

Meeting with Legislators

Schedule the meeting

Meeting with your legislator is one of the most powerful ways to share the experiences of people with IDD in our community. The civic engagement team can assist you with setting up a meeting, in-person or virtual.

Before the meeting

Decide what issues to talk about. Prepare materials: one-pagers, factsheets, or stories. Plan 1–2 stories about real people with IDD. Learn about your legislator: their committees, priorities, past votes.

During the meeting

Introduce yourself: Name, district, role. Share your story: Real experiences show the impact of policies. Make your ask clear: What action do you want? (vote, funding, co-sponsor a bill, etc.). Engage: Ask about their priorities for people with IDD. Take a picture! (And share it)

After the meeting

Send a thank-you note or email: Restate your ask and appreciation. Share notes with the team. This helps track follow up. Stay in touch: Invite them to visit programs or meet people with IDD.

Tips

Keep main points to 3–5 minutes.
Focus on personal stories, not just numbers.
Stay positive and respectful.

Talking Points

Protect people. No cuts to services.

Because of changes at the federal level, the state is looking at cuts to our social safety net and Medicaid services tailored for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Cuts cause crisis and trauma, expensive recovery costs, and unnecessary hospitalization. Institutional care is more than triple the cost of community care. We need:

- Safe, affordable, and accessible housing
- Reliable access to food & healthcare
- Tailored supports to live in the community, including residential support, personal care; supported employment and community inclusion; respite; life skills and other essential services

Each service is essential. We need them all to hold lives together.

Pass progressive revenue.

We need to strengthen our revenue base to provide the support we all need.

Our state has had deep cracks in its financial foundation for years. We know this at The Arc, because budget writers often struggle to fund and stabilize care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Now, the state is also looking at losing billions in federal Medicaid funding over the next 10 years.

We need to secure our financial foundation with progressive revenue to cover the care and social safety net Washington needs to thrive.

End isolation & reduce restraint of students.

Isolation and restraint are deeply harmful to students' mental health and interfere with the skill-building they need to identify and resolve problems so they can thrive in school and later as adults.

We know from neuroscience that when dysregulated, children need co-regulation. They need safe relationships to recover. Isolation not only interrupts essential relationship building, it pushes anxious kids already in flight or fight mode into escalating cycles of dysregulation. Cycles that children take with across their K-12 years and that can lead to complex PTSD.

Isolation and restraint lead to MORE isolation and restraint - making school unsafe for students and staff. Our state has invested in technical support, pilot sites, and demonstration projects to reduce restraint and eliminate isolation. It is time for the next step: phase out isolation, and ban dangerous types of restraint.