



*The Arc Maryland works to create a world where children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have and enjoy equal rights and opportunities*

## Public Policy Platform Summary 2014 Priorities

The Arc Maryland advocates to protect the rights and to increase opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our top priorities are:

- **Enforce civil rights.** Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are equal under the law and are entitled to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law. We advocate for elimination of discrimination in housing, transportation, recreation, education, and community access. We advocate for enforcement of existing legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the *Olmstead* Supreme Court Decision. **This means: Close Institutions.** Unjustified segregation is a violation of individual rights. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the legal right to inclusive lives within the community. We oppose the expansion of the state residential centers (SRC) (including the Secure Evaluation and Therapeutic Treatment Center (SETT)) and expect the Department of Health Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to develop appropriate community capacity.
- **Fix chronic underfunding for current and future needs:**
  - Fix Underfunding of Current Programs and Services in order to achieve a reasonable quality of life for all.
    - Reform the current system so that funding pays for actual needs and costs
    - State funding must accommodate the actual cost of labor: employee benefits and a fair/living wage.
  - Adequately fund the full life span of an individual -- for example, state funding does not cover transportation, life-long education supports, job transition supports, or medical costs associated with aging.
  - Adequately fund individuals who are receiving supports and services at home.
  - Additional funding is required to accompany the Alcohol Tax in order to fully fund individuals in crisis (and emergencies) on the DDA waiting list.
  - Adequately fund children and youth in need (including infants and toddlers, <21, in school and out of school time).
    - Fully fund 100% of the children eligible for waiver services who are on the on the Autism Waiver Waiting List.
    - Fully fund and find placements for 100% of the "Transitioning Youth" entering the adult service delivery system.



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- Adequately fund, staff, and effectively manage all agencies supporting individuals with I/DD: DDA, Department of Disabilities (DOD), Department of Human Resources (DHR), and Special Education resources.
  - Oppose transfer of funding and program management from DDA to the Medicaid Office in order to assure quality of services to individuals.
  - By incorporating these suggestions DDA will be a more effective service system.
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- **Improve life outcomes.** The Arc Maryland seeks to ensure the brightest possible inclusive and integrated future for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
    - **Expand Educational Opportunities.** We advocate for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) with supports to ensure full participation in an inclusive and least restrictive environment which is free of bullying. Education professionals and school staff should have continuing disabilities training including positive behavior supports and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This includes opportunities across the lifespan inside and outside school settings such as recreational activities, day care, worship, college and job training opportunities, etc.
    - **Create Employment Opportunities.** The Arc Maryland advocates for real jobs for real pay. Government agencies and administrations (local, state, and federal) should include individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their hiring initiatives.
    - **Support Asset Development.** The Arc Maryland advocates for the rights of persons with I/DD to acquire assets and savings to strive for financial independence.
    - **Develop First Responder Training.** The Arc Maryland advocates for developing comprehensive training, policies, practices, and sensitivity to ensure protection of civil rights and ensure safety in the community.
  - **Close gaps among delivery systems.** Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: a) are receiving better and more comprehensive diagnosis; b) may have co-occurring conditions; and c) are living much longer. This increases a need for services that grow and change through the lifespan. It requires:
    - Coordination among multiple service delivery systems (such as medical, aging, DD, mental health, and substance abuse) is necessary for treatment, services, and supports. The Arc Maryland seeks to work with the State and the medical professions to close gaps between delivery systems
    - Regulations realigned to meet these new expectations.
    - That the driving principle of any system is the end goal: people with I/DD living full, rich lives in their communities with necessary supports to enable them to be included in every activity and opportunity.