) Deputy

Family Advocate Award
Ken Cross, The Arc of Greater Boone County

Media Award
Holly Hays, IndyStar Social Services Reporter

Chapter Membership Award
The Arc of Bartholomew County & Noble/The Arc of Greater Indianapolis

Stay up to date by signing up to receive legislative updates from our Director of Public Policy, Hannah Carlock, and weekly updates on a wide range of issues in our e-newsletter. Sign up by visiting our website at arcind.org/get-involved/sign-up.