

# The Arc of Colorado 2018 Chapter Report



# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Honored Guests,

It is hard to believe that I am already looking back on my first year as the Executive Director of The Arc of Colorado. I look back on a year of excitement. Each day presents new challenges and I am grateful for the opportunity to have an impact on important issues facing our community.

I have been incredibly lucky to join an organization with such an outstanding reputation. Whether I am seated at a table of community partners, government agencies, or at the Capitol Building, the people around me recognize the outstanding work done by The Arc of Colorado. I owe an immense debt of gratitude to my predecessor and to each of the Chapters of The Arc in Colorado for their excellent work across our state.

While acknowledging the work of the past, I hope to build on an important legacy, insuring a positive position for the future. In order to achieve this goal, I look forward to working with you to strategically build on the work of our past.

The Arc of Colorado continues our strong emphasis on public policy. During the 2017-2018 legislative session, all five of our most prioritized bills passed into legislation. All of the bills we strongly opposed did not pass into legislation. As in all legislative sessions, we did suffer some defeat. However, we are energized to fight these fights again in the coming session. I look forward to a chapter report that one day, features the end of the DD waiver waitlist.

This year, we also made sustainable change for our organization. This included diversification of revenue through grants and major gifts. This additional funding allowed us to add another staff member full-time and to update much of our technology. Our new technology will help to increase our capacity and efficiency for the coming session and to better serve rural areas.

My board chair, Tonya Kelly and I have placed much emphasis this year on increasing board involvement. Three new committees have been created and involvement is up 275%. This involvement of our board ensures sound stewardship of our organization and provides much needed collaborative energy to help meet our goals. In addition, The Arc of Colorado proudly announced a new Vice President, Mitch Routon in August. Mitch is the first executive committee member of The Arc of Colorado's Board to also be a self-advocate. His leadership position grounds our organization in our true mission and values.

This fall, I completed a listening tour of all of the rural chapters in Colorado (I will be continuing this tour in the Denver-metro area over the course of the winter). I am privileged to learn more about the needs of each community and to better understand ways in which The Arc of Colorado can be of service to each chapter. As always, I want to thank each of the chapters, their executive directors and staff, for their accomplishments. This community would not be effective without all of you. I am thankful for all of your input as I have navigated my first year at The Arc.

I am reminded every day how important this work is and I am so thankful to be here. I invite you to celebrate the past with us today, and to energize yourself for the road ahead.

Cordially,



Christiano Sosa



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# OUR MISSION

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The Arc of Colorado believes that: All people have moral and civil rights providing them with opportunities to love, work, play, learn, and worship in communities where they choose to live. All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have inherent value with individual strengths and abilities, are equal before the law, and must be treated with dignity and respect.

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## OUR WORK

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- Influencing public policy to ensure the necessary supports and services are in place for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a common life
- Increasing public awareness of the rights and needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Supporting and developing local chapters
- Collaborating with national, state, and local organizations sharing the same values



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Executive Committee:

Tonya Kelly- President \*^  
Mitch Routon- Vice President  
Randy Patrick- Past President  
Ben Rhodes- Secretary~  
Kelly Stahlman- Treasurer \*\*

## At Large Members:

Vicki Wray  
Jill Accame  
Corry Robinson +  
Faye Tate \*^

## Chapter Representatives:

Oren “Von” Limbaugh- The Arc of Aurora \*\*  
Lynnelle Zackroff- The Arc of Adams County +~  
Jessica Wayt- The Arc Mesa~  
Mika Kusar- The Arc of Southwest Colorado  
Mary Young- The Arc of Weld County  
Lynn Meyer- The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas Counties  
Tom Riley- ACL- Boulder \*^  
Lori Thom- The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region \*^  
Danielle Angotti- 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  
Tena Green- The Arc of Larimer County

- \* 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

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# STAFF

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## **Christiano Sosa- Executive Director**

Christiano has been with The Arc of Colorado since 2018. 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.

He currently serves as President of the Board of Directors for Mi Casa Resource Center, advancing the economic success of Latino families in Denver.

## **Heidi Haines- Director of Advocacy**

Heidi Haines has been with The Arc of Colorado since 2011. Heidi works as the Director of Advocacy and also serves as an advisor to SABE (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered), the National self advocacy organization for people with developmental disabilities. Heidi is a 2017 graduate of the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware Advanced Leadership Institute. Heidi is also 2016 graduate of the William and Mary Law Institute of Special Education Advocacy. Heidi served as a technology navigation fellow for The Arc of The United States in 2015 and 2016. Heidi has long demonstrated a passion for disability rights, an understanding of the critical issues, and the desire to collaborate with a wide range of advocacy and community groups in the state of Colorado and nationwide.

## **Abigail Negley- Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator**

Abigail has been with the Arc of Colorado since 2017. She is indispensable in our office including communications, policy, and advocacy referrals. Prior to becoming an employee, she was a volunteer with The Arc for six years during high school and college, and has developed a passion for advocating for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Abigail strongly believes that sound, bi-partisan policy can make a positive difference in the lives of people with I/DD. She is a 2018 graduate of the University of Denver with a Bachelor of Arts in French and Francophone Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Socio-Legal Studies.

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# SELF-ADVOCACY

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## A Celebration

The theme of this annual meeting is Self-Advocacy. This theme was chosen to celebrate our continued efforts to place self-advocacy at the center of our mission.

This year, Vicki Wray was named Vice President of the SABE board. Her success demonstrates the wonderful things that people with disabilities can accomplish when they are supported and included. We recognize that Vicki, and others with disabilities have limitless possibilities when their interests are fostered. We are proud to be a part of her journey.

“I am privileged and honored to be on this board. It means a lot to me.”- Mitch Routon

Mitch Routon was named our new Board Vice President this year. Mitch is a strong advocate for individuals with I/DD. In the public policy arena, from local government to Federal government, Mitch provides a vital prospective to his representatives and reminds us all of the power of the Democratic process. His leadership will be invaluable to our organization.





# OPPORTUNITIES

## Calabrese Life Opportunities Fund

Every year, the Arc of Colorado provides technology for applicants who demonstrate both a need for technology, and a measurable way that technology would help them to live with increasing independence. Last year, we awarded five iPads, three laptops, and one Amazon echo.



## Disability Policy Seminar

Disability Policy Seminar is a wonderful opportunity for self-advocates to practice advocacy within the realm of public policy. It is an opportunity to have their voices heard and to feel empowered. The Arc of Colorado was pleased to help send three self-advocates to the Seminar in 2018. We were joined by four board members, five Arc staff members, and six community partners. Self advocate Julian Wang is pictured above, showing his iPad to Senator Corey Gardner.



## Testimony at the State Legislature

When self-advocates provide testimony at legislative session, it often reminds legislators of what truly matters. We were happy to have Connor Long (pictured) and Vicki Wray testify on our behalf multiple times during the last session. If you know of, or are a self-advocate who would like to testify, please contact us!



# PUBLIC POLICY

The following is a brief description of each bill The Arc of Colorado strongly supported in the last legislative session. Each of these bills were signed into law.

**HB18-1094:** This bill, "Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act." had four prime sponsors, Representative Leslie Herod, Representative Cole Wist, Senator Beth Martinez Humenik, and Senator Dominick Moreno. The bill indefinitely extended the "Child Mental Health Treatment Act" and renamed the Act as well. Most notably, the bill increases access for parents of non-Medicaid eligible children to receive mental health services without undue interference from child welfare, necessitates the use of the standard risk stratification tool during evaluations and creates a new definition of what it is to be a mental health agency in order to broaden the scope of providers under this net.

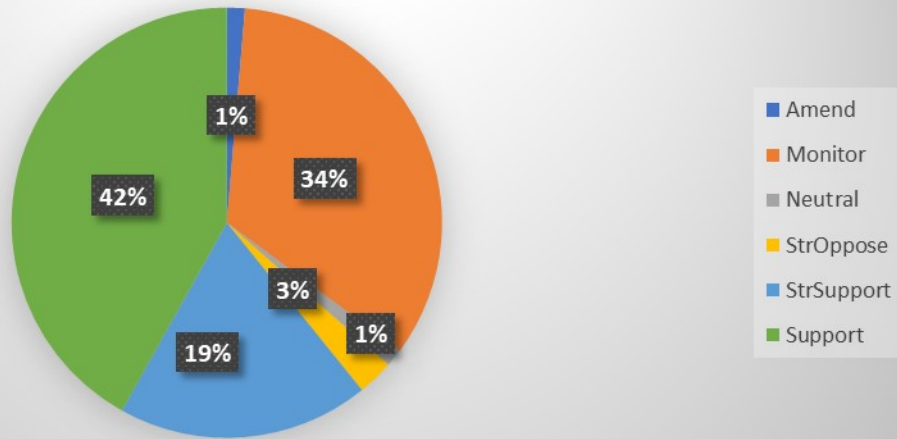
**HB18-1407:** This bill, "Access to Disability Services and Stable Workforce" bill had four prime sponsors, Representative Dave Young, Representative Bob Rankin, Senator Kent Lambert, and Senator Dominick Moreno. The bill increases access for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to services provided through work. The bill requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to find federal approval for a 6.5% increase in reimbursement rate for at-home and community-based services as specified in the bill. This increased funding must be used in full, to go towards compensation for direct support professionals.

**HB18-1328:** This bill, "Redesign Residential Child Health Care Waiver" had three prime sponsors, Representative Dave Young, Senator Kent Lambert, and Senator Dominick Moreno. The bill requires the Department Health Care Policy and Financing to include stakeholders in the drafting newly designed children's habilitation residential program waiver. The new waiver will allow for at-home and community-based services. The intention of the bill is to allow parents to retain parental rights over children receiving this waiver.



# PUBLIC POLICY

## 74 Total Bills



An overview of the Arc of Colorado's bill breakdown for the 2017-2018 Legislative Session.



The Arc of Colorado board member and SABE VP, Vicki Wray at a model of the President's Desk at the Bill Clinton Presidential Library in Arkansas. Vicki was attending a SABE meeting in Arkansas. The Arc of Colorado is proud to support her.

# PUBLIC POLICY

**SB18-145:** This bill, "Implement Employment First Recommendations" bill had two prime sponsors, Senator John Kefalas and Representative Joann Ginal. The bill implements employment first advisory partnership recommendations to further competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The department of labor and employment and the state medical services board are required to implement rules requiring providers of supported employment services for persons with disabilities to obtain certification.

**SB18-174:** This bill, "Service Providers for Persons with Developmental Disabilities" had two prime sponsors, Senator Bob Gardner and Representative Lang Sias. The bill creates a definition for a "case management agency" and requires providers and service agencies to operate in accordance with the rules of the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. The bill allows individuals with developmental disabilities to be considered tenants in their residential settings and allows them accrue property rights as tenants. Further, the bill ensures that before removing a person from their facility, person-centered planning must take place.

The Arc of Colorado's Christiano Sosa and Heidi Haines stand with self-advocates Julian Wang and Bonnie McKenzie after a bill signing.

"We salute The Arc chapters in Colorado for protecting the rights of people with disabilities and working to strengthen laws, expand services and supports for people with disabilities"- Governor John Hickenlooper



# 2019 POLICY AGENDA

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

- Changes in Colorado statute, where needed, to comply with the requirements established in federal law for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS);
- Therapeutic, out-of-home placement, and intensive treatment options for children with I/DD and dual diagnosis/secondary diagnosis of serious health, mental health, and behavioral conditions;
- Full implementation of Colorado's Olmstead Plan including implementation of strategies for integrated competitive employment;
- Increased standards for health, fire, and safety as they pertain to IRSS settings.
- Additional resources to be allocated for the implementation of Employment First in Colorado;
- Increased funding for respite and other services needed to maintain family stability;
- Expansion of *Cross-System Behavioral Health Crises Pilots*;
- Consistent standards for enrollment in HCBS/Long-Term Supports and Services (LTSS) waivers for emergency cases;
- 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/developmental disabilities. Each waiver should further access to quality services and supports when and where needed throughout their lifetimes;
- Increased Supported Living Services and waiver levels with rate increases.
- Consumer and participant directed services in all HCBS/LTSS waivers.

## **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 provide for:**

- Adequate funding for public schools for inclusive, student-centered programs for all students;
- Alternatives to harmful disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion for young students and requirements that schools to work to de-escalate minor school infractions rather than call for police department assistance.
- Expansion of Inclusive Higher Education programs in the Denver-Metro area and along the Western slope; and encourage future and current programs to attract and support degree seeking students,
- Elimination of corporal punishment in public schools that receive federal funding;
- Special education services 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 supports including transportation;
- Adequate medical, nursing, and behavioral support services (with appropriate staffing) for students with complex needs;
- Meaningful transition services for students with disabilities that are person-centered and that prepare them for continuing education and/or work-based experiences, resulting in competitive integrated employment, and successful community living;
- Achieve equal access to appropriate supports and services in publicly funded education services for student age birth through 21.



# PROPOSED 2019 POLICY AGENDA

## Protection of civil rights for people with disabilities including:

- Promoting alternatives (e.g., health-care proxies, advance directives, supported decision-making, powers of attorney, notarized statements, representation agreements, etc.) in favor of permanent, restrictive protective arrangements; guardianship policies should respect the rights of people with disabilities to manage their own affairs with 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;
- Policies for representatives of people with I/DD to ensure that the needs and choices of people are respected and honored;
- School discipline policies that provide positive behavioral supports for students with disabilities that minimize seclusion, restraint, and involvement of law enforcement;
- Appropriate accommodations and modifications to support individuals with disabilities in the criminal justice system.



# EVENTS

The Arc of Colorado once again hosted our “Wings for All” event. The event gives children with disabilities and their families the opportunity to go on a “test run” and see what it is like to go through the airport. With the help of United Airlines, 168 families experienced navigating terminals, airport security, boarding the plane, and leaving the plane.

This year, Heidi Haines, in collaboration with Jill Pidcock and Alice Brouhard of Families at the Forefront of Technology, completed six mini-conferences across the front range and the four corners of the state to educate providers and families on the potential of technology to increase independence for individuals with cognitive disabilities. The project was made possible by the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities. The Arc of Colorado and Families at the Forefront of Technology, in collaboration with Alliance were 2017 DIGS grant recipients.





# EVENTS



The Arc of Colorado, in collaboration with Alliance, hosted a successful annual legislative luncheon hosting 500 attendees, 64 of which were legislators. Donna Gunnisson (pictured above, far right) delivered the same speech at the luncheon that she had delivered at the Denver Women's March. She spoke passionately and eloquently about always having felt ignored and underestimated, and about the power of her voice. Board member Vicki Wray (center) and staff member Abigail Negley (left) also attended.



The Arc of Colorado hosted our seventh annual Achieve with us Colorado Film Festival! The event helps to spread community awareness and was held during Developmental Disabilities Awareness month. This year, 295 attendees came to learn more about the impact that people with disabilities have on the world. The Veronica Brennan award was awarded to Samuel Lawrence. He is pictured with Veronica Brennan's family and staff member Heidi Haines.



# LOOKING FORWARD

## Upcoming Projects

### SABE 2020

The Arc of Colorado is proud to partner with Speaking for Ourselves Colorado, in conjunction with The Coleman Conference, to host the 2020 conference of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (S.A.B.E.). The SABE conference is held every two years and cities are required to put in bids. For the 2020 conference, Denver won that bid! We are very excited to bring this opportunity to self-advocates across the nation and welcome them to our state. The conference is a wonderful opportunity for self-advocates to collaborate on the issues that matter most to them. If you are interested in participating in this exciting event, please contact any of the staff at The Arc of Colorado.

### CQ Engage

The Arc of Colorado is very excited to announce the launch of CQ Engage, a public policy advocacy website for our members. The URL will interface and connect with our existing website, but can be reached directly through the following URL: <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>

CQ engage is currently used by the Arc of the United States to create action alerts and reach out to their advocacy network about relevant public policy issues. We will be using the platform similarly, but to highlight issues in our state in particular. We hope that this tool will help increase our efficacy, mobilizing our base to pass and block important legislation. Please subscribe to our mailing list available on our website!

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the CQ Engage website for The Arc of Colorado. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0>. The website has a white background with a blue header. The header includes the "The Arc Colorado" logo on the left and navigation links for "HOME", "ELECTION", and "THE ARC CO" on the right. Below the header, the main heading "Achieve with us." is displayed in a large, bold, blue font. Underneath this heading, there are three main sections. The first section, titled "For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities", contains a paragraph about the organization's beliefs and a bulleted list of its goals. The second section, titled "Find your elected officials", includes a text input field for a ZIP code and a blue "GO" button. The third section, titled "Subscribe to our mailing list", includes a text input field for an email address and a blue "GO" button. The bottom of the browser window shows the Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system clock indicating 2:40 PM on 10/17/2018.

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← → ↻ <https://cqrcengage.com/thearco/home?0> ☆ 🔍 ⓘ A ⋮

**The Arc**  
Colorado

HOME | ELECTION | THE ARC CO

## Achieve with us.

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**For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The Arc of Colorado believes that: All people have moral and civil rights providing them with opportunities to love, work, play, learn and worship in communities where they choose to live. All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have inherent value with individual strengths and abilities, are equal before the law and must be treated with dignity and respect.

- Influencing public policy to ensure the necessary supports and services are in place for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a common life
- Increasing public awareness of the rights and needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Supporting and developing local chapters
- Collaborating with national, state and local organizations sharing the same values

All people in Colorado with developmental disabilities will have choices in how they live, learn, work, worship and play. **Contact us** today to learn more about how we can help.

**Find your elected officials**

Lookup your elected officials and candidates. Just enter your ZIP code to get started.

**GO ▶**

**Subscribe to our mailing list**

Provide us with your email address and we'll let you know about upcoming engagements, etc.

**GO**

Windows taskbar: Type here to search, [Taskbar icons], 2:40 PM 10/17/2018

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# LOOKING FORWARD

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## Goals for the Future

### Public Policy

We will continue to support people with I/DD and community members through testimony to the legislature. During Legislative Session we will continue to focus on building bi-partisan relationships with new legislators and creating bi-partisan solutions to problems.

### Technology

The Arc of Colorado is working hard to integrate new technology into our organization. In addition to CQ engage, we are also working to integrate further technology into our work. Our goal is to create accessible ways for our community to be involved with policy initiatives.

### Chapter Development

The Arc of Colorado will continue to offer opportunities for chapter development. We are always looking for new ways to support the chapters and look forward to your input as we collaborate with other organizations to bring new things your way!

### Strategic Planning

For 60 years, The Arc of Colorado has been making incremental change, year after year, to improve the lives of people with disabilities. When we were founded, we were focused on deinstitutionalizing. As the years progressed our strategy shifted to providing community supports that allow for full integration. We still have work to do. We look forward to working with the chapters, self-advocates, parents, siblings, legislators, and government, to establish new strategies that reflect the very core of who we are and ensure a bright, sustainable future reflective of the diversity and strength that all communities have.