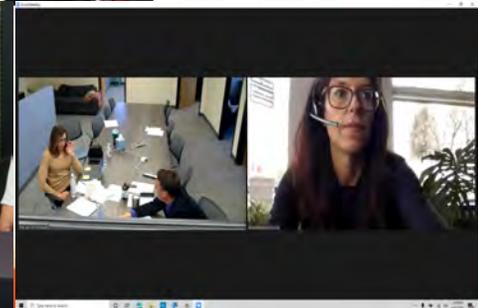


2021 Annual Report



GREETINGS!



(303) 864-9334



1580 Logan Street
Ste 730
Denver, CO 80203



csosa@thearcofco.org



www.thearcofco.org

A Letter From our Executive Director



Dear Honored Guests,

It has been an incredible year.

We followed our programmatic strategies using our trusty road-map and listened to our hearts and community. We were rewarded with *a perfect legislative session* in which our five priority bills became law. Special thanks to all of those who testified and lobbied in support of our bills. With your hard work, dedication, passion and mobilization, the year that began in a climate of uncertainty ended with our state passing major legislation, some years and decades in the making, in support and advancement of the rights of Coloradans with disabilities.

We also saw 667 new enrollments to the Developmental Disabilities waiver!

We accomplished this while also focusing our efforts on Covid-19 vaccine mobilization. After months of work in trying to prioritize people with disabilities in the vaccine schedule, we were successful in getting people with disabilities prioritized in Phase 1.b.3 which started March 5, 2021! Local chapters of The Arc stepped up and established pop-up clinics to distribute vaccines to the disability community.

We did this as a team of course! A new team here at the Arc of Colorado, with two new staff who joined us this year: Jennifer Levin, Esq., our fearless Director of Public Policy and Jane Johnston, our interim Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator!

We look forward to the year ahead, with each of you. We are reminded every day of how important this work is and we invite you to celebrate the past with us today, and to energize yourself for the road ahead.

With gratitude,

Christiano Sosa,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Executive Director



MISSION / WORK / STRATEGY



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 MISSION ◀

Achieve with us.

The Arc®

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

The banner features the Arc logo at the top, followed by the text 'Achieve with us.' in a small font. Below that is the large 'The Arc' logo with a registered trademark symbol. Underneath is the tagline 'For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities' in italics. At the bottom, a dark grey bar contains the text 'BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION' in white capital letters.

- We influence public policy to ensure the necessary supports and services are in place for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a common life.
- We increase public awareness of the rights and needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- We support and develop local chapters.
- We collaborate with national, state, and local organizations sharing the same values.

▶ OUR WORK

▶ OUR STRATEGY

Amplifying the voice of individuals with IDD, 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.

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



Please visit
www.thearcofco.org
for more information.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

(303) 864 9334 | 1580 LOGAN STREET, STE 730 | DENVER CO 80203
8020

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:

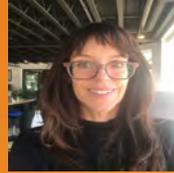
Vicki Wray
Jill Accame**
Corry Rosenberg +
Faye Tate Wilson ^
Stone Anderson
Keith Larsen ** *
Jennifer Harris ^
Brooke Dorsey-Holliman

Chapter Representatives:

Oren “Von” Limbaugh- The Arc of Aurora *^
Lynnelle Zackroff- The Arc of Adams County ^+~
Jessica Wayt- The Arc Mesa County~
Jay Wood- The Arc of Southwest Colorado
Vincent Scott- The Arc of Weld County
Lynn Meyer- The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas Counties^
Ben Rhodes- ACL- Boulder~
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
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

STAFF



Christiano Sosa - Executive Director

Christiano has been with The Arc of Colorado since 2017. 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.

Jennifer Levin - Director of Public Policy

Jennifer Levin graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a major in political science and went on to the University of Alabama to earn her law degree. As a parent of two boys with disabilities, Jennifer has devoted the past two decades to advancing the rights of children with disabilities in the school setting.

It was a natural transition for Jennifer to go from parent advocate for members in her community to an attorney with Disability Law Colorado, the state's protection and advocacy system. Jennifer served Disability Law Colorado as an Equal Justice Works Fellow and later moved into position of Education Team Leader.

Jennifer has represented individuals in civil rights complaints against various agencies and businesses throughout Colorado. She has taken on legislative action, disability rights trainings, and investigations into allegations of abuse and neglect in state run facilities serving people with disabilities. Currently, in her position with The Arc of Colorado as the Director of Public Policy, Jennifer remains dedicated to working towards implementing public policy that will promote and protect the civil and human rights of people with disabilities throughout the state.

Jane Johnston - Interim Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

Jane is a recent addition to The Arc of Colorado team coming on board in February 2021. Jane has a passion for working with the community and has interned with the ACLU of Colorado and refugee and asylum seeker organizations locally here in Denver. Jane comes to us with a Bachelor's Degree of Social Work and with it a dedication to working for the IDD community. Working in the legal field for over 19 years, Jane offers her organizational experience and managerial skills to further the work here at The Arc of Colorado.



NAVIGATING THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Along with our partners, stakeholders, state department staff, and fearless legislators, The Arc of Colorado and all of the local chapters of The Arc were 100% successful in our collective efforts!

PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA 2021 SUCCESSES



FOCUS

FIVE PRIORITY BILLS



After extensive lobbying, stakeholder work and intensive work with our collaborative partnerships, all five of our priority bills passed into law this session:



AMPLIFY

SB21-0399 Elimination of Subminimum Wage



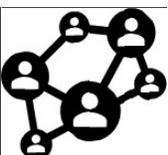
COLLABORATE

SB21-075 Supported Decision-Making Agreement

SB21-1881 Ballot Access for Voters with Disabilities

HB21-11661 Behavioral Health Crisis Response Training

HB21-11871 Long Term Services and Support Case Management Redesign



LEVERAGE

Joint Budget Committee: Developmental Disability Waiver: The Arc of Colorado is proud to have partnered with several groups to push the Joint Budget Committee to release 667 new enrollments in the Developmental Disabilities Comprehensive waiver chipping away at the 3,000-person waitlist! We are working with local chapters to ensure folks know the slots are available and how to sign-up. As part of these efforts, we worked with the department on a "Myth Buster" document/memo issued by HCPF and we promoted a plain-language document explaining the process and importance of signing up for the released enrollments.



PUBLIC POLICY 2021

As a human rights organization The Arc of Colorado promotes and protects the human rights of people with IDD and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetime. We do this in part by influencing public policy, including legislation, and work with state agencies. We focus our legislative and policy efforts on the highest impact efforts we have the capacity to support in the short and long term.



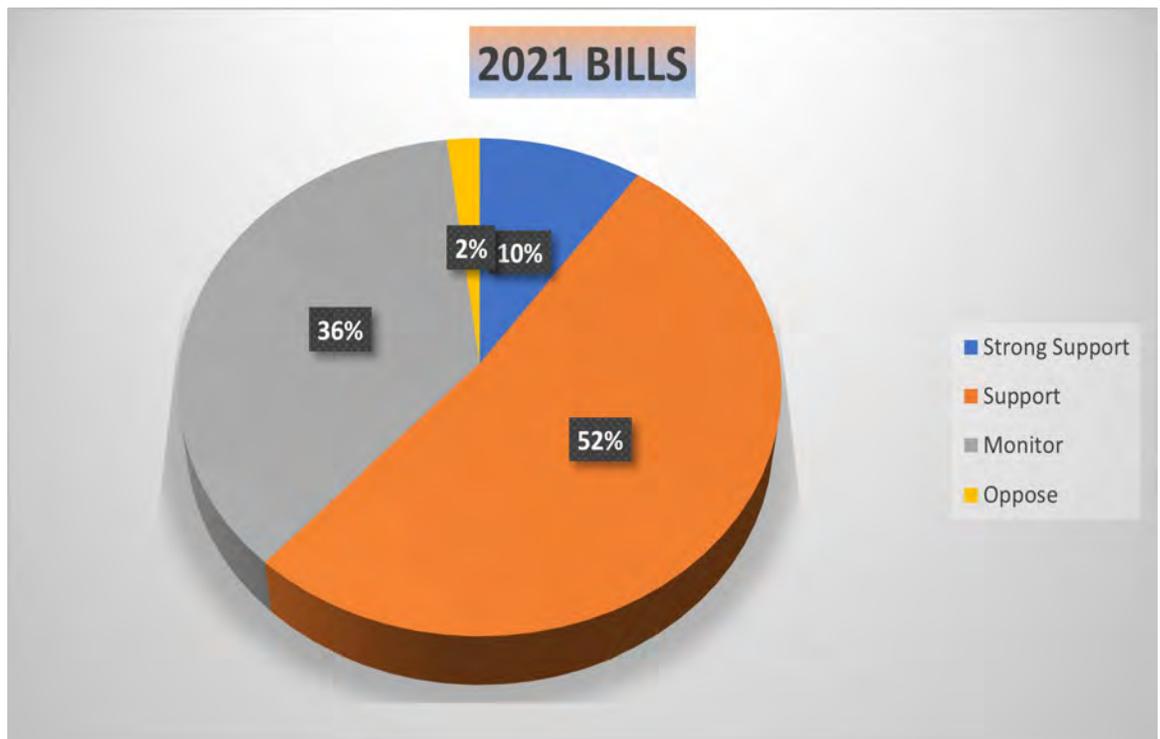
Through our public policy efforts, we amplified the voices of individuals with IDD and their families, strengthened self-advocacy, emphasized integration, and partnered to build awareness for those not connected in readily served areas.



By Focusing our legislative and policy efforts on the highest impact efforts, we built capacity to support legislation in the short and long term and enjoyed success in this year’s session!

The 2021 Colorado Legislative session began in a climate of uncertainty. Due to COVID protocols that required distancing and virtual testimony and the nation’s economic concerns and fear that any bill with a fiscal note may not make it to the Governor’s desk, many organizations, advocates, and community members were unsure how far their efforts to promote legislation for the disability community would go. In the end, there was cause for celebration as the session closed and state lawmakers passed legislation supporting and advancing the rights of Coloradans with disabilities.

The Arc of Colorado tracked 53 bills in total this past session.



PUBLIC POLICY 2021

- ★ A+ 100% of the Senate received an A grade on our priority bills!
- ★ A+ 100% of the House Democrats received an A grade!
- ★ 73% of the House Republicans received a C grade or better!

Summary in Brief of our 2021 Priority Bills

Senate Bill 21-075: Supported Decision-Making Agreement Colorado joins 10 other states and the District of Columbia that legally recognize supported decision-making agreements and outline their implementation as a less-restrictive alternative (or supplement) to guardianship. People with disabilities and older adults may voluntarily enter into an agreement with chosen supporters whom the individual trusts. The supporters may assist with understanding options and consequences, answering questions, communicating the individual's decisions, and ensuring the execution of those decisions.

Senate Bill 21-039: Elimination of Sub-minimum Wage Employment Federal law has long allowed employers to pay people with disabilities substantially less than the minimum wage if their disability impacts their earning or productivity capacity. Now, 10 employers in Colorado who retain special certificates to pay sub-minimum wage must develop plans to phase out these models by 2025. The bill also allocates dollars and development toward Medicaid waiver supported employment options to ensure successful transitions and reduce barriers to competitive integrated employment. Under this act, Colorado affirms its position as an Employment First state dedicated to the advancement and economic justice of workers with disabilities across the state.

House Bill 21-1166: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Training A 2014 statewide study revealed significant gaps and barriers for Coloradans that are dually diagnosed with both an intellectual and/or developmental disability and a mental health diagnoses, especially in obtaining timely, high quality, and effective care. This bill directs the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to obtain a training vendor to provide statewide, teleconferenced training on behavioral health crisis response management to case management agencies, mental health centers, and program-approved support providers. The training will reach 20 providers, including 10 additional providers from underserved areas of the state.

House Bill 21-1187: Long Term Services and Support Case Management Redesign

At least ten years in the making, this bill addresses the case management for individuals with IDD and will change case management to include more choice, easier access, and better accountability for individuals on all HCBS (Home and Community Based Service) waivers. The bill will bring Colorado in line with federal Medicaid conflict-free case management. The bill ensures the establishment of conflict free case management for persons 18 years of age or older in need of long-term care under Medicaid. Sponsored by Representatives Pelton and Young and Senators Rankin and Winter, this bill enjoyed a unanimous Yes vote on both floors.

Senate Bill 21-188: Ballot Access for Voters with Disabilities

This bill, Sponsored by Representatives Duran and Ortiz and Senator Danielson, allows voters with disabilities who receive a ballot through an electronic voting device, to return the ballot electronically. Historically, voters with disabilities who received their ballots on-line would be required to print out the completed ballot, sign the paper ballot and submit it. This requirement limits a voter's right to independently and privately cast a ballot.

PUBLIC POLICY 2021 CONT.

Joint Budget Committee: Developmental Disability Waiver Slots

A significant indent was made to the list of over 3000 individuals across the state on the waitlist for the comprehensive Developmental Disabilities waiver. The Joint Budget Committee allocated enough money to open 667 enrollments, allowing individuals and families to access vital supports in their community.

Senator Dominick Moreno (D)— “In a difficult budget year with so many unknowns, I was happy to advance more support and resources for people with IDD. Unfortunately, despite the intensive level of care needed by people on the waiting list, it continues to grow each year. Many of these individuals have been waiting for more than a decade for the critical supports they need to fully participate in their communities. Each year we chip away at the list, and I am honored to support the most vulnerable in our communities yet again this session.”

Senator Bob Rankin (R)— “I have worked for several years to provide resources and supports in the person’s home and community to help with activities of daily living like bathing, getting dressed, finding, and getting to work, and participating in community life. Especially in rural Colorado, these supports are critical to ensuring that people with IDD can access the services they need to fully participate in the communities of their choice.”



2022 POLICY AGENDA

2022 POLICY AGENDA





For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

2022 Policy Agenda

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

Enhance Capacity, Sustainability, and Quality for IDD Services

- Bring an end to the HCBS Comprehensive Developmental Disability waiver waitlist;
- Provide an increase in pay rates for direct care workers;
- Preserve and maintain current funding levels for intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) services and supports;
- Create changes in Colorado statute, where needed, to comply with the requirements established in federal law for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS);
- Ensure the full implementation of Colorado's Olmstead Plan including implementation of strategies for competitive integrated employment;
- Advance 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 and developmental disabilities. Each waiver should further access to quality services and supports when and where needed.
- Increase Supported Living Services and equitable access to services across all Long-Term Supports and Services (LTSS);
- Increase the accessibility and availability of telehealth services for Medicaid recipients;

Implement Person Centered Practices

- Ensure quality person-centered services are provided consistently at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way across the state.
- Resolve equitable 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;
- Establish consumer and participant directed service delivery options in all HCBS/LTSS waivers;
- Increase accessibility and availability of appropriate, person-centered technology and create billable services for technology acquisition, utilization, and training to bridge the digital divide and make Colorado a technology first state;

Mental Health and IDD

- Ensure therapeutic, out-of-home placement, and intensive treatment options for children with IDD and dual diagnosis/secondary diagnosis of serious health, mental health, and behavioral conditions are readily available and accessed when needed;

- Ensure equitable access to behavioral health services for adults and children with co-occurring IDD and mental health diagnoses in the public and private insurance systems;

Advance Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes

- Continue to phase out and end sub-minimum wage employment in Colorado while providing 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.
- Implement a four-year monitoring period to ensure that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, and the Office of Employment First are supporting individuals in competitive and integrative career goals.

Funding and Policy Measures Prompted by COVID 19

- Ensure 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;
- Retain flexibilities and codify changes in rules and processes that based on community feedback, have proved essential to maintaining public health as a result of COVID-19;
- Maintain funding for respite and other services needed to sustain family stability;
- Implement the Cross-System Behavioral Health Crises Pilots to address the increased behavioral health needs as a result of COVID-19 and any future public health crisis;
- Increase 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;
- Invest in the recruitment of direct care staff;
- Implement the American Rescue Plan funds for the above-mentioned services and supports.

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 include:

Enhance Capacity, Sustainability, and Quality for IDD Services in Education

- Pursue policy development to address the racial, cultural, and linguistic inequities in education.
- Secure funding, professional development, and staffing resources for public schools to forge inclusive, student-centered programs for all students;
- Establish processes that ensure the Colorado Department of Education's dispute resolution office remains equitable and accessible to parents;
- Guarantee equitable access to technology and technology supports for students with IDD;
- Secure adequate and quality educational supports to ensure appropriate and accountable progress;
- Pursue adequate medical, nursing, and behavioral support services (with appropriate staffing) for students with complex needs to ensure equitable access to the general education classroom, non-academic and extra-curricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate;
- Ensure equal access to appropriate supports and services in publicly funded education services for children age birth through 21;

- Preserve and maintain funding for Inclusive Higher Education programs across Colorado along with encouragement of future and current programs to attract and support students with disabilities and IDD;

Improve Disciplinary and Seclusion Practices

- Implement education services that are 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 services such as transportation;
- Assure alternatives to harmful disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion for young students along with requirements that schools work to de-escalate minor school infractions rather than call for police department assistance;
- Make certain school discipline policies provide positive behavioral supports for students with disabilities to avoid trauma, seclusion, restraint, and involvement of law enforcement;
- Strive for the elimination of corporal punishment in public schools that receive federal funding;
- Eliminate the use of restraint and seclusion for non-emergency situations and address harmful restraint and seclusion practices;
- Require adequate training, documentation and reporting for any seclusion and restraint practices needed for the student's safety;

Improve Transition Services

- Improve meaningful transition services that include a strong pipeline of employers for students with disabilities that are person-centered;
- Enhance transition services that prepare students for continuing education in higher education and vocational alternatives which will result in competitive integrated employment and successful community living;
- Implement Supported Decision-Making training for the Colorado Department of Education so that educators will refrain from encouraging guardianship for students entering adulthood;

Education Policy Measures Prompted by COVID-19

- Ensure proper safety measures are in place to help slow the spread of COVID-19;
- Improve parity and flexibility for students with IDD who, because of possible health complications, may suffer more adverse health effects from the contraction of COVID-19 and therefore, require remote learning options;
- Ensure the same hybrid and remote options available to students without disabilities are also available to student with disabilities;
- Enhance applicable person-centered contingency plans in Individualized Education Programs;
- Guarantee individualized compensatory services to students who, as a result of COVID remote and hybrid learning, experienced learning loss and lack of progress towards goals.

Protection of civil rights for people with disabilities. Colorado must include:

The Elimination of Inequities

- Promote policies that dismantle systemic racism that negatively impacts persons with disabilities of color, their caregivers, and family;

- Ensure equitable opportunities, rights and protections are afforded to all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and caregivers;
- Create appropriate accommodations, modifications, and preventative measures designed to support individuals with disabilities in the criminal justice system;
- Advance 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;
- Enhance access to supports and services in rural communities, equitable to that which is found in urban communities.

Less Restrictive Environments

- Promote alternatives (e.g., health-care proxies, advance directives, supported decision-making, powers of attorney, notarized statements, representation agreements, releases, etc.) in lieu of permanent, restrictive protective arrangements;
- Promote guardianship policies, in concert with Colorado Statute, that respect and promote the rights of people with disabilities to manage their own affairs with or without 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;
- Pursue legislation efforts towards increasing oversight of guardians;
- Advance 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;

Increase Affordable Housing Options for people with IDD

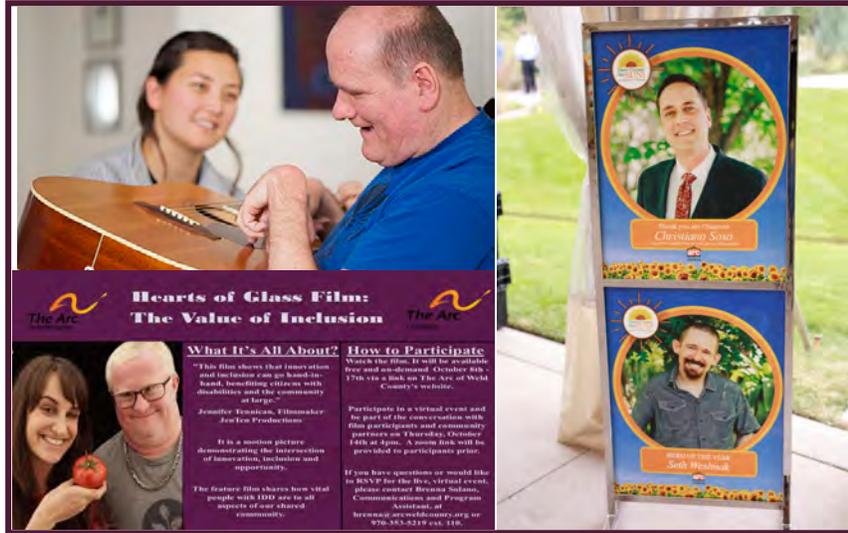
- Increase affordable, safe, accessible, integrated, and community-based housing options that promote independence, freedom, authority, and support individuals with IDD to exercise control over their housing. This housing must reflect personal preferences and styles, and must be free from housing discrimination;

Civil Rights Policy Measures Prompted by COVID-19

- Ensure civil rights protections for people with disabilities in situations that include life-saving treatments, necessary medical care, even in the event of a medical shortage, and access to assistance for voters with disabilities in elections
- Support for patients with IDD who require help with their provision of care in hospital, clinical, behavioral, and other health settings.



Projects & Events



The arc Thrift Gala Celebration
Hearts of Glass Film and Panel Discussion with The Arc of Weld
IDD Day at the Capitol and Virtual Legislator Lunch
DC Policy Seminar and Virtual Hill Visit Day
Supported Decision Making Livestream Event
Summer Townhall Tour / Colorado Roadtrip



Progress on Strategic Plan

Amplifying the Voice of individuals with IDD and their families, by strengthening self-advocacy, emphasizing integration, and partnering to build awareness.

Colorado's Rural Areas

Matt Cloven, Principal, PeaceWolf Advocacy, contracts with The Arc to serve those that do not have a local chapter. His representation includes guardianship information, medical support, legal help advocacy, and educational advocacy. As diverse as the work, so are the locations Monte Vista, Hayden, Alamosa, Craig, Moffat, Steamboat Springs, and many others.

Jennifer Levin, Esq., Christiano Sosa, and Matt Cloven completed a week-long, **statewide listening tour** with communities in the San Luis Valley, Steamboat Springs, and Craig, Colorado, in the month of August. The purpose of the tour was to build better relationships and understand the assets and challenges inherent to each diverse community. Approximately 40 individuals participated. Common themes were transition services, lack of providers, and access and knowledge of available services. On a positive note, community members identified programs that work well and acknowledged that the smaller community and its members were quick to offer support. We will share resources, provide opportunities for feedback, and explore resource/ and consultation clinics specific to each area.



Cultural Competence

The Colorado Community of Practice group, through Georgetown University, working to increase diversity in the IDD field, presented at the Virtual Transformation Leadership Forum in April 2021. Jane Johnston participated in the group's work.

Our American Sign Language and Spanish language Supported Decision-Making Livestream event was a resounding success. Days after the event, 146 people participated, including 69 who viewed the Spanish translation version. Downloads occurred, and we expect more views on our website.

Jennifer Levin, Esq. has conducted two Community of Practice Events where The Arc advocates and Executive Directors are invited to attend and discuss current and hot-topic issues. Staff created a process by which people can request a meeting to share their ideas and expertise. The first event focused on medical proxies and the challenges of people being denied care or treatment because they do not have a guardian. The second event focused on cultural competency challenges in the schools and gaps that have persisted for decades.

Self-Advocacy



The Arc of Colorado devoted Colorado Gives Day fundraising efforts to the Calabrese Life Opportunities Fund so that individuals can access the technology necessary to stay connected in our new COVID reality. We were also able to add just under \$10,000 to the pool of funding available. In 2021 we have already served 15 families and individuals in need of assistive technology, by providing iPads, protective bump cases, Mac Book Pro laptops, and much needed assistive software packages and iPhones.

Julian Wang, President, Speaking for Ourselves Colorado (SFO), was featured March 25, 2021 for the virtual IDD Day at the Capitol. The event brought great exposure to SFO.

The Arc of Colorado is working with SFO, The Coleman Institute, and the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council to prepare an unsolicited proposal for \$120,000 to support SFO's PATH Plan through technology and to create a technology lending library. With the grant, SFO will be able to hire staff and/or vendors to help assist with the project. The Arc of Colorado will serve as fiscal sponsor and continue to work on making Colorado a Technology First State. The project will be helpful in ensuring that the self-advocate concerns will be front and center in deliverables, including potential policy as an Employment First State.

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

IDD Day at the Capitol:



The IDD Policy Webinar followed by an Awareness Virtual was a success. We spoke about several pieces of important legislation. Speakers included Heather Cluck (The Arc of Pikes Peak Region) and Julian Wang



Supported-Decision-Making for the Eastern Plains: The S & P Global Corporation awarded us a grant of \$15,000 for education and outreach around the Supported Decision-Making Agreement legislation (SB21-075). The Arc of Colorado and The Arc of Weld County worked to create supported-decision making educational materials for the state. The videos, social media strategies, virtual meetings, and print materials were completed. A Livestream panel discussion event was held on August 5th. Pairing educational initiatives with our public policy efforts is a model to look forward to in the future.



This year the **National Disability Policy Seminar** was virtual. On April 22nd over 30 people from Colorado met with our Congressional Delegates. Our legislators listened to the concerns, personal stories and heartfelt gratitude expressed by families, self-advocates, and professionals throughout the state. Our conversations included discussion about the HCBS Access Act, Social Security (SSI) reform, the ABLE Age Adjustment bill, education, and criminal justice issues.

ARPA Funding

We are working with HCPF on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to make one-time investments in behavioral health, technology, transportation, respite, temporary wage increases for Direct Support Providers, investments in the future case management system, and Community First Choice.

The Arc of Colorado submitted a letter to help prioritize ARPA funding. Staff will participate in several stakeholder meetings in the coming weeks to deploy one-time dollars to shore up the system as a result of Covid 19.

Better Care Better Jobs Act

In September, The Arc of Colorado promoted the Online Day of Action Campaign regarding the national *Better Care Better Jobs Act* on social media platforms and sent out an Action Alert about the Colorado Day of Action. Staff and advocates went to Senator Hickenlooper's four state offices on September 21st to urge him to support the *Better Care Better Jobs Act*. Senator Hickenlooper made a public statement in support of the Act later that week.

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

Jefferson County Public Health Department: Jennifer Levin presented to approximately 20 Spanish speaking parents on special education law in March.

Jennifer Levin presented to self-advocates and parents of young children through **Sewell Child Development Center** on disability rights in education.

Commission & Task Force Appointments: Jennifer Levin, Esq. was appointed by the Department of Human Services to serve as a committee member of the Special Education sub-group to the Early Childhood Transition Advisory Group. This group considers best practice while early intervention for children with special education needs overlap with the creation of a new department that oversees pre-school programs.

Christiano is in the process of being appointed to the Higher Education Interim Committee to help distribute ARPA funding.

Staff and several chapters are **meeting regularly with the Lt. Governor's office** to identify emerging issues and to work through daily changes that affect the I/DD and disability community. Staff continues to participate in several coalition meetings ranging from behavioral health, education, metro advocacy forum, SFO, rights modifications, and respite.



Denver Empowering Communities Network: Christiano has joined Denver Empowering Communities Network to look at housing options for individuals with IDD. The group is consulting with the Autism Housing Network to survey needs in order to expand residential options outside of the host home and the family caregiver model.

Vaccine clinics and Vaccine Priority



Vaccine Priority: After months of work in trying to prioritize people with disabilities in the vaccine schedule, we were successful in getting people with disabilities prioritized in Phase 1.b.3 which started March 5, 2021! We could not have done this without the media push from arc Thrift along with the endless negotiation, letters, zoom calls, and action alerts by The Arc network. The specific addition of "individuals with disabilities who require direct care in their home, and people with disabilities that prevent them from wearing masks," covers the majority of people. Several of the local chapters of The Arc established pop-up clinics in their regions: Boulder, Jeffco, Pikes Peak, Durango, and Arapahoe.

Vaccine Distribution: Thank you, Jennifer Harris, for helping The Arc of Aurora and AdvocacyDenver in partnership with The Arc of Colorado and Atlantis Community vaccinate an estimated 120 people on April 23rd. The pop-up clinics were disability friendly and well received by the community. The follow-up vaccine clinic occurred May 21, 2021.

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



Hearts of Glass - Virtual Film Showing and Livestream Panel:

We partnered with The Arc of Weld County for a virtual event. On October 14th, we showed the Hearts of Glass: Virtual Gardens film and moderated panel including self-advocates and Lloyd Lewis.

Legal Clinics:

- AdvocacyDenver, The Children's' Law Center, Disability Law Colorado, and The Arc of Colorado started virtual individual consulting on education rights law and compensatory services.
- Jennifer Levin, Esq. continues in her leadership role with the Colorado Lawyers Committee, Special Education Section and her work with the Colorado Bar Association, Disability Bar Section.

Supported-Decision-Making Livestream event

Christiano presented on the success of the Supported-Decision-Making effort with The Arc of Weld County to the employee resource group of the S & P Global Foundation.

Education Ad-Hoc Group:

Several of The Arc chapters that contributed to the **EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC HANDBOOK** will now focus their attention on another project. The work is an extension of the effort on compensatory services to ensure that the services provided are person-centered. Products will include fact sheets on many areas including discipline, least restrictive environments, and evaluations.

Several chapters have worked together to **create eleven factsheets** on disability rights and education. Once finalized, they will be available on our website for download.

Autism Resource Fair: Christiano attended the Autism Resource Fair with The Arc of Arapahoe Douglas and The Arc of Adams County. We were able to distribute the attached chapter map which was a collaboration with The Arc of Arapahoe County.

The Arc of Colorado participated in the Autism Society of Colorado's Walk with Autism 2021. The event brought over 70 providers and non-profit organizations together for families and individuals interested in supports, education, services, and employment opportunities available to people of all ages and abilities.

The Arc of Colorado thanks you all so much again for your time, support, advocacy, and high spirits this year.



arc Thrift Stores' 2021 Celebration

