



The Arc of Colorado 2019 Chapter Report

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Honored Guests,

I can't believe that this is already my third annual meeting with The Arc of Colorado! It seems that time has flown by. I am so grateful for each of the relationships that I have built over the past few years. Getting to know The Arc community has been a privilege and a joy.

It has been an incredible year. So very much has been accomplished at The Arc of Colorado. In this past legislative session, 92% of our strong support bills were signed into law. In a very tight fiscal year, this was a wonderful accomplishment and it shows the legislature's long-standing commitment to prioritizing the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Each of us at the Arc of Colorado look forward to another year of working at the legislature to ensure a brighter future for Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A large portion of this last year has been devoted to our new strategic plan. I have spent much of my time working with our strategic planner and our strategic planning committee to determine the direction for the next three years of The Arc of Colorado. This has been an incredibly rewarding process and through it all I have been so lucky to have the direction of my board chair, Tonya Kelly. We are so hopeful that you will be as excited about our new direction as we are.

We are also excited to work on a bill that would eliminate the use of sub-minimum wage, through 14c certificates, in Colorado. In partnership with The Alliance and Disability Law Colorado, the bill will also provide supports to help further the state of employment for people with I/DD in Colorado and ensure that those currently employed in sub-minimum wage programs have a wide variety of options to access competitive employment at at-least minimum wage.

We anticipate that this year will be filled with even more budgetary constraints. This is why we need you and your communities to mobilize and actively participate to help end sub-minimum wage. Please sign up for our action alerts on our website and call and meet with your representatives. This year, we will be providing an opportunity to meet with your local representatives on the morning of our legislative luncheon. It is so important that you do so. Make ending sub-minimum wage a priority to you to ensure that it will be a priority for our Colorado State Legislature.

I look forward to the year ahead, with each of you. I truly could not be in better company. I stand on the shoulders of giants.

I am reminded every day of how important this work is and I am so thankful to be here. I invite you to celebrate the past with us today, and to energize yourself for the road ahead.

Cordially,



Christiano Sosa

OUR MISSION

As a human rights organization, The Arc of Colorado provides leadership opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to achieve their goals by influencing public policy, promoting integration through public awareness and community engagement, showcasing best practices of the chapter network, and collaborating with national, state and local organizations sharing the same values.

OUR WORK

- Influencing public policy to ensure the necessary supports and services are in place for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a common life
- Increasing public awareness of the rights and needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Supporting and developing local chapters
- Collaborating with national, state, and local organizations sharing the same values



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee:

Tonya Kelly- President *^>
Mitch Routon- Vice President
Randy Patrick- Past President
Ben Rhodes- Secretary~
Kelly Stahlman- Treasurer **

At Large Members:

Vicki Wray
Jill Accame
Corry Robinson +
Faye Tate *^>
Stone Anderson**>
Alex Peterson
Keith Larson
Jennifer Harris>

Chapter Representatives:

Oren “Von” Limbaugh- The Arc of Aurora **
Lynnelle Zackroff- The Arc of Adams County +~>
Jessica Wayt- The Arc Mesa~
Mika Kusar- The Arc of Southwest Colorado
Vincent Scott- The Arc of Weld County
Lynn Meyer- The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas Counties>
Tom Riley- ACL- Boulder *^>
Lori Thom- The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region *^>
Jeremy Casteel- The Arc of West Central Colorado ^
Kent Olson- AdvocacyDenver ^
Helen Pietranczyk- The Arc of Jefferson, Clear Creek, and Gilpin Counties~>
Maralina Schoenfelder- The Arc of Pueblo
Phil Beers- The Arc of Larimer County

- * indicates member of Governance Committee
- ** indicates a member of the Finance Committee
- + indicates a member of the nominating committee
- ^ Indicates a member of the bylaw review committee
- ~ indicates Calabrese Committee Member
- > indicates strategic planning committee member

STAFF

Christiano Sosa- Executive Director

Christiano has been with The Arc of Colorado since 2018. Prior to joining The Arc of Colorado, Christiano was the Director of Capacity Building and Philanthropic Partnerships at The Denver Foundation, a position he held for twelve years. Prior to that, he was Executive Director of the Northern Colorado AIDS Project in Ft. Collins where he engaged extensively in public policy advocacy for men, women, and children living with HIV.

Christiano is a Colorado Trust Fellow and former Commissioner for the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships. He has taught courses in "Wealth and Philanthropy", "Resource Development", and "The Student Oriented Field Experience" in the Masters of Nonprofit Management Program at Regis University.

Heidi Haines- Director of Advocacy

Heidi Haines has been with The Arc of Colorado since 2011. Heidi works as the Director of Advocacy and also serves as an advisor to SABE (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered), the National self advocacy organization for people with developmental disabilities. Heidi is a 2017 graduate of the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware Advanced Leadership Institute. Heidi is also 2016 graduate of the William and Mary Law Institute of Special Education Advocacy. Heidi served as a technology navigation fellow for The Arc of The United States in 2015 and 2016. Heidi has long demonstrated a passion for disability rights, an understanding of the critical issues, and the desire to collaborate with a wide range of advocacy and community groups in the state of Colorado and nationwide.

Abigail Negley- Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

Abigail has been with the Arc of Colorado since 2017. She is indispensable in our office including communications, policy, and advocacy referrals. Prior to becoming an employee, she was a volunteer with The Arc for six years during high school and college, and has developed a passion for advocating for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Abigail strongly believes that sound, bi-partisan policy can make a positive difference in the lives of people with I/DD. She is a 2018 graduate of the University of Denver with a Bachelor of Arts in French and Francophone Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Socio-Legal Studies.

GALVANIZING GRASSROOTS!



Board member and SABE vice president Vicki Wray at the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial in March. Vicky was in DC to advocate to federal representatives as a part of Disability Policy Seminar.

This year, our theme is: Galvanizing Grassroots!

Early predictions show another, even tighter economic year at the Colorado legislature. Help us to ensure that our efforts to pass legislation ending 14c certificate, sub-minimum wage practices in Colorado are a success!

What can you do?

- Sign up for our online advocacy platform, CQ engage to receive action alerts!
- Schedule meetings during our annual day at the capitol (Wednesday, February 26th) with your local legislators. (We will provide fact sheets and talking points)
 - Participate in our weekly public policy calls!

OPPORTUNITIES

Disability Policy Seminar

Disability Policy Seminar is a wonderful opportunity for self-advocates to practice advocacy within the realm of public policy. It is an opportunity to have their voices heard and to feel empowered. The Arc of Colorado was pleased to help send five self-advocates to the Seminar in 2019. We were joined by members of our board, community partners, and many individuals from The Arc Chapter network. Pictured: self-advocates Stone Anderson, Vicki Wray, Karie Valdez, and Julian wang pose in front of the Lincoln Memorial during seminar this year.



Testimony and Action at the State Legislature

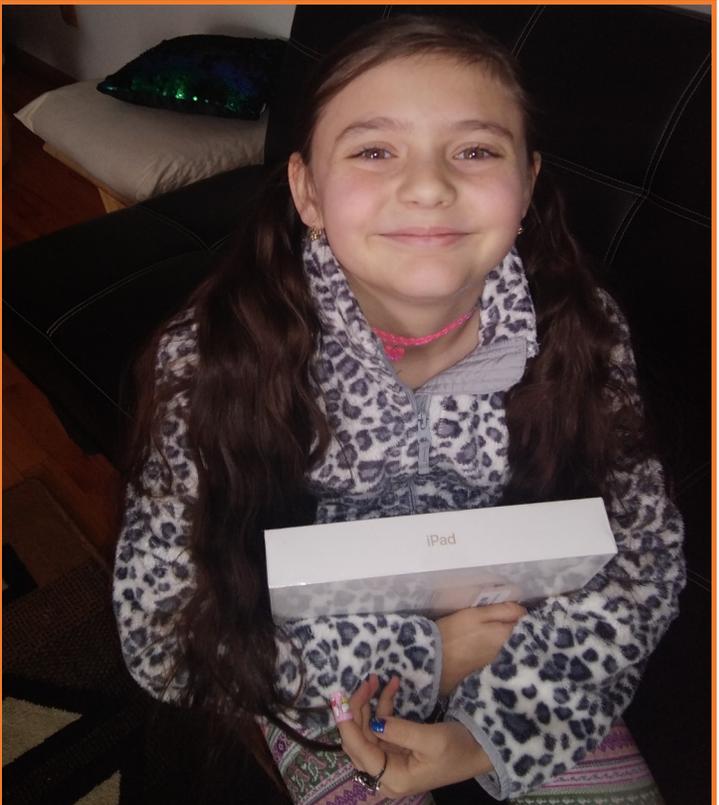
This year, the Arc provided more than 54 instances of testimony. We are always made stronger by testimony from chapters and self-advocates who have lived the stories that we tell. This year, we are hoping to also use our online advocacy platform to generate more stories for even more compelling testimony!



OPPORTUNITIES

Calabrese Life Opportunities Fund

Every year, the Arc of Colorado provides technology for applicants who demonstrate both a need for technology, and a measurable way that technology would help them to live with increased independence.



Aging Caregivers Conference

In June of this year, The Arc of Colorado partnered with The Arc of the United States to host a conference for individuals who work with aging caregivers. The purpose of the training was to stress the importance of future planning, and educate professionals about the Arc's tools for future planning.

AWARDS

Christiano was awarded the NCE rising star award for all of his accomplishments and his leadership at The Arc of Colorado. Carol Meredith and Craig Severa (also pictured) also won awards at the event. Colorado had a strong showing and three wonderful award winners! Thank you to Christiano, for all that you do!



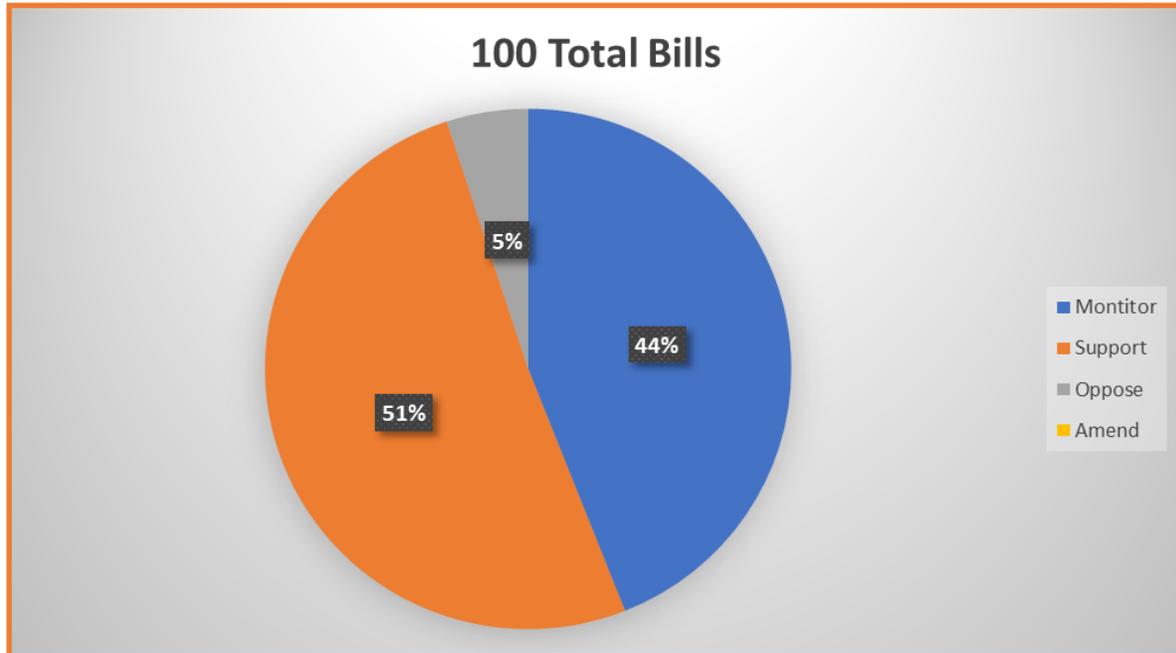
AWARDS

This year, The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region awarded Heidi Haines with the President's Award! She was commended for making self-advocacy one of the cornerstones of The Arc of Colorado, and her commitment to inclusion for people with I/DD, among other laudable accomplishments!



*Thank you, Heidi, for all of
your hard work and
dedication!*

PUBLIC POLICY



The above conveys bills that we tracked in the last session. This year, 100% of our strong support bills were made into law, 92% of our support bills were made into law, and 100% of our oppose bills died. Below: a group celebrates a voting right's bill's passage.



PUBLIC POLICY

The following is a brief description of each bill The Arc of Colorado strongly supported in the last legislative session. Each of these bills were signed into law.

HB19-1194: This bill, "School Discipline for Preschool through Second Grade" had four prime sponsors, Representatives Susan Lontine and Colin Larson, and Senators Kevin Priola and Rhonda Fields. This bill sets limitations on suspensions and expulsions for children in preschool, through to second grade, for children in state-funded, community-based preschool, school district, or charter schools. The bill also requires the state board to perform an annual review of data on suspensions and expulsions of students in preschool, kindergarten, first, and second grade.

HB19-1045: This bill, "Office of Public Guardianship Operation Conditions" had three prime sponsors, Senator Joanne Ginal and Representatives Marc Snyder and Matt Soper. The bill removes a previous condition requiring the commission and director of the Office of Public Guardianship to wait to carry out certain duties until the cash fund has received the 1.7 million dollars in gifts, grants, and donations.

HB19-1223: This bill, "Social Security Disability Application Assistance" had three prime sponsors, Senator Faith Winter and Representatives Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Colin Larson. The bill would allow participating counties to fund staff to help individuals currently enrolled in the Colorado Aid to the Needy and Disabled Program to apply for Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance.

SB19-222 This bill, "Individuals At Risk of Institutionalization" had four prime sponsors, Senators Pete Lee and Tammy Story and Representatives Daneya Esgar and Lois Landgraf. The bill is an effort at prevention to help the state in the crisis of competency that we have recently seen. Amongst other things, it requires the department of health care policy and financing to develop measurable outcomes to monitor efforts to prevent individuals on Medicaid from becoming part of the criminal justice system. It also requires the department to make a determination considering the addition of a possible waiver aimed at providing services for those with severe mental health problems.

SB19-223: This bill, "Actions Related to Competency to Proceed" had four prime sponsors, Senators Pete Lee and Robert "Bob" Gardner, and Representative Mike Weissman and Lois Landgraf. The bill clarifies and expedites various elements of the competency procedure that is enacted after the question of competency is raised for a particular defendant. The bill also directs the department of human services to engage in multiple measures with the hopes of bettering tackle issues surrounding competency.

2020 POLICY AGENDA

Funding and policy changes to strengthen the CO Medicaid State Plan, state programs, and HCBS Medicaid waivers for people with disabilities to include support for:

- Changes in Colorado statute, where needed, to comply with the requirements established in federal law for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS);
- Therapeutic, out-of-home placement, and intensive treatment options for children with I/DD and dual diagnosis/secondary diagnosis of serious health, mental health, and behavioral conditions;
- Full implementation of Colorado's Olmstead Plan including implementation of strategies for integrated competitive employment;
- Phase out and permanently end the use of sub-minimum wage employment in Colorado and provide necessary supports to eliminate the need for sub-minimum wage employment through the advancement of opportunities for meaningful employment at or above the Colorado minimum wage;
- Fair and equal access to personal care services for all people currently receiving long term services and supports. Access should be at a level that meets individual needs and not be limited based on specific waiver participation;
- Increased funding for respite and other services needed to maintain family stability;
- Expansion of *Cross-System Behavioral Health Crises Pilots*;
Accelerated Medicaid waiver simplification with the purpose of creating single, easily accessible HCBS waivers for 1) all eligible children and 2) all eligible adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Each waiver should further access to quality services and supports when and where needed throughout their lifetimes;
- Increased Supported Living Services and equitable access to services across all LTSS with rate increases;
- Consumer and participant directed service delivery options in all HCBS/LTSS waivers.

Colorado students with disabilities have a legal right to free, appropriate and inclusive educational opportunities in all settings within the least restrictive environment. Colorado must provide for:

- Adequate funding, professional development, and staffing resources for public schools for inclusive, student-centered programs for all students;
- Alternatives to harmful disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion for young students and requirements that schools work to de-escalate minor school infractions rather than call for police department assistance.
- Expansion of Inclusive Higher Education programs across Colorado; and encourage future and current programs to attract and support students with disabilities and I/DD,
- Elimination of corporal punishment in public schools that receive federal funding;
- Special education services provided in the least restrictive and most inclusive setting by qualified teachers, staff and therapists for all eligible students including an appropriate continuum of services, para-professional support, and related supports including transportation;
- Adequate and quality educational supports to ensure appropriate and accountable progress;
- Adequate medical, nursing, and behavioral support services (with appropriate staffing) for students with complex needs;
- Meaningful transition services and a strong pipeline of employers for students with disabilities that are person-centered and that prepare them for continuing education resulting in competitive integrated employment, and successful community living;
- Achieve equal access to appropriate supports and services in publicly funded education services for student age birth through 21.

PROPOSED 2020 POLICY AGENDA

Protection of civil rights for people with disabilities including:

- Promoting alternatives (e.g., health-care proxies, advance directives, supported decision-making, powers of attorney, notarized statements, representation agreements, etc.) in favor of permanent, restrictive protective arrangements; guardianship policies should respect the rights of people with disabilities to manage their own affairs with informal assistance and guidance from family, friends, and others. If guardianship is essential, it should be limited to the fewest restrictions necessary for the shortest amount of time and tailored to the individual's specific capacities and needs, always with a presumption in favor of limited rather than full guardianship;
- Promote development of policies, procedures, and funding to ensure that the preferences, needs, and complaints expressed by people with IDD are respected, honored, and enforced effectively to enhance quality of life;
- Affordable, safe, accessible, integrated, and community-based housing options that promote independence, freedom, authority, and support to exercise control over their housing, reflect personal preferences and styles, and are free from housing discrimination;
- School discipline policies that provide positive behavioral supports for students with disabilities that avoid trauma, seclusion, restraint, and involvement of law enforcement;
- Appropriate accommodations, modifications, and preventative measures designed to support individuals with disabilities in the criminal justice system.



EVENTS

Wings for All

The Arc of Colorado once again hosted our “Wings for All” event twice in 2019. The event gives children with disabilities and their families the opportunity to go on a “test run” and see what it is like to go through the airport. With the help of United Airlines, 168 families experienced navigating terminals, airport security, boarding the plane, a short, “flight” experience, and the de-boarding process.



What does Wings for All Mean?

“As a mother of a kid with special needs, I tend to try to shield Cooper from the negative people who don’t understand the world of autism. That means keeping him away from some things we take for granted. I now know that I want to be able to show Cooper (pictured below in front of the train at DIA) the world, and it is because of this event that I feel confident enough to do so. “- Jessica Castle



Jennifer (board member), Heidi, and Christiano at Wings for All!

EVENTS



The Arc of Colorado, in collaboration with Alliance, hosted a successful annual legislative luncheon hosting 500 attendees, 64 of which were legislators. This year, Mitch Routon, Vice President of our board, was our speaker. We celebrated the many accomplishments of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the Colorado State Legislature’s commitment to bettering the lives of people with I/DD through measurable legislative impact. Christiano, Heidi, and Abigail are pictured at the luncheon.



The Arc of Colorado hosted our eighth annual Achieve with us Colorado Film Festival! The event helps to spread community awareness and was held during Developmental Disabilities Awareness month. This year, 260 attendees came to learn more about the impact that people with disabilities have on the world. The Arc of Colorado showed a film by local self-advocate and filmmaker, Sam Lawrence. Heidi and Abigail presented the film at the Arc of the United States’ convention with Sam, as well. Heidi and our long time film-festival volunteer, Ann Rosart are pictured above.

EVENTS

Special Events

The Arc of Colorado staff and board members attending many events this year in support of the community. A few highlights are captured here.



Christiano Sosa, Tonya Kelly (board president) and Jennifer Harris (board member) at the arc Thrift Gala.



Heidi Haines, her daughter Ava, and Kelly Stahlman (board member) meet with participants in Colorado's IN Higher Education Pilot Program!



Mitch Routon, Heidi Haines, and Kelly Stahlman pose at this year's legislative luncheon, where Mitch was The Arc of Colorado's guest speaker.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Planning for the Next 3 years

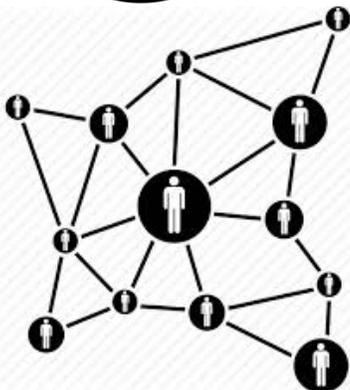
This year, the Arc of Colorado, with the help of La Piana consulting, staff, board, and the strategic planning committee, engaged in strategic planning. Through the planning process, the Arc of Colorado identified four key action strategies:



Amplify the voice of individuals with I/DD, their families, and The Arc of Colorado by strengthening self-advocacy, emphasizing integration, and partnering to build awareness for those not connected in readily served areas, especially those who will bring greater diversity, equity, and inclusion to our efforts



Focusing Our Legislative and Policy Efforts on the highest impact efforts we have the capacity to support in the short and long-term



Leveraging the Power of Our Chapters to showcase best and emerging practices and keep our movement relevant

STRATEGIC PLAN CONTINUED



Working in Collaboration with other partners, pilots, and coalitions when we have clear goals and measurable outcomes for people with I/DD

LOOKING FORWARD

Upcoming Projects

SABE 2020

The Arc of Colorado is proud to partner with Speaking for Ourselves Colorado, in conjunction with The Coleman Conference, to host the 2020 conference of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (S.A.B.E.). The SABE conference is held every two years and cities are required to put in bids. For the 2020 conference, Denver won that bid! We are very excited to bring this opportunity to self-advocates across the nation and welcome them to our state. The conference is a wonderful opportunity for self-advocates to collaborate on the issues that matter most to them.

Since last year, Speaking for Ourselves Colorado has been hard at work. The group has identified a date (October 1st-3rd), a venue (The Denver Convention Center), and a theme: Moving Mountains, for the convention. As the Arc of Colorado serves as SFO's fiscal sponsor, Heidi Haines and SFO president Julian Wang have been able to secure sponsorships for the event, as well. You can visit the conference website for more information and to register at: sabeconference.org

LOOKING FORWARD

Upcoming Projects

CQ Engage

The Arc of Colorado is very excited to continue its efforts to grow CQ Engage, a public policy advocacy website for our members. The URL will interface and connect with our existing website, but can be reached directly through the following URL: <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>

CQ engage is currently used by the Arc of the United States to create action alerts and reach out to their advocacy network about relevant public policy issues. We will be using the platform similarly, but to highlight issues in our state in particular. We hope that this tool will help increase our efficacy, mobilizing our base to pass and block important legislation. Please subscribe to our mailing list available on our website!

This year will be a tight budget year and The Arc of Colorado is working on some very ambitious legislation that will likely result in huge fiscal notes. If we want to get this done, we **MUST** rely on the strength of our grassroots network. Please sign up and encourage the people you know to sign up for our action alerts so that we may come to this session with the best ground-game the Arcs in Colorado have ever seen!

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the homepage of CQ Engage for The Arc of Colorado. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>. The website features a navigation menu with links for HOME, ELECTION, and THE ARCO CO. The main heading reads "Achieve with us." Below this, there are three main sections:

- For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**: A paragraph states that The Arc of Colorado believes all people have moral and civil rights. Below this is a bulleted list of goals: influencing public policy, increasing public awareness, supporting local chapters, and collaborating with other organizations. A call to action at the bottom of this section says "All people in Colorado with developmental disabilities will have choices in how they live, learn, work, worship and play. Contact us today to learn more about how we can help."
- Find your elected officials**: A section with a text input field and a "GO ►" button, intended for users to look up elected officials by ZIP code.
- Subscribe to our mailing list**: A section with a text input field and a "GO" button, intended for users to provide their email address for upcoming engagements.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar, task view, and various application icons, with the system tray displaying the time as 2:40 PM on 10/17/2018.

LOOKING FORWARD

Goals for the Future

Public Policy

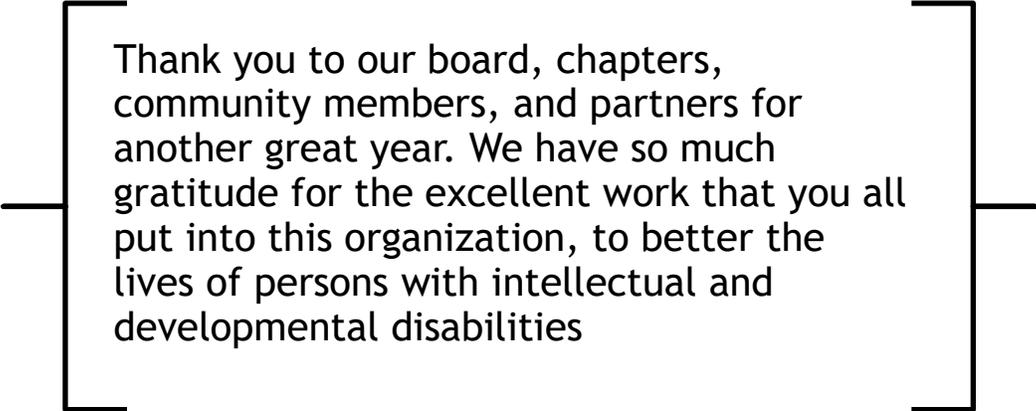
We will continue to support people with I/DD and community members through testimony to the legislature and through work at the legislature. During Legislative Session we will continue to focus on building bi-partisan relationships with new legislators and creating bi-partisan solutions to problems. In addition, The Arc of Colorado will continue its commitment to stakeholder work at the Departmental level. The Arc of Colorado will participate in policy workgroups and will provide input on topics impacting disability throughout the coming year.

Technology

The Arc of Colorado is working hard to integrate new technology into our organization. In addition to CQ engage, we are also working to integrate further technology into our work. Our goal is to create accessible ways for our community to be involved with policy initiatives. We are also adding in remote advocacy solutions for rural networks that will help us to provide high-quality advocacy to more families.

Chapter Development

The Arc of Colorado will continue to offer opportunities for chapter development. We are always looking for new ways to support the chapters and look forward to your input as we collaborate with other organizations to bring new things your way!



Thank you to our board, chapters, community members, and partners for another great year. We have so much gratitude for the excellent work that you all put into this organization, to better the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities