



The Arc of Colorado- Annual Chapter Report



2020

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Honored Guests,

This year's annual report may look a bit different than it has in previous years. Indeed, the world looks a bit different than it has in previous years. Where before, we dedicated page after page to special events and awards, this year, we leave those pages blank. Whereas in previous years, we touted legislative successes, in this year, we are simply grateful for what has not been lost, not what has been gained. You won't see photos of us out in the community. You will not see pictures from the much anticipated SABE 2020. This meeting, unlike any meeting before it, will not be held in the physical company of one another.

In spite of, or perhaps, because of these changes, we invite you to commune with one another in whatever way you can. This year was a difficult one for everyone, but especially, for those people that we serve. Persistent issues around loneliness and isolation have been worsened. We face enormous budget cuts and threats to the long-term viability of our systems. We see rampant bias and ableism impacting the people we serve, changed by language of scarcity and medicalization. However, in this time, we have also found connection from afar. We have implored upon our legislators and political figures to put adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities first. We have fought against policies that endanger the civil rights of the individuals and families we serve. Through all of this, we have managed to come back better and stronger.

We will be faced with another tight budget year and more cuts to valuable programs serving not only the I/DD community, but intersecting communities. In this spirit, we will continue to fight for the civil rights of people with disabilities and our community. We will be mindful of intersectionality while prioritizing the community that we are charged with supporting. We invite each of you to join us in that fight. It is an honor and a privilege to have you all as partners in this work. It is our most sincere wish that each of you feels invited to take part in the legislative process. We look forward to another strange and different session with the knowledge that we will persevere and prevail.

Thank you, each and every one of you, for what you contribute to this organization. Please take a moment to look back on what has happened, to take stock of our moment, and to move on with gratitude towards the future.

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
Lori Thom- Secretary*^>
Kelly Stahlman- Treasurer **

At Large Members:

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

Chapter Representatives:

Oren “Von” Limbaugh- The Arc of Aurora **
Lynnelle Zackroff- The Arc of Adams County +~>
Jessica Wayt- The Arc Mesa~
Charles Spence- The Arc of South-west Colorado
Vincent Scott- The Arc of Weld County
Lynn Meyer- The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas Counties>
Ben Rhodes- ACL- Boulder
Jeramy 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
Danielle Coulter- The Arc of the Central Mountains

- * 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.

Abigail Negley- Public Policy and Advocacy Manager

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.

SAY THANKS, MOVE FORWARD



Board member and SABE Vice President Vicki Wray at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in March of 2019. Vicki was in DC to advocate to federal representatives as a part of Disability Policy Seminar.

This year, our theme is: Say Thanks, Move Forward

Early predictions show another, even tighter economic year at the Colorado legislature. We know that we will have to fight to prevent vital cuts to key programs. What can you do?

- Sign up for our online advocacy platform, CQ engage to receive action alerts!
- Get to know newly elected members of the House and Senate and educate them on our issues!
 - Participate in our weekly public policy calls!

OPPORTUNITIES

Testimony and Action at the State Legislature

This year, The Arc provided testimony a bit differently. After the closure of the legislature, The Arc of Colorado provided much of its testimony remotely. We are always made stronger by testimony from chapters and self-advocates who have lived the stories that we tell. We invite you to provide testimony, be it remote or in-person, in the 2021 session.

Special Session Advocacy

Legislative session was briefly put on hold as a result of COVID-19. In this time, The Arc of Colorado worked with the Governor and his office as well as the Joint Budget Committee on a variety of issues including: budget cuts, medical rationing, and retainer payments for providers.

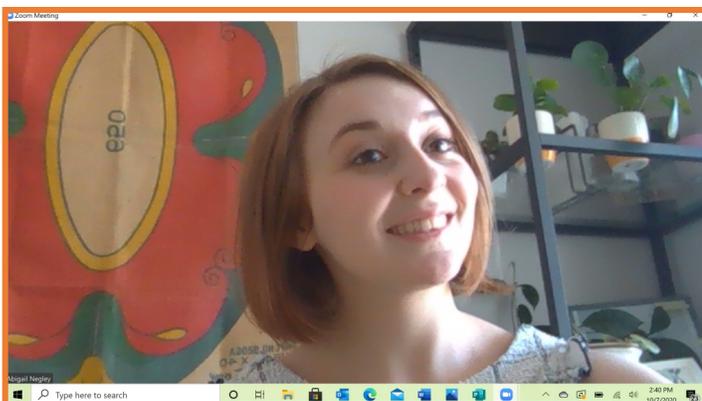
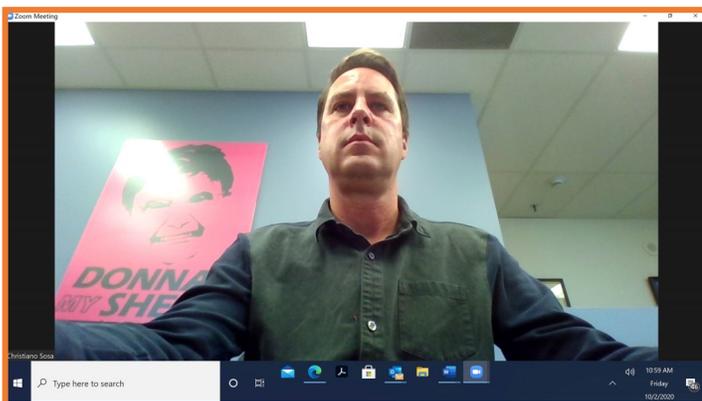


Members of the Colorado State House of Representatives legislature reconvene in June, with masks, to continue the odd legislative session.

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.



Adapting to working from home

Like many of you, the Arc of Colorado staff began working from home in March. This has provided new ways to connect with and foster community. We have benefitted from the opportunity to lead by example and remind others of the importance of safety during COVID 19.

PUBLIC POLICY

The information below conveys bills that we tracked in the last session. As a result of COVID-19, none of our strongly supported bills were passed into law. In order to produce our annual scorecard, we also identified five priority bills that did see final passage.

Pre-COVID19 Priority Bills

End the Waiting List: While this bill was not formally introduced at the legislature, it was a priority bill for us at the beginning of this legislative session. The bill proposed eliminating the waiting list for Colorado's most comprehensive waiver for adults with I/DD, the Developmental Disabilities Waiver. About 3,000 Coloradans are currently on the waiting list for this waiver. This bill would commit funds to reducing the waitlist by about 500 people a year over the course of six years until the waitlist was finally eliminated. This legislation was not introduced as the fiscal impacts of the bill were no longer realistic as the state plummeted into debt. In the first year alone, Colorado would need to commit an estimated \$26 million to the effort which is impossible at this time.

HB20-1263: This bill, entitled, Eliminate Sub-minimum Wage Employment was sponsored by Senator Julie Gonzales and Representative Yadira Caraveo and Rod Pelton. The bill would have required a five-year phase out of sub-minimum wage employment. All current holders of 14c certificates, which allow employers to pay less than minimum wage to workers with disabilities, would be required to submit a phase-out plan to the Colorado Department of Labor. The bill also created a requirement for the Employment First Advisory Partnership to study and determine the barriers to ending sub-minimum wage employment and to develop recommendations to successfully move those in sub-minimum wage employment to competitive, integrated employment. The bill also included a variety of employment services to be added and expanded to the services currently offered by the state Medicaid department. Notably, the bill called for an expansion of the Medicaid Buy-In program. This bill carried a very high fiscal note related to the services and supports it required. Without these services, the transition out of sub-minimum wage employment risked being unsuccessful for a higher number of individuals. Therefore, the bill was postponed indefinitely.

HB20-1314: This bill, Behavioral Health Crisis Response Training was sponsored by Representative Mary Young and Representative Rod Pelton. The bill directs the department of Health Care Policy and Financing to issue a request for proposals to contract with an entity who could provide training around a model of comprehensive, wraparound care for individuals with co-occurring diagnosis of an intellectual and developmental disability and a behavioral health disorders. Community Centered Boards, mental health centers, school districts, and Program Approved Service Agencies could nominate up to 50 individuals to go through this training, which could also be offered via tele-health. Though the fiscal note for this bill for the next two fiscal years were under \$100,000, given the current financial situation of the state, it was impossible to commit these funds.

HB20-1331: This bill, Transportation Services for Medicaid Recipients was sponsored by Representative Colin Larson and Representative Monica Duran. This bill required the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to implement an expedited provider enrollment approval process for Medicaid providers providing transportation services. The bill also required the Department to develop a stakeholder process to identify barriers and solutions to transportation issues impacting Medicaid service recipients.

PUBLIC POLICY

The following is a brief description of each bill The Arc of Colorado strongly supported in the last legislative session. Both Pre-COVID and Post-COVID bills are outlined.

Post-COVID-19 Priority Bills

HB20-1312: This bill, Behavioral Health Training Requirements Educator License, was sponsored by Senators Nancy Todd and Dennis Hisey and Representatives Dafna Michaelson-Jenet and Brianna Titone. The bill creates a 10 hour training requirement for behavioral health training that is culturally responsive and trauma informed, out of the 90 hour training requirement currently required for educator license renewal. This applies also to teacher preparation programs for teachers undergoing initial educator licensure.

HB20- 1332: This bill, Prohibit Housing Discrimination Source of Income, was sponsored by Senator Rhonda Fields and Representatives Leslie Herod and Dominique Jackson. The bill adds discrimination based on type of income to the list of unfair housing practices for landlords with more than three rentals. The landlord also cannot discriminate based on the presence of a third-party contract required as a condition of receiving public housing assistance. As many of the individuals we work with rely on family or government assistance to obtain housing, this bill was a critical bill for us to support.

HB20-1128: This bill, Educator Education Requirements Special Education was sponsored by Senators Kevin Priola and Rachel Zenzinger and representatives James Wilson and Brianna Buentello. The bill requires 10 clock hours of education related to laws and practices surrounding special education for license renewal for teachers, special service providers, principals, and administrators. Additionally, the bill requires the educator preparation program, alternative teacher program, and alternative principal preparation program to provide education related to federal laws surrounding special education.

SB20-100: This bill, Repeal the Death Penalty, was sponsored by Senators Julie Gonzales and Jack Tate and Representatives Jeni-James Arndt and Adrienne Benavidez. The bill repeals the death penalty in Colorado for offenses charged on or after July 1, 2020. While the Supreme Court decided in *Atkins V. Virginia* to allow states to set their own standards for executing individuals with I/DD who had committed a crime, the statute is by no means fool proof or uniform protection from state to state. Colorado has a long history of executing individuals with developmental disabilities and currently, individuals on death row in other states are being denied an *Atkins* hearing. As a civil rights organization, our support on this bill was imperative.

SB20-217: This bill, Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity Act was sponsored by Senators Rhonda Fields and Leroy Garcia and Representatives Leslie Herod and Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez. Among other provisions, the bill requires all law enforcement to issue body cameras to officers. It creates a registry to prevent other law enforcement agencies from hiring officers who repeatedly engage in acts of abuse, and allows the Colorado State Constitution to be enforceable. About half of the individuals in America who are killed by law enforcement have a disability. Those with I/DD are no stranger to police brutality. Again, as a civil rights organization, our support of this bill was critical to our mission.

2021 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:

- Preserving and maintain current funding levels for I/DD services and supports;
- Changes in Colorado statute, where needed, to comply with the requirements established in federal law for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS);
- Full implementation of Colorado's Olmstead Plan including implementation of strategies for integrated competitive employment;
- 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;
- Fair and equal access to behavioral health services for adults and children with co-occurring intellectual and/or developmental disability and mental health diagnoses in the public and private insurance systems;
- 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;
- Consumer and participant directed service delivery options in all HCBS/LTSS waivers;
- Increasing the accessibility and availability of appropriate, person-centered technology and create billable services for technology utilization and training and support in order to bridge the digital divide;
- Increasing the accessibility and availability of telehealth services for Medicaid recipients;
- Increased Supported Living Services and equitable access to services across all LTSS with rate increases;
- 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;
- 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.

Policy Measures Prompted by COVID 19

- Ensuring that ample and proper personal protective equipment is supplied to those who provide and receive services during any health emergency so that services are provided in the safest possible manner;
- Retaining flexibilities and codifying changes in rules and processes that, based on community feedback, have proved essential to maintaining public health as a result of COVID-19;
- Maintaining funding for respite and other services needed to sustain family stability, including retainer payments for these programs that provide such services;
- Expanding the Cross-System Behavioral Health Crises Pilots to address the increased behavioral health need as a result of COVID-19 and any future public health crisis;
- Hazard pay or bonuses for all direct care staff and other related personnel who work directly with individuals with IDD, their families, and caregivers in their homes or in other residential and/or day programs.

2021 POLICY AGENDA

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;
- 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;
- Equal access to technology and technology supports for students with I/DD;
- 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;
- Elimination of corporal punishment in public schools that receive federal funding;
- 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;
- Preservation and maintenance of funding for Inclusive Higher Education programs across Colorado; and encouragement of future and current programs to attract and support students with disabilities and I/DD.

Policy Measures Prompted by COVID-19

- Require schools to implement proper safety measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19;
- Parity and flexibility for students with I/DD who, because of possible health complications, may suffer more adverse health effects from the contraction of COVID-19 and therefore, require remote learning options;
- Applicable person-centered contingency plans included in Individualized Education Plans and amendments are regularly provided and followed for students with I/DD during the pandemic.

2021 POLICY AGENDA

Protection of civil rights for people with disabilities including:

- Equitable opportunities, rights and protections are afforded to all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and caregivers;
- Dismantling of historical institutions that promote systemic racism and negatively impact persons with disabilities of color, their caregivers, and family;
- 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;
- Equal access to medical information and treatment by ensuring that: 1) all communications are tailored to meet the needs of the individual receiving treatment and/or the guardian; and 2) the appropriate treatment is determined in the context of a person's overall unique medical history and not based on the person's diagnosis of a disability.

Policy Measures Prompted by COVID-19

- Protections for people with disabilities that ensure that they are not discriminated against during considerations for life-saving treatments and other necessary medical care, even in the event of medical shortage;
- Patients with IDD who require help with the provision of care are allowed support professionals in hospital, clinical, behavioral, and other health settings.

EVENTS

Legislative Luncheon- Just in Time!

The Arc of Colorado, in collaboration with Alliance, hosted a successful annual legislative luncheon hosting 500 attendees, 64 of which were legislators. This year, Kris Housel of The Arc of Weld County was our speaker. We celebrated the many accomplishments of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and the Colorado State Legislature's commitment to bettering the lives of people with I/DD through measurable legislative impact. This year, Heidi Haines and Abigail Negley also provided a legislative bootcamp to provide information on the legislative process and getting involved in legislative advocacy.



STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan In Action

Last year, we unveiled our strategic plan for the next three years. This year, we want to provide you an update on our progress within this plan. Please read below for a refresher on our strategic plan, and accomplishments under each area.



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

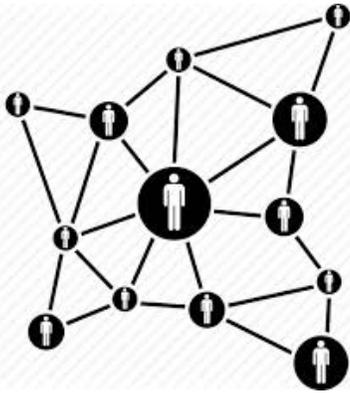
- Continued work with SFO
- Diversified our board
- Worked on equity initiatives statewide through the Community of Practice and the Colorado Equity Alliance



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

- The Arc of Colorado significantly cut down their bill involvement this year to sharpen our focus and deepen our impact
- The Arc of Colorado has increased the number of bills coming directly from our organization

STRATEGIC PLAN CONTINUED



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

- The Arc of Colorado continues to use our network to the best of their strengths, relying on chapters as subject matter experts and integrating their input
- The Arc of Colorado has created legislation this year as a result of input directly from advocates from chapters- an organizational first



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

- We continue our Sub-Minimum Wage legislation in partnership with Disability Law Colorado and the Alliance
- Working alongside our partners at DLC, CCDC, Global Down Syndrome Foundation, and the Governor's office, The Arc of Colorado helped to successfully ensure that the governor would issue an executive order preventing medical rationing

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 interfaces and connects with our existing website, but can be reached directly through the following URL: <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>

CQ engage is helps us to create action alerts and reach out to our advocacy networks about relevant public policy issues. 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 with the URL <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>. The website features a navigation bar with links for HOME, ELECTION, and THE ARCO CO. The main heading is "Achieve with us." Below this, there are three content sections:

- For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The Arc of Colorado believes that: All people have moral and civil rights providing them with opportunities to love, work, play, learn and worship in communities where they choose to live. All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have inherent value with individual strengths and abilities, are equal before the law and must be treated with dignity and respect.

 - 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

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**

Lookup your elected officials and candidates. Just enter your ZIP code to get started.
- Subscribe to our mailing list**

Provide us with your email address and we'll let you know about upcoming engagements, etc.

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LOOKING FORWARD

Goals for the Future

Public Policy

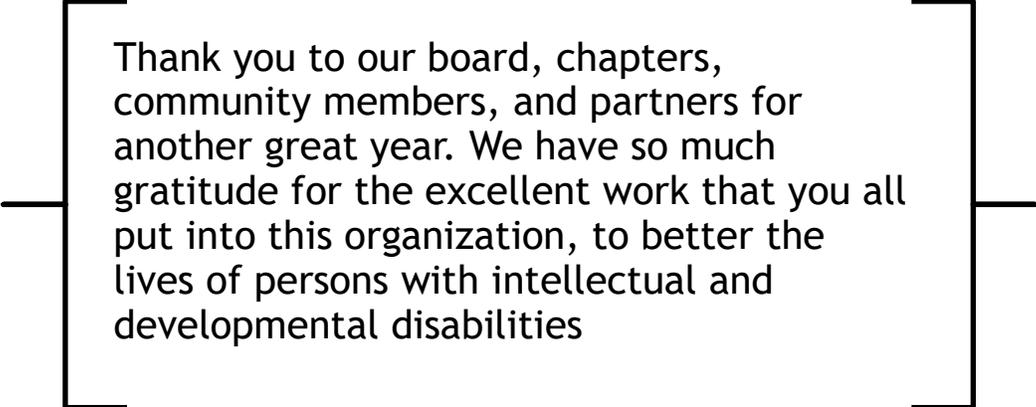
We will continue to support people with I/DD and community members through testimony to the Legislature and through work at the Legislature. During Legislative Session we will continue to focus on building bi-partisan relationships with new legislators and create bi-partisan solutions to problems. In 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