

Join the **Movement!**

This year and every year, The Arc of Massachusetts enhances the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, and their families.

More than 200,000 individuals with disabilities live in Massachusetts. Giving them and their families greater access to community-based lifespan supports and services including early intervention, family support, employment and residential programs, and social-recreational activities is crucial. The Arc of Massachusetts fights to make these opportunities available.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARC'S WORK.

Make a gift.

The Annual Fund supports our advocacy and outreach on Beacon Hill and on Capitol Hill, as well as programs such as Operation House Call and Widening the Circle. Make a gift anytime at thearcofmass.org/donate. You also can make a tribute gift and honor a friend or loved one with a contribution.

Sponsor the annual gala.

Sponsorship packages provide opportunities for corporations, individuals, and agencies to get involved at a range of giving levels.

Become an agency sponsor.

If you represent a human service agency serving people with IDD, join the Agency Sponsorship Program. You will be directly participating in and supporting ongoing work to secure funding and establish effective disability policies and receive great benefits.

Contact your elected officials.

Make your voice heard on Capitol Hill and Beacon Hill. Share your stories with your legislators. Share your stories with legislators so that they can understand the pressing need for good policies and funding for services.

Share your stories.

The Arc is constantly in need of stories that demonstrate the urgency of our advocacy. Stay tuned for announcements of our story collecting campaigns and be prepared to share yours.

Achieve with us.

Visit arcmass.org/donate to learn more or make a gift.



The Arc of Massachusetts

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CHAPTERS OF THE ARC OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Arc of Bristol County
The Arc of Greater Brockton
The Arc of Greater Haverhill-Newburyport
The Arc of Opportunity
The Arc of Plymouth and Upper Cape Cod
The Arc of the South Shore
Berkshire County Arc
Center of Hope Foundation

Charles River Center
Communitas, Inc.
Community Connections, Inc.
Incompass Human Services
Lifeworks
Minute Man Arc
Northeast Arc
Opportunities for Inclusion
The United Arc



Achieve with us.

Enhancing the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, and their families. We fulfill this mission through advocacy for community supports and services that foster social inclusion, self-determination, and equity across all aspects of society.





PROGRAMS OF THE ARC OF MASSACHUSETTS:

Changing the Lives of People with Disabilities through Equity and Empowerment

EQUITY IN ACTION

Operation House Call (OHC) is creating inclusive healthcare spaces by teaching thousands of future healthcare professionals essential skills and mindsets to enhance the healthcare of persons with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Families, parents, and individual self-advocates serve as educators in a field that seldom focuses on more than a diagnosis. It is a rare and important training opportunity for students at Boston University School of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Simmons School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Tufts Medical School, UMass Chan Medical School, UMass Graduate School of Nursing, and Yale School of Nursing. Through OHC, students begin to build confidence and interest in working and becoming champions for individuals with autism and IDD and their families.

Widening the Circle – Pathways to Friendship explores the benefits of relationships between people with and without disabilities and provides information on engaging in and sustaining those relationships. Building friendships can be especially challenging for people who have disabilities, whose relationships are often limited to family, paid staff, and others with disabilities. All people benefit from a diversity of relationships.

SUPPORTbrokers assists persons with disabilities achieve their vision through planning, education, and advocacy. Consumers or families hire a support broker to help them find services and supports to thrive in their community. Brokers can help consumers find transportation, a place to live, someone to help them with daily living skills, a job counselor, and other linkages. They also can facilitate and create a person-centered plan and help consumers apply for Social Security or health insurance, among other benefits.

EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

The Arc of Massachusetts is a leader in advocacy on both the state and federal levels to obtain services and supports for people of all ages and across the spectrum of autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other IDD. This includes advocacy for appropriately funded state budgets and critically needed legislation. The Arc's Government Affairs team ensures that elected leaders and public officials understand the needs of our constituents. We advance progressive regulations or policies and work with the judicial system, if needed.

We encourage families and individuals to advocate for their personal goals. Specifically, our annual Legislative Reception, which is co-hosted with the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, empowers people with disabilities to have their voices heard by their elected officials and provides training to effectively communicate their needs. In addition, The Arc is a leader of the Massachusetts Alliance for 21st Century Policy (MA21 Alliance), which works to protect the rights of people with IDD to choose self-direction.

People with autism and IDD have the right to be fully included in all aspects of community life, including housing, employment, and recreation. The Arc offers a range of webinars and outreach sessions to assist families in their caregiving role and to educate them about available resources. Our Transition Conference, online resources, and information sessions provide self-advocates, parents, educators, and other professionals tools that facilitate positive transitions from school to adulthood.

Welcome to The Arc of Massachusetts

Established more than 70 years ago, The Arc of Massachusetts enhances the lives of the more than 200,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism in our Commonwealth and their families. With our 17 chapters across Massachusetts, we advocate for supports and community-based services such as family support, employment, recreation, and residential.

Families banded together in the 1950s to change policies and practices. In the 1960s, special education and de-institutionalization took center stage. In the 1970s, 'normalization' became the watchword for services and The Arc advocated for a life in the community. The Arc led the push for funding for adult supports (Turning 22) in the 1980s. In the 2000s, we successfully advocated for the 2,437 individuals on waiting lists to receive the community-based supports and placements they deserved. In the 2010s, The Arc played a key role in passage of five key pieces of legislation: Real Lives, the Autism Omnibus bill, the National Background Check, a data study of autism, and Nicky's Law, which created a registry of care providers substantiated of abuse.

The 2020s have brought many challenges for our community. The coronavirus pandemic resulted in loss of services, programs closing, behaviors regressing, and an increase in isolation. At the same time, the shortage of direct support professionals has progressed into a crisis, which has caused thousands of families across the state to take on full-time caregiver duties. Despite the many challenges that our community has faced in recent years, The Arc has had multiple crucial accomplishments. We successfully advocated time and again for people with IDD and autism to be prioritized during the dark days of the pandemic. Our tireless advocacy has resulted in historic funding increases in crucial DDS line items and the direct support workforce. Operation House Call was fully funded and signed into law.

The Arc remains at the forefront of the fight for better lives for people with IDD and autism. The Arc works to ensure the rights of people with disabilities, obtain funding for support services, and seek the passage of good policies and laws.

In the coming years, The Arc of Massachusetts will continue to address the dire state of the direct support workforce shortage crisis; advocating for the needs of those thousands of individuals with disabilities who have gone unserved or underserved for years; filing and refiling our priority legislation as needed; and advocating for the necessary increases in funding in each fiscal year state budget. Through our advocacy trainings and webinars, information and referral responses, and our work on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill, The Arc will continue the fight to ensure that all persons with IDD and autism have the equal rights they deserve.

ARCHIVE WITH US