

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is an honor to reflect on a year marked by impactful advocacy. This year, we focused on ensuring families understand how to access the vital services available to them. Through steadfast dedication, we amplified awareness across the state about the challenges faced by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and the critical importance of providing high-quality supports. By coming together with one voice, we strengthened our message and advanced our mission to create meaningful change.



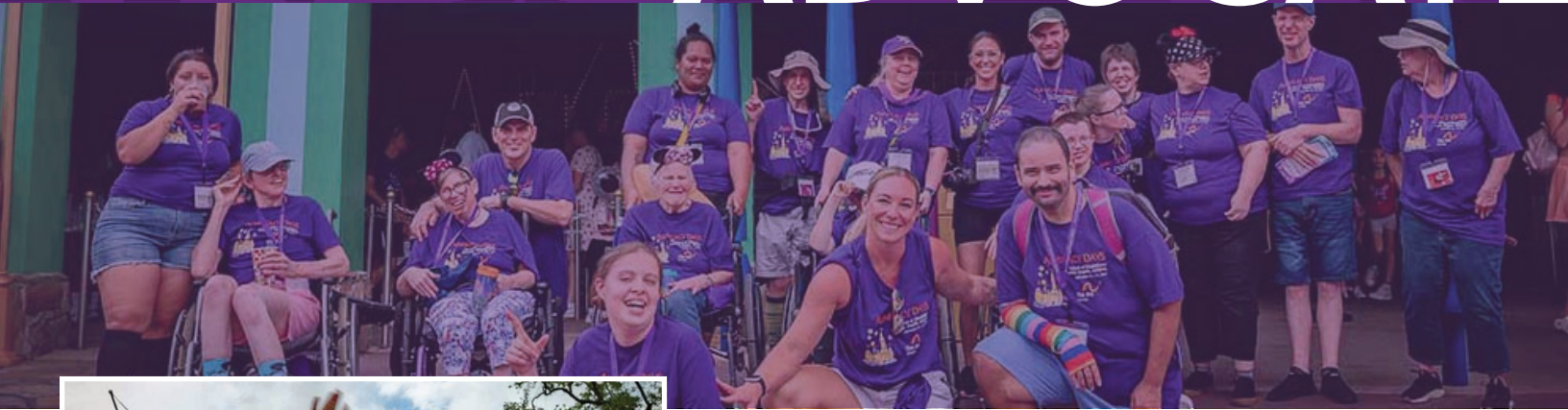
I extend my deepest gratitude to the families who place their trust in us and dedicate their time and energy to this important work. To our Arc chapters and colleagues across Florida, thank you for your unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional services every day to the most deserving group of people. And to our legislators, state agencies, and stakeholders, your recognition of the value and potential of people with I/DD fuels our progress and helps build a brighter, more welcoming future for people with I/DD.

Together, we are making a difference—thank you for being a part of this journey.

With appreciation,

Kari Bates
The Arc of Florida Board President

CONTINUING TO ADVOCATE



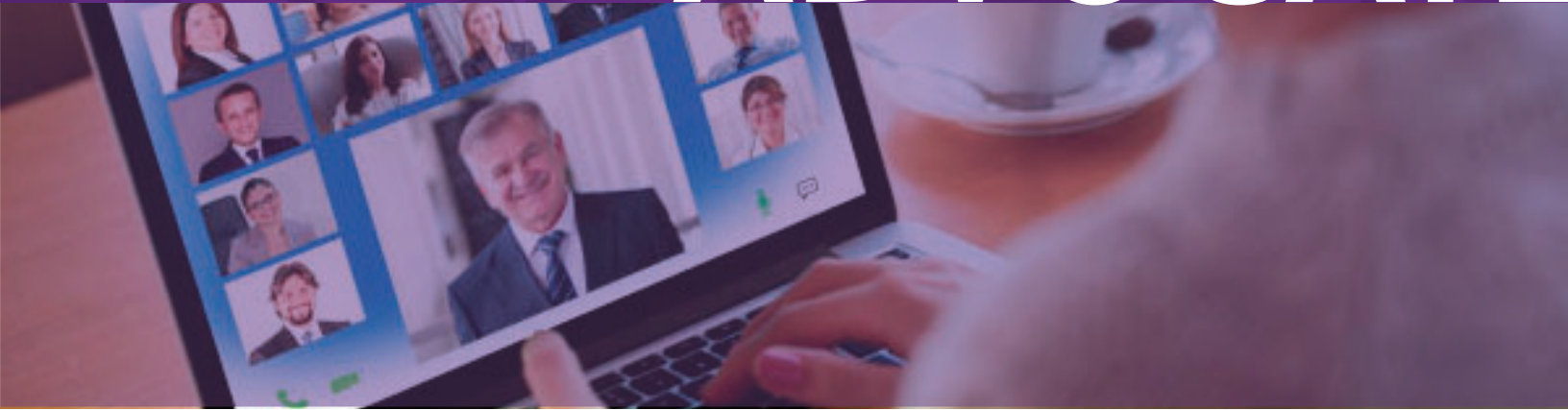
The Arc of Florida held its 2nd Annual #AdvocacyDays at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, September 13 - 15, 2024. Attended by 504 self-advocates, families, caregivers, and leadership, we focused on inclusion, acceptance, and diversity while discussing innovative ideas for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The theme was Support Decision-Making. Attendees were welcomed on Friday evening by our keynote speaker followed by dinner, Disney characters, and the most awesome Dance Party ever! Saturday and Sunday morning featured sessions, including a self-advocate panel, in addition to an afternoon at the Magic Kingdom Park for all.

Sponsors included:

ABLE United
CareSource
Children's Medical Services Health Plan
(operated by Sunshine Health)
Community Assisted & Supported Living (CASL)
Florida Association of Community Health Centers
Florida Home Health Equipment & Supplies
Florida Community Care
Florida Insurance Trust
Jazz Pharmaceuticals
Kaye Kendrick Enterprises
Liberty Dental
Park Shore Pharmacon
Sandata Technologies
Therap
The Arc of South Florida
The Florida Certified Board



CONTINUING TO ADVOCATE



The Arc of Florida continues to expand our advocacy through **MONTHLY MEETINGS** focusing on pertinent and important topics for three distinct groups. Certificates of attendance are available when relevant.

We promote these meetings through our social media platforms and email database of 22,695 contacts.



ADVOCACY MEETINGS

This committee is for family members, self-advocates and professionals to be part of Florida's advocacy for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

(206 average registered monthly)



LUNCH-N-LEARN

A series of webinars for parents, caregivers, and self-advocates. Centered around the lunch time hour, these will focus on topics you need to know.

(211 average registered monthly)



PROVIDER FORUMS

This monthly forum, a free service, is for small and moderate providers to keep them informed during legislative session and up to date on advocacy.

(346 average registered monthly)

CONTINUING TO ADVOCATE



The Arc of Florida continued our **ADVOCACY IN ACTION** by bringing our **AWARENESS INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN** into the community. Our 4th component, **#BeActive**, joined forces with our Arc chapters, colleagues, and community partners. These in-person trainings educated self-advocates, families, and caregivers, on the importance of applying for the Medicaid waiver, understanding what is happening legislatively, and the advantages of being on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Waiting List .

We also educated families on School-Age Transition and why it is important. Being on APD's Waiting List will help your child transition to other services once they become an adult. Even though there is a Waiting List, limited services with state-funded programs may be available.

“ The challenges we face in supporting individuals with intellectual and/or development differences can be overwhelming at times. Being able to collaborate with other agencies throughout the state to develop innovative programming, as well as learn how to better navigate the systems and programs that are available for those we serve, has been a game changer; it also helps remind that we are not alone in our advocacy work.

John Williams
CEO, The Arc of Bradford County

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BE ACTIVE...



... in your community. If you are caring for a loved one with an intellectual and developmental disability, take part in our **Awareness Initiative**.



Powered by ScanLife.com

- ✓ **#BePrepared.**
Learn how to apply for services.
- ✓ **#BeCounted.**
Contact your APD office.
- ✓ **#BeHeard.**
Follow up and know your category classification.

CONTINUING TO SPEAK ONE VOICE

The Arc of Florida continues our statewide awareness by engaging self-advocates and families in everything we do. **OUR MISSION** is to advocate for local chapters, public policies, and high quality supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of their community.



PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

A joint survey conducted by The Arc of Florida showed provider concern regarding programs and services provided to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). They stated choice and independence as paramount for this vulnerable population to live in their own home or in the community and achieve productive lives.

- 47% OF PROVIDERS** reduced client services last year and **21% OF PROVIDERS** stated they are planning to further reduce services.
- 85% OF PROVIDERS** stated they are operating at a loss even with the increase in rates last year.
- 40% OF PROVIDERS** stated the lack of funding has negatively impacted their ability to maintain services.
- 110% AVERAGE INCREASE** in liability insurance premiums over the past five years.
- 47% AVERAGE INCREASE** in personnel costs for employee health insurance premiums.
- On average, **14% OF POSITIONS** are currently open and **OVERTIME IS 12%.**

PROVIDERS IDENTIFIED ADULT DAY TRAINING (ADT) AS THE MOST DIFFICULT SERVICE TO MAINTAIN.

Others included:

- Group Homes and Supported Living
- Personal Supports
- Transportation
- Supported Employment

Most small and medium providers surveyed reported using charitable contributions, earned income and reserve funds to continue business, along with reductions. Providers noted projected operating losses for FY 23-26.

The Arc of Florida
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2025 LEGISLATIVE STAFFING

RATE INCREASE TO RETAIN, RECRUIT, AND SUPPORT DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSPs): Address minimum wage increase and increased cost of living which threatens service delivery.

INCREASE DSPS WAGES \$1 with an estimated \$44.6 million General Revenue (\$57.4 million Federal match).

✓ This is to allow providers to recruit and retain Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

ADDITIONAL COST CONSIDERATIONS:

- ✓ Florida has experienced **SIGNIFICANT INFLATION** in terms of housing costs and other outlays of doing business. This makes it increasingly difficult for individuals and businesses to plan for the future and maintain financial stability.
- ✓ Providers, in a recent survey, stated the lack of funding has negatively impacted their ability to maintain services provided to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- ✓ Recent notifications regarding the Medicaid unwinding process have forced providers to make difficult decisions regarding uncompensated care or ending critical services.
- ✓ Denying care to longstanding clients resulted in catastrophic consequences such as homelessness, loss of access to health and safety supports.
- ✓ Significant **INCREASES IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND REGULATORY BURDEN** placed on providers, such as Training (ADT) and iConnect, have had substantial cost implications.
- ✓ Providers have had to hire additional staff solely dedicated to administrative compliance rather than direct client care activities.

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2025 LEGISLATIVE HOUSING

HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES: Housing tailored to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) is crucial and continued discussions for next year's legislative agenda is a priority. Money from previous appropriations for housing for this vulnerable population is gone, and if capital isn't available, it will be difficult to purchase or build at current costs.

APPROPRIATE \$25 MILLION to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) to fund continuation of the competitive grant program for affordable housing for individuals with I/DD.

✓ Affordable housing deepens community integration, improves quality of life, and increases independence and self-sufficiency for this vulnerable population.

RETAIN FLEXIBILITY for FHFC to collaborate with stakeholders like the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to determine optimal housing models (community residential homes, supported living units, larger multifamily apartment communities).

✓ Move into small community group homes and small apartment communities built with the intent of larger units, and high-end units, to meet the needs of individuals with I/DD to live independently.

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2025 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

RATE INCREASE TO RETAIN, RECRUIT, AND SUPPORT DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSPs): Address minimum wage increase and increased cost of living which threatens service delivery.

✓ The Arc of Florida supports the investment in the Medicaid Waiver as expansion of services statewide is critical for families and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

REDUCE THE AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (APD) WAITING LIST: A proposed waiver for transitioning students with I/DD out of schools is being considered and a new Pilot explored. Successful innovations and feedback from families and individuals with I/DD participating in these new programs is paramount.

✓ The Arc of Florida supports legislative and gubernatorial efforts to reduce APD's Waiting List for those with I/DD.

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✓ The Arc of Florida supports the need for individuals with I/DD to live independently in their own community with dignity and choice.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR): Support the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's legislative budget request to be a first step in implementing the Public Consulting Group (PCG) rate study recommendations. In 2022, the VR Division commissioned the four-year phase-in plan rate study, which recommended an average 52% increase for services.

✓ The Arc of Florida supports this recommendation as the first part of the phased approach outlined in the PCG report.

Individuals Enrolled on Medicaid Waiver: 35,566
Individuals in Pre-enrollment Category: 21,967
Agency for Persons with Disabilities, June 2023

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“Through the advocacy efforts of The Arc of Florida, individuals and families across the state can be assured their voices are heard. The commitment of The Arc of Florida to our mission enhances our ability as members to create positive change and empower individuals in our community.”

Melissa Rogers
CEO, Arc Gateway

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CONTINUING TO SPEAK ONE VOICE



The Arc of Florida continues to encourage individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as their families, to [#FindYourVoice](#) and to [#StepUp](#) and [#BeHeard](#) at their local delegation meetings. Our message was heard at every delegation meeting throughout the state.

Legislative delegation meetings are public meetings happening before the start of a new legislative session, usually in the summer and fall. These meetings occur throughout the state; Senators and Representatives from each district are present at their respective meetings. These forums are open to the public and are a great chance for members of the public to present legislative proposals, make funding requests, or express opinions on state issues.

“ Meeting our mission is paramount in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially the role of Direct Support Professionals. This dedicated group work tirelessly through daily challenges to provide needed support and outstanding service to those we serve. When we all speak with one voice and work together, everyone benefits. ”

Brian Siracusa
Executive Director, The Arc Tampa Bay



CONTINUING TO REACH

The Arc of Florida continues our brand recognition and awareness through **SOCIAL MEDIA** and **EMAIL MARKETING**. This establishes an emotional connection with our followers and increases our visibility across all platforms.

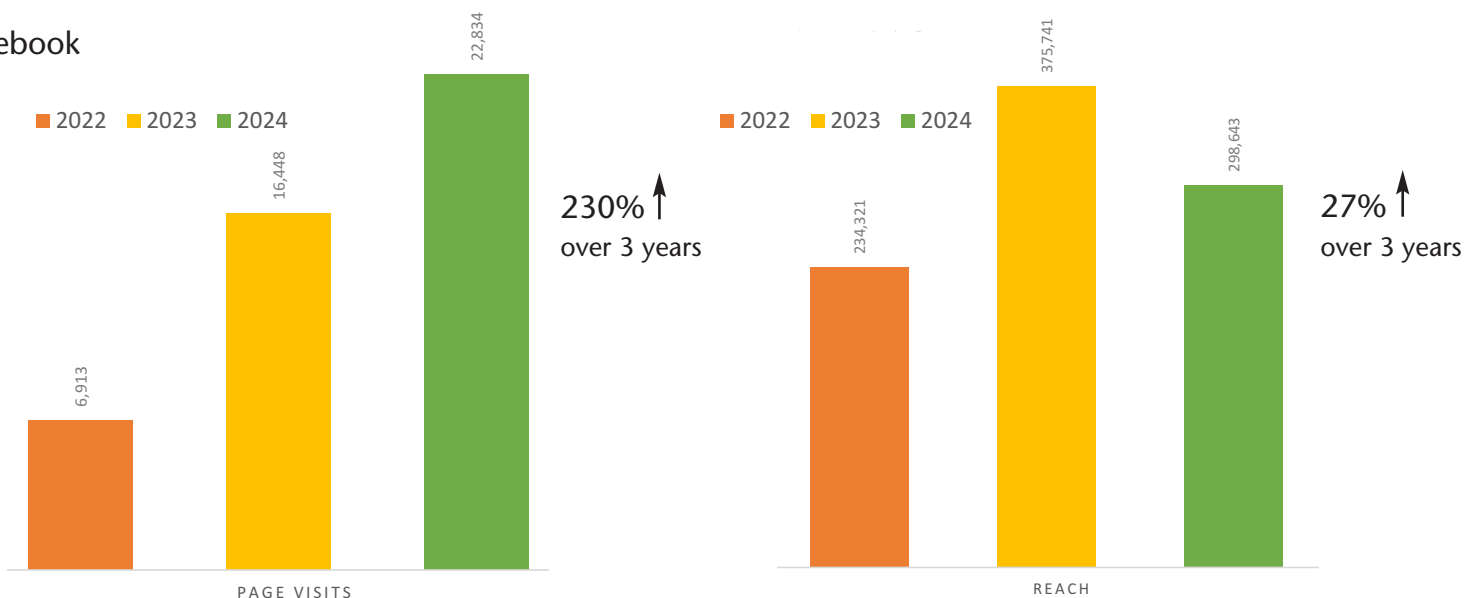
“ We have found a great tool in our marketing arsenal with our social media and email campaigns. These have greatly increased our overall branding and continue to set the stage for future objectives. ”

Dina Justice
COO, The Arc of Florida

Page Views: The number of times your page was visited.

Reach/Impressions: The number of people who saw any of your posts at least once.

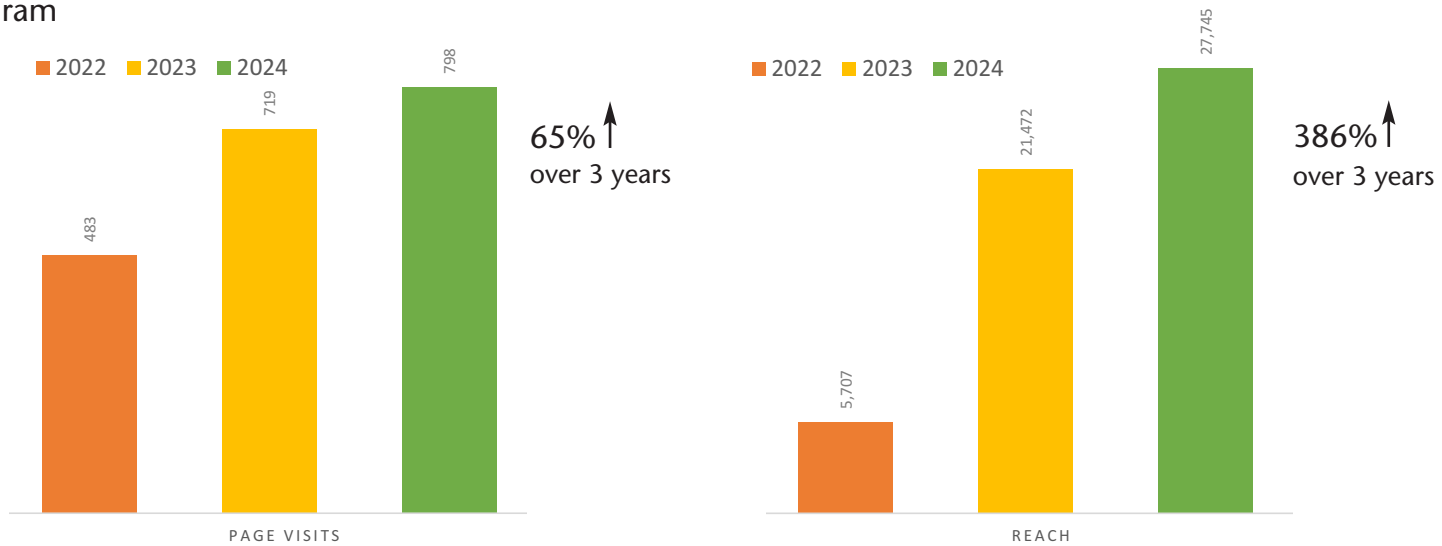
Facebook



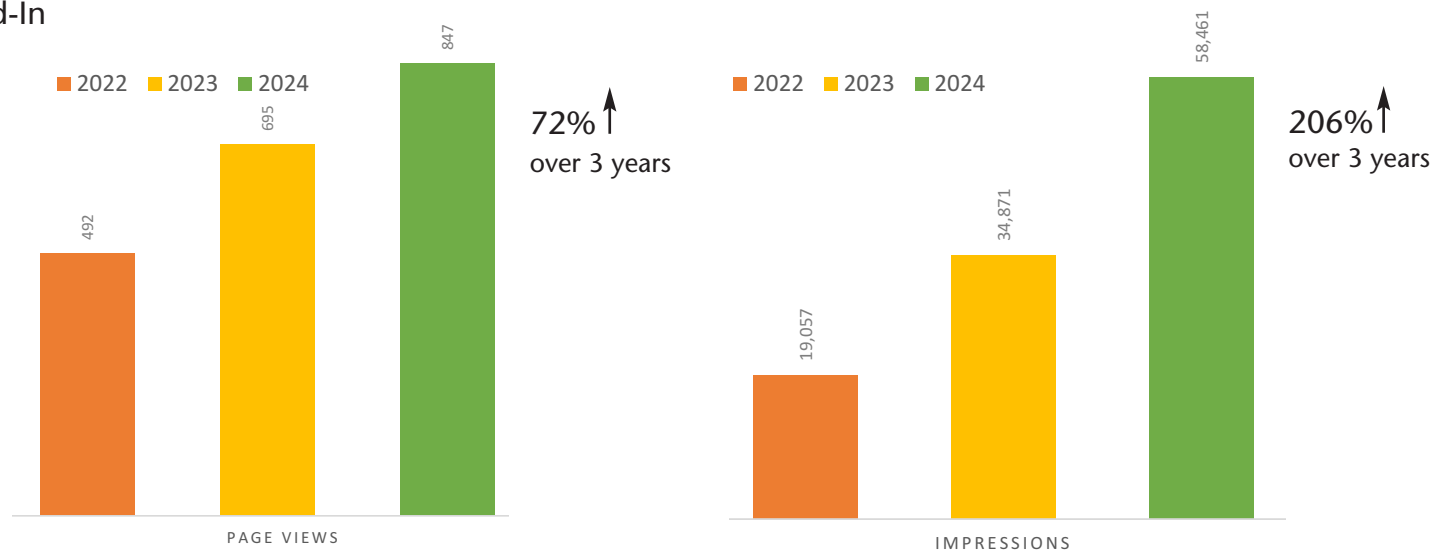
CONTINUING TO REACH



Instagram



Linked-In



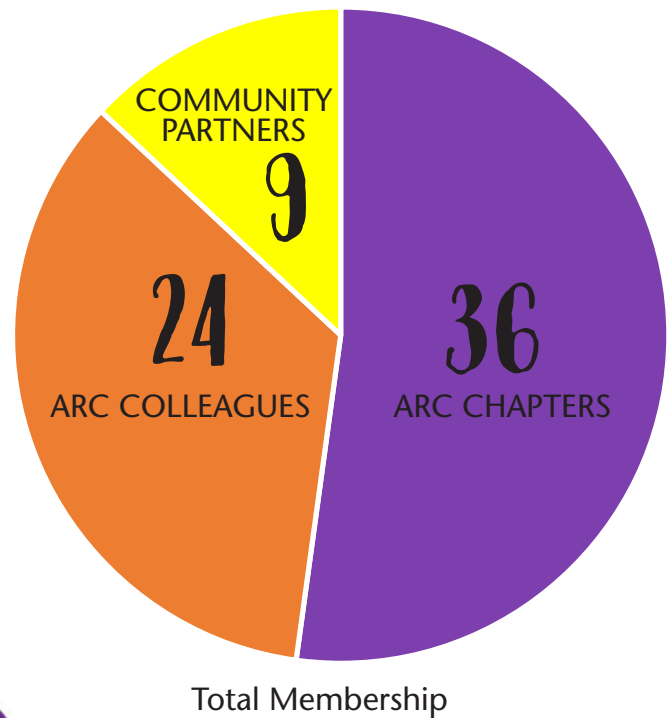
CONTINUING TO EXPAND



The Arc of Florida continues to maintain its statewide advocacy through **CONTINUED GROWTH** of chapters and various membership opportunities.

COLLEAGUE MEMBERSHIPS are providers who have partnered with The Arc of Florida who support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). These are non-voting members, but with all membership opportunities as our Arc chapters except The Arc branding.

COMMUNITY PARTNER MEMBERSHIPS are those smaller associations supporting individuals with I/DD, often at the grassroots level.



“It has been a privilege to become a part of The Arc of Florida family. JARC Florida has greatly benefitted from the support and collaboration we have received from the staff and colleagues.”

Jeffrey Zirulnick
CEO, JARC

CONTINUING TO EXPAND

CHAPTERS

Arc Broward
Arc Desoto
Arc Gateway
Arc on the Gulf
Arc of Martin County
CASL – Community Assisted
& Supported Living
Jackson Arc
LARC/The Arc of
Southwest Florida
Pyramid
Ridge Area Arc
The Arc Big Bend
The Arc Bradford County
The Arc Jacksonville
The Arc Marion County
The Arc Nassau
The Arc Nature Coast
The Arc North Florida
The Arc Sunrise of
Central Florida
The Arc Tampa Bay
The Arc Tampa Bay
Foundation
The Arc of Alachua County
The Arc of Charlotte County
The Arc of Indian River County
The Arc of Levy County
The Arc of Martin County
The Arc of Palm Beach County
The Arc of Putnam County
The Arc of South Florida
The Arc of Space Coast
The Arc of St. Lucie County
The Arc of Volusia
The Arc of Washington-
Holmes Counties
The Arc of the Bay
The Arc of the Emerald Coast
The Arc of The Glades

The Arc of the St. Johns
Victory Living Programs

COLLEAGUES

Adult Care Housing
All Support Servicing
Award Living Solutions
Bridge to Hope
Chautauqua Learn &
Serve Charter School
Empowerment Programs
Expert Billing & More
Florida Home Health
Equipment & Supplies
God's Protected Harbor
Habilitative Services of
North Florida
JARC Florida
Jonathan's Landing
J.R. Ranch Home #1
Logistique
Non-Profit Initiatives
Pine Castle
Resolute Care Service
Rosen JCC
Shalimare, Inc.
Side by Side
STARability Founda-
tion
Therap
We Care Support Services
Yasmina

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

American Children's
Campaign
Autism Society of Florida

Autism Speaks
Center for Autism & Related
Disabilities (CARD)
Down Syndrome Association
Florida Association of Behavior
Florida Youth Soccer
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome
We the People, By the People



The Arc
of Florida

