

The Arc®

Texas

*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities.*

Impact Report

July 2025

So every Texan with IDD can live the life they deserve and choose

This report sheds light on the real, lasting difference our collective efforts are having in the lives of Texans with IDD. It is a celebration of the people we exist to serve, those we have the honor of working alongside in the fight for disability rights, and recent wins that remind us change is possible!

- By **centering the voices of Texans with IDD** to inform legislators about disability rights, we make statewide, systemic public policy progress—together.
- By **protecting the financial security and government benefits of Texans with any disability**, we help families create a better life for their loved one—today and for their future.
- By **providing trusted information resources**, we connect Texans with IDD to critical supports and services.
- By **collaborating with local chapters across the state**, we help Texans live, learn, work and engage in their communities.

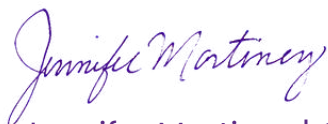
The stakes are higher than ever for the 500,000+ Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who are waiting for services that would help them live in the community of their choice; for people who have skills but can't find a fair-paying job; for parents desperate for the free public education their child needs to reach their full potential; and for folks denied their civil rights or fair treatment in the criminal justice system.

We press on. For 72 years, we've stood with the Lone Star State's diverse IDD community, our chapter members, and advocates, and **we will continue until every Texan with IDD lives the life they deserve and choose.**

Keep hope. **While facing some of the most serious threats to people with IDD we have seen—at both the state and federal level—there is progress, too, thanks to you.**

The self-determination of the disability community moves our mission forward, energizing us to evolve and try new things. We believe deeply that **Texans with IDD and their families are the experts in their own lives, and we are listening, learning, and taking action.** *Thank you.*

Sincerely,



Jennifer Martinez | Chief Executive Officer, The Arc of Texas

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"We must, and we will, continue to break down barriers to community inclusion for Texans with IDD."

Jennifer Martinez
Chief Executive Officer



What is IDD?

IDD stands for Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD), a group of conditions that affect a person's cognitive abilities, learning, and adaptive behaviors.

These disabilities appear before the age of 22 and can impact a person's ability to communicate, socialize, and perform everyday tasks independently.

IDD includes a range of disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy, and vary widely in their effects on each individual.

500,000+

Texans with IDD

More than **176,000** Texans are waiting for care through Medicaid waiver programs—which aim to keep individuals with IDD living in their communities—a **73%** increase since 2015.

Some people wait nearly 20 years to reach the top of the list.



*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities.*

MISSION

The Arc of Texas promotes, protects, and advocates for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

VISION

We envision a world where Texans with IDD are included in their communities with quality supports and services that meet their needs and choices.

STRATEGY

Disability rights are human rights! Texans with IDD can and do make decisions about their lives—especially when quality supports and services are available.

Founded in 1953 by parents of children with IDD, The Arc of Texas is a statewide advocacy organization centering the voices of self-advocates.

- **Advocating for Texans with IDD:** We've been involved in the creation or preservation of every support available to Texans with IDD.
- **Protecting Finances and Benefits:** Since 1997, our Master Pooled Trust is a solution for Texans with any disability to manage funds while preserving government benefits eligibility.
- **Connecting to Resources:** Our trusted IDD information resources cover waivers, guardianship, education, employment, future planning, civil rights, and more, and our 26 local chapters offer region-specific services.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

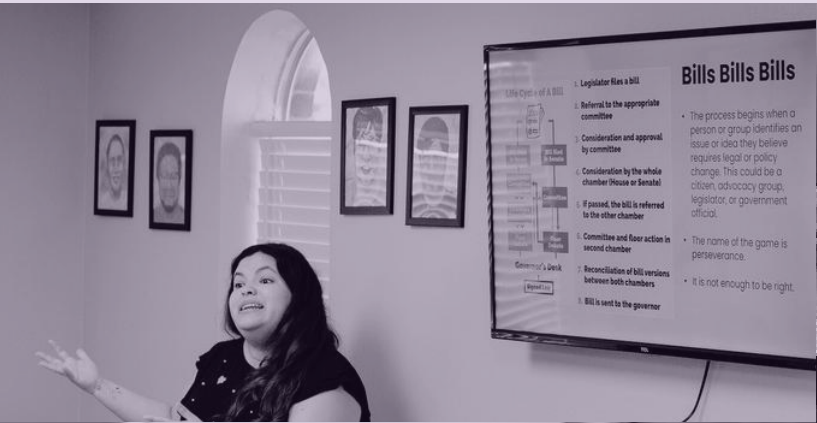
Terri Hawthorne, President
Veronica Ayala, President-Elect
Cody Sutton, Treasurer
Phyllis Cox, Secretary
Louisa Day
Shelbi Davenport
Anna Griffith, Texas Advocates Representative
Dona Kotzur, Local Chapter Representative
Renee Lopez
Dr. Maria Quintero-Conk
Molly Saenz
Molly Spratt
Sergio Zarate

"When I am asked about The Arc of Texas I feel a sense of pride. I am honored to work among a dedicated group of people as committed to community inclusion as I am."

Veronica Ayala
Self-Advocate
Board President-Elect

After time in a Texas state-supported living center, Veronica understood what comes of exclusionary policies. Conversely, 20+ years in the workforce revealed what's possible for people with disabilities when given the chance to shine.

Passionate about voting rights and inclusion for all, she is a member of our Public Policy and Advocacy Committee, as well as The Arc's National Council of Self-Advocates.



"We will no longer be seen as second class citizens."

Renee Lopez
Board Member



Local Chapters

Our member chapters provide supports, services, and/or programming to meet the needs of their region and help people with IDD live and engage in their communities. [Find a chapter near you.](#)

Chapter	Location
The Arc of Bell County	Temple
The Arc of Brown County	Brownwood
The Arc of Bryan-College Station	College Station
The Arc of the Capital Area	Austin
The Arc of Denton County	Denton
The Arc of the DFW Area	Haltom City
The Arc of El Paso	El Paso
The Arc of Fort Bend County	Sugar Land
The Arc of Gillespie County	Fredericksburg
The Arc of Greater Beaumont	Beaumont
The Arc of Greater East Texas	Tyler
The Arc of the Gulf Coast	Alvin
The Arc of Harris County	Houston
The Arc of the Hill Country	New Braunfels
The Arc of Katy	Katy
The Arc of McLennan County	Waco
The Arc of Milam County	Rockdale
The Arc of Panola County	Beckville
The Arc of Potter & Randall Counties	Amarillo
The Arc of San Antonio	San Antonio
The Arc of Spring Branch Memorial	Houston
The Arc of Wharton	Wharton
The Arc of Wichita County	Wichita Falls

Some local chapters provide direct residential, vocational, and community-living support services, while those located in regions that have a Local IDD Authority (LIDDAs) or other community-based services providers, offer ancillary services, including parent support, self-advocacy programs, recreation and social experiences, and respite care.

National Network



577 chapters spanning 47 states and Washington, D.C., drive impact from the local level up.

Together, we are changing systems that hold people with disabilities back.

Texans on
The Arc's National Council
of Self-Advocates

2



4

Local Texas chapters attended The Arc U.S. Disability Policy Seminar

10

Stipends provided to local chapters to travel to Texas Capitol for Meet The Arc Day

2

Stipends provided to local chapters to attend The Arc National Conference

4

Quarterly info-sharing meetings with local chapters

Large Texas Contingent

Texas was well represented at the #ProtectMedicaid rally in Washington, D.C.





DONATE

Public Policy and Advocacy

The 89th Legislative Session marked meaningful progress for Texans with IDD, driven by the tireless efforts of our Public Policy and Advocacy team, passionate self-advocates and families, and our incredible local chapters across the state. Our community showed up powerfully at the Texas Capitol, offering moving testimony to ensure the voices of Texans with IDD were heard in every chamber and committee room.

We celebrated significant wins—from expanding access to inclusive higher education programs to strengthening connections to essential community-based resources.

Yet, the legislature has not fully addressed longstanding barriers preventing people with IDD from living fully included, independent lives in their communities. Our work is far from over.



"We remain steadfast in our mission to advance policies rooted in equity, inclusion, and dignity. The progress during this session brings us one step closer to a future where Texans with IDD can access the supports they need, and deserve, to thrive."

Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy

89th Texas Legislative Session Priorities

The Arc of Texas advocates for public policies that prioritize community-inclusion for Texans with IDD. This session, we focused on the following:

Quality of Life



When Texans with IDD receive individualized supports/services, they can make their own decisions about how/where to live and work.

- **Increase Access to Home and Community-Based Services:** Reduce wait times and improve interest list management to ensure timely, community-based care.
- **Address the Direct Workforce Crisis:** Raise direct support professional wages from \$10.60/hour to \$17/hour.
- **Expand Access to Mental Health Services:** Increase outpatient capacity and availability of mental health services for people with IDD by expanding biopsychosocial model.

Competitive Integrated Employment



Work is fundamental to adult life, and Texans with IDD have skills the workforce needs. Policies are needed to improve competitive, integrated employment options.

- **Promote Competitive Integrated Employment:** Support policies that expand access to inclusive jobs and competitive wages.
- **Enhance Employment Support Services and Peer Support:** Expand funding for job training, career counseling, on-the-job supports, and peer support programs.
- **Eliminate Barriers to Employment:** Promote workplace accommodations, inclusive hiring practices, and equal opportunity.

Inclusive Education



Inclusive education policies are necessary to assist Texans with IDD in reaching their full potential—from early childcare settings to postsecondary education.

- **Invest Equitable Funding for Special Education Services:** Shift to intensity-based funding model that meets each student's unique needs.
- **Promote Safe and Inclusive School Environments:** Reduce use of physical restraints and improve educator training on positive behavior strategies.
- **Expand Access to Inclusive Higher Education:** Create funding opportunities for inclusive postsecondary programs that support students with IDD.

Civil Rights and Justice



When Texans with IDD have equitable access to justice and services within community, they are less likely to be victims of abuse and crime, and more likely to participate civically.

- **Define and Standardize IDD Identification:** Establish process for identifying people with IDD in criminal legal system to prevent unjust outcomes.
- **Promote Self-Determination and Protect Rights of Texans with IDD:** Support policies that empower people with IDD to make informed choices and live free from discrimination, exploitation and abuse.
- **Uphold Voting Rights:** Ensure Texans with IDD can vote privately and independently with appropriate access and accommodations.



Inclus

Inclusion

Public Policy Progress

By centering the voices of Texans with disabilities, we're making progress—together. Here are some highlights we are celebrating from the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

130+

Bills tracked across our four policy pillars

45

Testimony delivered on bills in committee (across 23 bills)

16



Bills supported in committee that passed House and Senate



240+

Legislators/staff with whom we interacted at our events

105+

Grassroots advocates supported at Texas Capitol

Bill	What It Does	How We Helped	Status
House Bill 2081 Representative John Bucy III EDUCATION	Established the Building Better Futures Program within the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide grant funding for colleges and universities to establish and expand inclusive higher education programs for students with IDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobilized a team of self-advocates to testify in favor of HB 2081• The Arc of Texas and board member Shelbi Davenport received certificate of recognition from bill author, Rep. Bucy, and sponsor, Sen. Menéndez, for our work• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law
House Bill 1188 The Caytlin Handley Act Representative Christian Manuel EDUCATION QUALITY OF LIFE	Requires school districts to inform families of students eligible for special education services due to diagnosis of intellectual disability or developmental delay about their Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA), ensuring families know about Medicaid waiver programs, long-term services and supports, and other community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helped facilitate the orientation of the bill• Supported the Handley family with coordinating initial meetings with House and Senate offices• Served as a resource throughout the legislative process• Provided professional and personal testimony in House and Senate committee hearings• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law



Public Policy Progress

CONTINUED

Bill	What It Does	How We Helped	Status
Senate Bill 769 Senator José Menéndez EDUCATION	Requires Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to collect data and report on students with disabilities enrolled in public higher education, including enrollment rates, degree attainment, barriers faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided IDD expertise to bill author• Provided testimony at every hearing of the bill• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law
Senate Bill 568 Senator Paul Bettencourt EDUCATION	Transitions the state's special education funding system to one based on intensity of services a student needs, rather than the current model, which is based solely on the instructional setting in which a student receives services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testified before House Public Education Committee and Senate K-16 Education Committee on the need to fully fund special education service as Texas transitions to new intensity-of-service-based funding model• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law
House Bill 2310 Representative Claudia Ordaz EDUCATION	Requires the Texas Education Agency, Texas Workforce Commission, and Health and Human Services Commission to develop a strategic plan to increase inclusivity of children with disabilities in public early childhood education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testified before House Public Education Committee and Senate Education K-16 Committee on the importance of inclusion of children with disabilities in early learning programs• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law



Public Policy Progress

CONTINUED

Bill	What It Does	How We Helped	Status
Senate Bill 57 Senator Judith Zaffirini EDUCATION	<p>Requires a school district to include in its multi-hazard emergency operations plan provisions ensuring students and district personnel with disabilities are provided equal access to safety during a disaster or emergency situation based on recommendations and guidelines established by commissioner of the Texas Education Agency (TEA)</p> <p>Requires Commissioner of Education at TEA to establish accommodation recommendations for a student with an individualized education program (IEP) created under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testified before House Public Education Committee and Senate Education K-16 Committee that emergency response plans must address needs of students with disabilities during drills and in emergencies• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law
Senate Bill 1437 Senator Paul Bettencourt CIVIL RIGHTS AND JUSTICE	<p>Strengthens hiring standards across juvenile justice facilities by prohibiting the re-hiring of individuals who were previously terminated or resigned due to substantiated incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided IDD expertise to bill author• Testified before House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee to emphasize how this policy would protect youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system who are disproportionately impacted by unsafe facility conditions• VIEW OUR TESTIMONY	 Signed by Governor into law

Watch: Session Photo Highlights

From committee hearings to office visits,
your voices made a difference!

"For too long, students with disabilities in Texas have been shortchanged by a system that has failed to provide them with the funding they need to succeed."

Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo

Director of Public Policy and Advocacy



\$1.7B

On Mar. 19, World Down Syndrome Advocacy Day, The Arc of Texas collaborated with disability rights partners to host a press conference at the Texas Capitol to urge the legislature to fully fund special education and close the \$1.7 billion annual funding gap.

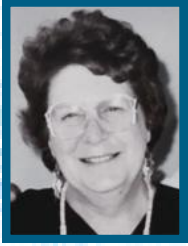
Sarah Hardin, Executive Director of The Arc of Greater Beaumont, is pictured addressing media and legislative staff.





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2025 Virginia Eernisse Legacy Award



Known for her passionate pursuit of equity and justice for people with disabilities, Virginia led with trademark courage, speaking truth to power about disability rights and fiercely supporting grassroots self-advocates in voicing their lived experience. A founder of The Arc of the Gulf Coast, she served on The Arc of Texas' Board of Directors and Public Policy & Advocacy Committee. "Virginia's indelible legacy guides our cultivation of advocates," said Jennifer Martinez, Chief Executive Officer. "Virginia believed people with disabilities deserve the same dignity and opportunity afforded to everyone else, and we wholeheartedly agree."

Honoring the Handley Family

We're thrilled to honor the Handley Family of Katy, Texas. Born of a desire to help their daughter Caytlin, the family's tireless advocacy has touched thousands of Texas families who, until now, were not informed of available IDD resources until their child's 14th birthday—years beyond helpful intervention timing. Thanks to their idea, and their persistence and collaboration throughout the legislative process, The Caytlin Handley Act (House Bill 1188) became law on May 29, 2025!

- Requires schools direct parents to Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority when child becomes eligible for special education due to intellectual disability/developmental delay
- Informs families how to enroll their child in a Medicaid waiver program and interest lists, and makes them aware earlier about other long-term services/supports and community resources
- Rep. Christian Manuel authored bill; Sen. Judith Zaffirini sponsored

"Multiple years in the making, true to grassroots advocacy, Carey, Boyd and Caytlin remained steadfast, building relationships with lawmakers, educating staffers about avoidable barriers students with disabilities face, and testifying with their story."

Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo
Director of Public Policy
and Advocacy



"I just want to help people that have special needs like I do, because there are many people in this world that have something and I just want to help them move forward."

Caytlin Handley
Self-Advocate

"In a sometimes contentious session, we found a bright spot in getting HB 1188 passed and signed by the governor. We are so grateful to all of the representatives and senators who backed our bill, fought for it, treated our daughter with dignity and respect and supported us while we worked on this. We are grateful to The Arc of Texas for being there since Day 1, when this was just an idea I had."

Carey Handley | Caytlin's Mom, Advocate

Advocate Spotlights

Throughout session, we shined a light on grassroots advocates who courageously use their voices and lived experience to inform policymakers of avoidable barriers faced by Texans with IDD, and to advocate for solutions.

We are honored to work alongside passionate Texans in the fight for disability rights and stand firmly in this rally cry:

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US



Ricky Broussard

Peer Support Specialist
Imagine Interprises

Following a false claim by Rep. Randy Weber about his Medicaid coverage, Ricky released a video urging Congress to protect constituents with disabilities



Shelbi Davenport

Program Coordinator
Texas A&M AgriLife

Testified for Building Better Futures bill; shared experience as graduate of Texas A&M's PATHS program and current role supporting students with disabilities through its HOPS program



Kason Erwin

EMPOWER Student
University of Arkansas

Testified about researching inclusive postsecondary programs and the need to go out-of-state due to limited options in Texas; encouraged expansion of in-state opportunities



Caytlin Handley

Self-Advocate

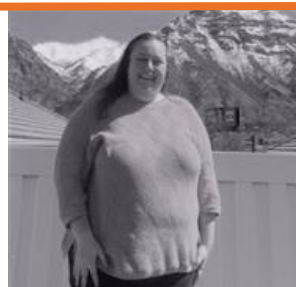
Her powerful testimony highlighted importance of connecting students with IDD to long-term services earlier in life and moved the committee to honor her with the renaming of House Bill 1188 to "The Caytlin Handley Act"



Sarah Hardin

Executive Director, The Arc of Greater Beaumont

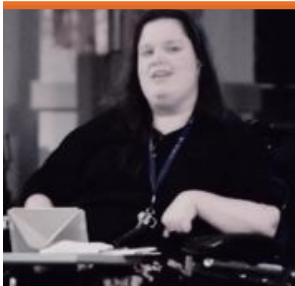
Ensures people with disabilities in southeast Texas are heard in local and state conversations; spoke at our press conference on special education, calling for a bold investment



Brooke Hohfield

Co-Executive Director
Texas Advocates

Testified on multiple bills, including to House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Article 2; highlighted need for adequate state disability services/supports (starts 7:01:42)



Amy Litzinger

Public Policy Specialist
Texas Parent to Parent

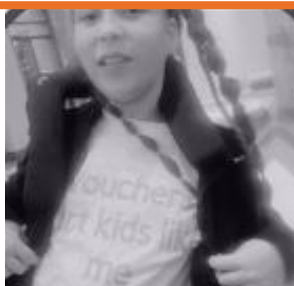
Testified for Senate Bill 57 (starts 3:20) to support student safety by requiring emergency drill accommodations be identified/documentated in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)



Rep. Christian Manuel

Texas House of Representatives (District 22)
Vice Chair, House Human Services Committee

Strong partner to The Arc of Texas and The Arc of Greater Beaumont; sponsored Meet The Arc Day at Texas Capitol; filed The Caytlin Handley Act, which became law



Felicita Pinon

Sixth Grade Public School Student

Shared her experience of being denied admittance to multiple private schools due to disability; called for full funding of public education while testifying to oppose Senate Bill 2



Dr. Melissa Rosario, Ed.D., BCASE

Patient Advocate
The Arc of Harris County

Helps Spanish-speaking families navigate special education; on Autism Society Texas' Autism Advocacy Day, met with Rep. Jeff Leach's office to champion fair school discipline policies for students with disabilities



Prog Progress



The Whole Person Project

The Whole Person Project seeks to expand access to quality mental health services for adult Texans with IDD. June 2025 marks the end of this three-year project supported by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities through a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Texans with IDD and mental health issues repeatedly failed by state, report finds



Out of Options: Addressing Inequities in Care for Texans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and Mental Illness

Investigative report and recommendations by The Arc of Texas
December 5, 2024

This report is authored by Alex Stuckey, Investigative Reporter for the Whole Person Project, an initiative of The Arc of Texas which seeks to expand access to quality mental health services for adult Texans with IDD.

Watch this 2-minute video to get a brief overview before diving into the report.

This work is supported by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities through a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Washington, D.C. 20207, with a 100% federal funding award totaling \$6,121,860. Council efforts are those of the grantees and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor are endorsed by ACL, HHS, or the U.S. government.

The Whole Person Project

Expanding access to quality mental health services for adult Texans with IDD



Read: Investigative Report and Recommendations

Following months of research and conversations with people living and working at the intersection of this co-occurrence, we released an in-depth, investigative report, "Out of Options: Addressing Inequities in Care for Texans with IDD and Mental Illness."

Watch: A Conversation with the Author (45 minutes)

Watch this summary of report findings and recommendations, featuring report author and Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist, Alex Stuckey.

Watch: About The Whole Person Project (2 minutes)

Hear about three families who have an adult child with co-occurring IDD and mental disorder, how they've been failed by state systems ill-equipped to handle dual diagnoses, and how we seek to address inequities.

Too often, still, psychiatric symptoms are misattributed to intellectual or developmental disability.

In reality, **one-third** of the estimated **500,000 Texans** with an IDD diagnosis **also have a mental health condition.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that adults with disabilities **experience mental distress 5x more frequently.**

They are confronted with abuse, neglect, and other trauma at higher rates than the general population, putting them at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder.

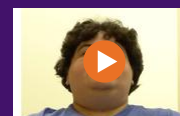
Take Course: Working with People with IDD (60 minutes)

This course, "Breaking Barriers: Supporting Texans with IDD and Mental Health Conditions" overviews disability frameworks, dual diagnosis, legal requirements, and communication strategies. Intended for mental health providers but available to anyone interested.



Docuseries | 2-minute shorts

At the Intersection of Mental Health and IDD
Hear from people with this dual diagnosis.



The Whole Person Project

CONTINUED

Public Policy Progress: The following bills passed the House and Senate and could positively impact Texans dually diagnosed with IDD and mental illness.

Identifying Mental Health Disorders in People with IDD

Senate Bill 2111 by Sen. Judith Zaffirini

 **Governor vetoed; did not become law**

- Would require a magistrate, upon reasonable cause that an arrested person has mental illness or intellectual disability, to follow steps in Texas law for early identification of a defendant suspected of having such diagnoses, which is key to improving first interactions with criminal legal system.

Mental Health Professional Workforce

Senate Bill 1401 by Sen. Royce West

 **Signed by Governor into law**

- We formally registered support for this bill. Would establish Texas Mental Health Profession Pipeline Program administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to address worker shortage.

Senate Bill 646 by Sen. Royce West

 **Signed by Governor into law**

- Would address worker shortage by expanding types of mental health professionals eligible to receive loan repayment assistance (currently limited to social workers, licensed professional counselors, school counselors, marriage and family therapists).

Access to Services

Senate Bill 1 (Budget)

 **Signed by Governor into law**

- Bill allocated \$5.2M over 2026–2027 biennium to expand Outpatient Biopsychosocial (OBI) Program. We delivered testimony before the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee on importance of OBI services expansion.
- Legislature increased Direct Service Professional (DSP) pay from \$10.60 to \$13/hour beginning fiscal year 2027. This does not sufficiently address the workforce crisis and is far below parity with State Supported Living Centers. We delivered testimony before the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee asking to increase DSP wages.
- Legislature funded an additional approximate 950 new Medicaid waiver slots for Texans with IDD. We delivered testimony before the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee on the importance of reducing the interest list.

Senate Bill 528 by Sen. Charles Schwertner

 **Became law without Governor's signature**

- We formally registered support for this bill and discussed competency restoration with bill's sponsor. Bill makes strides at improving inpatient competency restoration services.

Senate Bill 2069 by Sen. Judith Zaffirini

 **Became law without Governor's signature**

- We formally registered support for this bill. Creates a workgroup to study Texas' ability to establish acute psychiatric bed registry, which would allow mental health professionals to check realtime availability. Marks first step to improve the bed shortage.

House Bill 305 by Rep Richard Hayes

 **Governor vetoed; did not become law**

- Would require people restored through a competency restoration program a timely court proceeding to mitigate decomposition while waiting in jail.



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11

Policy advocacy trainings provided to 11 Texas regions

Tour Across Texas

Summer 2024

The Arc of Texas Policy and Advocacy team hits the road every other summer, before the Texas Legislative Session begins, to visit with staff, volunteers and participants of our local chapters, and provide advocacy training to help folks influence state-level public policies affecting people with IDD.

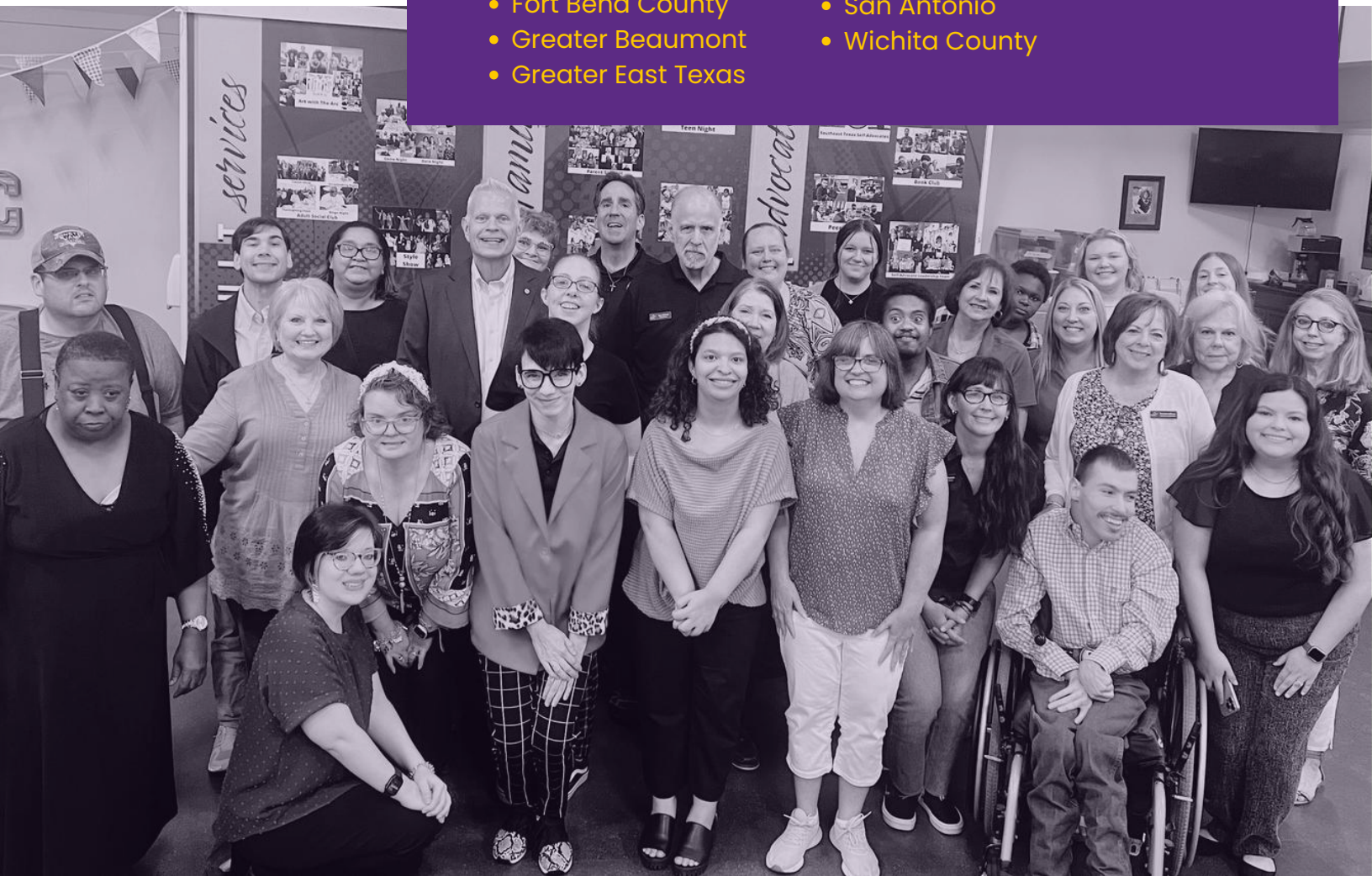
The tour was a huge success, with stops in 11 regions across the state. It had us singing Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" on repeat as we got to meet hundreds of people from the Lone Star State's diverse disability community, including determined self-advocates, passionate parents and family members of people with IDD, and incredible people working in the disability services field.

To our local chapters, thank you for having us! Your voices helped shape our policy priorities—and progress—for the 89th Texas Legislative Session!

- Capital Area
- DFW Area
- El Paso
- Fort Bend County
- Greater Beaumont
- Greater East Texas
- Harris County
- McLennan County
- Rio Grande Valley
- San Antonio
- Wichita County

THE ARC OF TEXAS Tour Across Texas

Coming to a chapter near you!



115

115 representatives from ten local chapters convened at the Texas Capitol to inform state policymakers about issues impacting people with IDD

Meet The Arc Day

January 31, 2025

Our kickoff advocacy day for the 89th Texas Legislative Session was abuzz with advocates on a mission to make their voices heard. The event offered state lawmakers and their staff the opportunity to meet our local chapters and learn about issues affecting constituents with IDD and their families. Each of the following chapters brought a contingent to the Texas Capitol, conducting more than 30 advocacy visits in a single day!

- Capital Area
- DFW Area
- El Paso
- Fort Bend County
- Greater Beaumont
- Greater East Texas
- Harris County
- Gulf Coast
- The Rio Grande Valley
- Wichita County



MEET THE ARC DAY


The Arc.
Texas

*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities.*



208

Legislative office visits to advocate for increased Direct Support Professionals wages

Have A Heart for The Arc Day

February 14, 2025

On Valentine's Day, our statewide network delivered Valentine's cards to their elected officials, reminding them to "have a heart" for The Arc and Texans with IDD. Our message focused on strengthening the direct care workforce.



The Problem

The backbone of the care system for the IDD community, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide supports that empower people to thrive in their communities, but low wages make it difficult to recruit and retain these essential workers. Many DSPs earn just \$10.60/hour despite the job's complex demands.

Proposed Solution

We advocated alongside disability rights partner organizations throughout session for a wage increase to \$17/hour. When DSP are supported with fair wages, Texans with IDD receive more consistent and quality care, which helps them live meaningful and independent lives. A strong DSP workforce ensures Texas families and communities can thrive.

Status

The legislature increased DSP pay to \$13/hour (effective fiscal year 2027). While this increase is appreciated, it does not sufficiently address the workforce crisis and remains far below parity with State Supported Living Centers.

Special thanks to volunteers of The Arc of the Capital Area for their collaboration at the Texas Capitol on event day!



DONATE



MASTER POOLED

trust

People with disabilities shouldn't be financially limited. Our Master Pooled Trust allows you to manage your funds while preserving government benefits eligibility. If a person with a disability receives even a modest amount of money, exceeding \$2,000, from an inheritance, a gift, a court settlement, or even from a savings account established on their behalf, they may become ineligible for critical government benefits. However, if funds are placed in a Master Pooled Trust sub-account, government benefits will not be at risk.

"The trust allows people with disabilities of any kind to live their best lives while protecting government benefits. We're here for people when no one else is."

Haley Greer

Director of The Arc of Texas
Master Pooled Trust

FAQ

- Established in 1997, we're one of the largest pooled trusts in the country. We understand trust laws and governmental requirements, and our investments are professionally managed.
- Any Texas resident who meets the Social Security Administration's definition of a person with a disability is eligible for our trust. It is not limited to people with IDD.
- The beneficiary and their representatives determine how trust funds are distributed, outlined in a legally binding Joinder Agreement. We follow Social Security and Medicaid regulations to ensure disbursements won't cause a loss of government benefits.

It's been a pivotal year for The Arc of Texas Master Pooled Trust, with significant strides to enhance our services and expand our reach. We transitioned to new financial partners, including a new investment advisor and financial administrator, to better serve our beneficiaries. We also launched a secure online portal, providing beneficiaries and their representatives easier access to account information, and an [on-demand video series to help people understand, enroll and make use of the trust \(available in English and Spanish\).](#)

In addition to these operational improvements, we are often called upon as experts in the field, presenting to 100+ audiences in Texas and across the nation about the benefits of special needs trusts. As an extension of our services, we hosted a Future Planning series to support individuals with disabilities and their families in preparing for long-term needs.

4,446

Trust accounts
established

2,139

Current
beneficiaries

182

Texas counties in
which we have
beneficiaries

In Their Words

The Arc of Texas
MASTER POOLED

trust

"My son, Jonathan, got his trust set up last year. I had a list of things I was trying to get for my son, and I needed guidance. I was overwhelmed. By the end of our conversation with The Arc of Texas, I was almost in tears because I was feeling overjoyed and empowered. The Master Pooled Trust Coordinator helped me understand what I needed to do.

We just got approved for a rehab machine we have only dreamed of getting for about 20 years (it has always been financially out of our reach), and that dream is about to be a reality. I tried many times to get insurance to cover it, without success. We are pinching ourselves right now!

We were also able to get a wheelchair van we desperately needed and it has been life changing to get my son to appointments safely. The nurses were having to physically lift him out of his wheelchair and then put him into the seat in the van. It was awkward and unsafe because he could be dropped, or the nurse could get injured. My son has a trach and moving him safely is our top priority. Now, he can go to doctor appointments with such ease, rolling his wheelchair into the van and rolling him out... no lifting or injuries.

We are still pinching ourselves because our life has changed for the better with these approvals. We are absolutely happier than we have been in years because we are all helping Jonathan have a better quality of life. We are grateful for the support and we are sending hugs!"

Tammy | Jonathan's Mom | Diboll



12,680

Disbursements
to beneficiaries
since Jan. 1, 2024

\$156M

Assets as of
May 31, 2025
(all beneficiary accounts)

\$1.8M

Remainder funds
as of May 31, 2025

Pooled trusts can retain a portion of remaining funds from a beneficiary's account after their death, before payback is made to Medicaid, to support programs and services benefitting people with disabilities.

At The Arc of Texas, this has helped us create a care manager position to assist beneficiaries, and fund projects that promote long-term quality of life for Texans with disabilities.

In Their Words

CONTINUED

The Arc of Texas
MASTER POOLED

trust

"For nearly two decades, I worked with The Arc of Texas Master Pooled Trust as part of our responsibility in delivering Medicaid waiver home and community-based services. I appreciate all the assistance, responsiveness, timely reports, and great service. You are a jewel to the disability community."

Sheryl | Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network | Waco

"Without the trust I would never have been able to get my home. Now I can take care of myself. I don't have to depend on somebody else. It relieved a lot of pressure."

Cissy | Trust Beneficiary | Abilene

"I had the chance to work with The Arc of Texas to establish a trust for a very special young woman who suffered a serious brain injury. From my first call to request help until the trust was approved by the court, the team was very helpful and responsive to our requests.

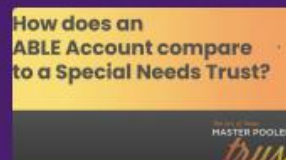
I hope more attorneys use this great organization to help their clients."

Jeff | Attorney | San Antonio

"I opened a trust for my adult son, Logan, who is disabled by autism, ADHD, and bipolar disorder. He inherited a little money from his grandmother and I realized this would disqualify him from receiving his social security benefits. This would mean that he would no longer have Medicaid, and that if anything were to happen to me, he could potentially be destitute and homeless. I want to make sure he will be secure even after I die. The trust makes this possible since it is exempt from the accounting of assets for the purpose of his social security income. It is also reassuring to know the trust makes certain his money is only spent in ways that will not jeopardize his benefits. Setting up the trust was time-sensitive for us and the team made the process simple and quick. They put my mind at ease. I will never hesitate to call if I need help in the future."

Stacy | Logan's Mom | Dallas

Explore Videos



The Arc of Texas

MASTER POOLED

trust

Easier Online
Experience

thearcoftexas.org/trust

How to Enroll



Jump to section



Step 1: Watch explainer videos (10 minutes)

Step 2: Choose your trust type

Step 3: Complete the joinder agreement

Step 4: Learn how to use your trust

Make the Most of Your Trust

Everything you need to use your trust.

Request a Disbursement

Check My Account

Everything you need to know

The Master Pooled Trust Toolkit includes all the information you need to make the most of your trust account.

Toolkit

Descargar En Español

Check My Account: Online Access

Online Trust account access is here! The True Link Financial online account portal allows you to:

[1] View, print and download quarterly statements

[2] Check the account balance

[3] See when a deposit is posted

[4] See when a disbursement has been approved

Online Account Access: Log In or Sign Up

To sign up for online account access, you will need the Beneficiary's name, date of birth, and sub-account number. **Please allow 3-5 business days after signing up to gain online access to the account.** Once access is granted, you will be able to log in.

NOTE: Primary Representatives who oversee multiple accounts must sign up for each account separately.

Log In

Sign Up

How to Read Your Statement

Get an explanation of all parts of your account statement.

Learn How

True Link Portal Guide

Get help navigating the online account portal.

View Guide



DONATE



Resource Library

Our new, online information [resource library](#) provides easy access to trusted resources for Texans with IDD, their families, and their support networks. Topics include education, alternatives to guardianship, legal aid, employment, protecting finances and benefits, and more. [Access it here and click a category to view related resources.](#)

Civil Rights and Justice

People with IDD deserve fair treatment in the criminal justice system.

Community Supports and Services

People with IDD have the right to live and thrive in their communities.

Employment Rights

People with IDD deserve fair, competitive, and integrated job opportunities.

Education Rights

Students with IDD deserve access to a free and appropriate public education.

Finances and Government Benefits

Manage your financial security and plan for the future.

Health and Mental Health

Appropriate whole-health care is critical to the wellbeing of people with IDD.

Housing

People with IDD deserve to live in the communities of their choice.

Legal

CLEA certified attorneys understand disability benefits, estate planning, wills, and special needs trusts.

Policy Advocacy

Advocacy helps elected officials make policy decisions that support Texans with IDD.


Supported Decision Making


Maintain the independence of Texans with disabilities while planning for the supports they need at every stage.



New Website

We launched a [new, improved website](#) at the end of 2024, marking a significant evolution in the look, experience, and accessibility of our digital content. Available in English and Spanish, get engaged, find resources, and learn about disability rights at thearcoftexas.org!

[Policy & Advocacy](#)[Master Pooled Trust](#)[Resources](#)[Get Involved](#)[Who We Are](#)




EN

Donate


Texans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Established in 1953, The Arc of Texas advocates for Texans with IDD, so that each of us can live the life we deserve and choose.



▼ SCROLL DOWN


[Advocate for Texans with IDD >](#)[Protect your finances and benefits >](#)[Check out disability resources >](#)[Find local chapters of The Arc >](#)







Take Action






Join an Event





Share Your Story





Make a Donation



Get disability rights news and tools

Subscribe:

Email address





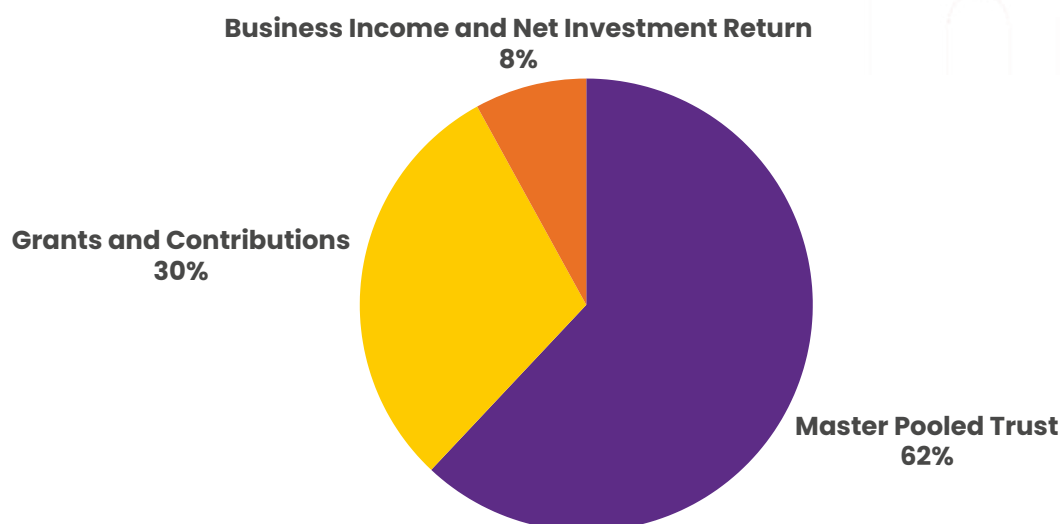
DONATE



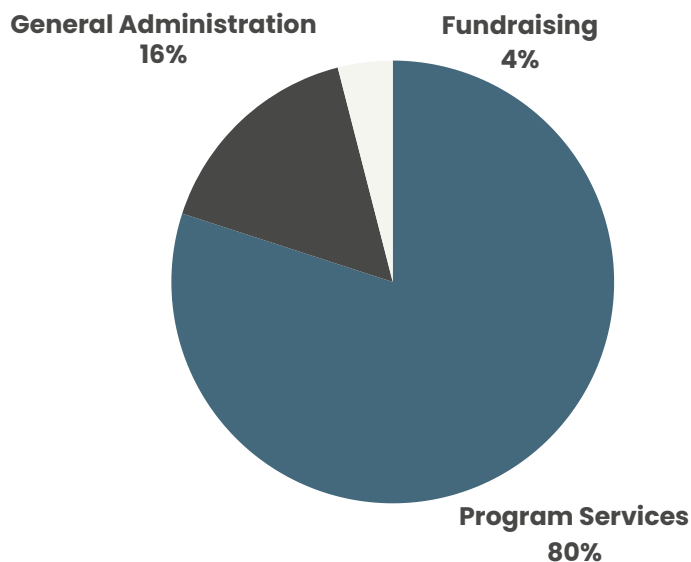
Financials

Based on The Arc of Texas' most recent audited financials (2023)

Operating Revenue | \$2.76M



Operating Expenses | \$2.48M



Make a gift that makes a difference

We've got the backs of Texans with IDD

Every Texan with IDD deserves the opportunity for an equal education, the freedom to make choices about where they live, the chance to earn a fair wage, and justice that treats them equitably.

Today, too many are still waiting for these rights—but we are committed to making them a reality.

MAKE A GIFT TODAY that makes a difference. No matter the size, every donation helps, and our mission depends on it.

DONATE NOW in someone's honor or memory, round up your purchases to donate the change to us, set a recurring gift, and more on [our donation webpage](#).

For sponsorship and visibility opportunities, please contact us.

The Arc of Texas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit—tax ID 74-1342667.



DONATE

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The Arc
Texas

*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities.*

THEARCOFTexas.ORG

Let's get social! Follow @THEARCOFTexas

