

current 2010



**CHAPTER AFFILIATION AGREEMENT
Between**

and The Arc of the United States

I. Mission of The Arc of the United States

The Arc of the United States works through education, research and advocacy to improve the quality of life for children and adults with mental retardation and their families and works to prevent both the causes and the effects of mental retardation.

II. Background

A. For over 50 years, the affiliated state and local chapters have worked cooperatively with The Arc of the United States (hereinafter referred to as The Arc) to accomplish this shared mission. Collectively, the state and local affiliates and The Arc have become The Arc movement. The Arc movement has brought about significant improvements in the lives of their constituents, people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families.

B. Going forward, the mission, bylaws, core values and position statements define the movement. The partnership between local, state and national components of the organization is one of the characteristics that defines The Arc. The components work together to improve the lives of The Arc's constituents and the communities in which they live. Any level of the movement without the others is less than whole.

C. The individuals who are members of The Arc come from varied backgrounds and experiences. Their diverse opinions are welcome within The Arc. This diversity strengthens The Arc's positions. The mission, core values, by laws and position statements developed by The Arc are reflective of the varied perspectives of its members and the democratic process by which the documents are approved. Once approved, they are incorporated into the work of all three levels of The Arc movement. Position statements articulate those issues that The Arc and its affiliates strive to implement directly and within the entire mental retardation/developmental disabilities movement.

D. To be an affiliated chapter of The Arc carries both privileges and responsibilities. Chapters of The Arc have chosen to accept these responsibilities and to work to implement the national organization's mission, core values and key position statements. This affiliation agreement covers the individual and joint responsibilities of The Arc of the United States and of the (state, local) chapter that arise from the affiliation. The intent of this agreement is to strengthen all three levels of The Arc movement and to clarify the relationship that has evolved between the levels over the first fifty years of The Arc.

III. Purpose

A. The purpose of this agreement is to outline the expectations local/state chapters have of The Arc and the basic requirements for chapter status in The Arc. Along with the mission, core values, by-laws and position statements, this agreement helps to define what is unique about The Arc movement. As such, it is intended to be a document that assists and supports growth and development of all organizations which are signatories. It is not intended to discipline or separate out those chapters not in total compliance.

B. It is an obligation of the signers of this document to work together to constantly move towards implementation of the mission, core values and position statements of The Arc. For it is through the values and ideals contained in those documents that The Arc helps its constituents to lead the lives they want and deserve.

IV. Core Values of The Arc

A. PREAMBLE

1. From its beginning, a major strength of The Arc movement has been that parents, family members and volunteers have governed the organization. In recent years, self-advocates have also assumed important roles. Parents, family members, self-advocates and other volunteers are the driving force in The Arc. From the grassroots of The Arc come the dreams, the philosophy that drives the core values, the ability to shape public policy and the mutual support that parents and self-advocates provide for one another.

2. Core values of The Arc are those values that are subscribed to and pursued at all three levels of The Arc – national, state chapter and local chapters by volunteer and staff leaders.

B. THE CORE VALUES ARE:

1. People First. The Arc believes that all people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities have strengths, abilities and inherent value; are equal before the law; and must be treated with dignity and respect. The Arc represents, supports and acts on behalf of individuals and their families regardless of level of disability or membership in The Arc. The Arc believes in self-determination by empowering people with the supports needed to make informed decisions and choices.

2. Democracy. A democratic process involving members, through affiliated chapters, is utilized to take positions on important issues, policies and programs.

3. Visionary Leadership. The Arc leads by promoting the mission core values and position statements. We lead with integrity, accountability and by open, honest and timely communication. We work with individuals, organizations and coalitions in a collaborative fashion. There is a valued partnership with volunteer and staff leadership at all levels of the organization that provides mutual support for their respective roles.

4. Community Participation. The Arc works toward and believes in the community imperative: that all people have the fundamental moral, civil and constitutional rights to live, learn, work, play and worship in safe and healthy communities of their choosing. The Arc needs to ensure the safety and well being of individuals.

5. Diversity. The Arc values and insists upon diversity in its leadership and membership. The Arc actively pursues and welcomes diverse groups (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender and level of disability).

6. Integrity and Excellence. The Arc conducts its business with integrity. The Arc reflects quality and excellence in all its work.

Approved by The Arc's Board of Directors at its July, 2000, meeting.

V. Local chapters, state chapters and The Arc of the United States,

While independent entities, are also interdependent and commit to work together to further the democratically approved objectives of The Arc. All components acknowledge the importance of providing the highest quality in existing services and supports while moving towards fulfillment of the promise in The Arc's Core Values, position statements and legislative goals.

A. All three components referenced above agree to share the following responsibilities

1. Advocacy
2. Service/assistance (to members/chapters/constituents)
3. Promotion of The Arc
4. Partnership with all components within the organization and with related organizations

VI. Responsibilities agreed to by the Local chapters

A. Advocate for children and adults with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families, whether or not these individuals are members or are served through programs of the chapter, by:

1. Assisting individuals and families in their area to achieve a better quality of life.
2. Influencing public opinion, through individual and systems advocacy, education, public awareness and other methods appropriate for this purpose.
3. Serving as a source of information, referral and guidance to individuals and families.
4. Advocating for services and supports that bring together people with and without disabilities in valued roles in the community.

5. Creating awareness on the local level in order to prevent the causes and effects of mental retardation and related disabilities.

6. Encouraging and supporting local self-advocacy organizations and activities.

B. To support its state affiliate and The Arc in their state and national advocacy efforts by:

1. Complying with all affiliation requirements contained in this agreement and the affiliation agreement with the state chapter.

2. Educating legislators and other elected officials as well as local government human services and health agencies, housing authorities, school boards and others.

3. Responding to requests for communicating positions to government officials.

4. Supporting and striving toward implementation of the mission, core values, legislative goals, policies and position statements of The Arc.

5. Taking public positions that are consistent with the mission, core values, legislative goals, policies and position statements of The Arc.

6. Remitting affiliation fees and dues, where required, when due.

C. To create an effective local chapter by:

1. Building and serving a substantial, committed and informed membership and report all members to The Arc. The local chapter is committed to reflecting the racial, social, economic, cultural and demographic diversity of the local community. Thus it includes families of both younger and older individuals with varied levels of need, people served by the chapter and self-advocates. The board of directors works to reflect this diversity. Families of constituents and/or self-advocates shall have significant and effective representation on the board of directors.

2. Educating the officers, board of directors and members of the chapter about best practices and local, state and national activities by distributing information and ensuring participation of chapter representatives at state

and national conventions, seminars and other functions.

3. Comprising boards exclusively of members of The Arc.

4. At the chapter's option, providing community-based direct services and supports. These services and supports must work to include constituents in the community.

5. Engaging in other activities, at the option of the chapter, consistent with the mission, core values, policies, legislative goals and position statements of The Arc.

D. To operate an effective local chapter by:

1. Training officers, board members and staff for the performance of their roles.

2. Complying with IRS and other applicable federal and state regulations for not-for-profit organizations.

3. Maintaining licensure for services provided by the chapter or affiliated organizations as required by local, state and federal authorities. Beginning January 1, 2006, the chapter will demonstrate progress toward accreditation from either The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for Persons with Disabilities (The Council) or the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), or through a peer review process to be developed by The Arc. Other accrediting bodies with specific standards for people with disabilities may meet these requirements upon review of the board of directors of The Arc.

4. Evolving toward best practices consistent with the mission, core values and position statements in advocacy, public awareness, governance and service provision.

5. Working with local organizations to build the capacity of the community to implement the mission, core values, position statements, bylaws and legislative goals of The Arc.

6. Providing a mechanism for members to annually assess the local chapter.

E. To maintain organizational links with The Arc of the United States by:

1. Identifying its affiliation with The Arc and its state affiliate in appropriate identifying materials, such as brochures and letterhead.
2. Providing feedback and comments on proposed policies, position statements and other materials requested.
3. Submitting to The Arc changes in leadership, articles of incorporation and constitution and/or bylaws within 30 days of occurrence.
4. Paying affiliation fees and remitting dues for individuals when due.
5. Cooperating with resource development initiatives that benefit state and local chapters and The Arc.
6. Maintaining the minimum number of members required by the bylaws of The Arc.
7. Submitting required financial information annually.

F. To terminate the use of all names, symbols and other similar identifying materials that associate the organization with The Arc, if the organization is no longer affiliated with The Arc.

VII. Responsibilities agreed to by the state chapter

A. To advocate for children and adults with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families, whether or not these individuals are members or are served through programs of the chapter's affiliates, by:

1. Formulating policy initiatives in cooperation with others.
2. Working with legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government.
3. Influencing public opinion in the state through advocacy, education, public awareness and other methods as appropriate.
4. Supporting and working to create awareness on the state level in order to prevent the causes and effects of mental retardation and related disabilities.
5. Working with state-based affiliates of national organizations to expand understanding and implementation of The Arc's mission, position

statements, core values, legislative goals and best practices in the field.

B. To support The Arc of the United States in its national advocacy efforts by:

1. Educating the state's Congressional delegation and state-level policymakers.
2. Responding to requests for communicating positions to federal and state government officials.
3. Endorsing the mission and core values of The Arc and striving toward implementation of the position statements of The Arc.
4. Taking public positions that are consistent with the mission, core values, position statements, legislative goals and policies of The Arc.

C. To create an effective state chapter by:

1. Assisting, building and serving a membership that reflects the diversity of the state including families of both younger and older individuals with varied levels of need, self advocates, racial and ethnic minorities and people from low income communities. The board of directors reflects this diversity. Families of constituents and self-advocates should have significant representation on the board of directors.
2. Educating the officers, board members, members and staff throughout the state about best practices and about national activities through distribution of information and through attendance by leaders at national conventions, seminars and other functions.
3. Ensuring that all board members are members of The Arc.
4. Encouraging and supporting statewide self-advocacy organizations and movements.
5. Providing support to existing local chapters and working to develop new or expanded chapters to serve areas of the state without existing chapters.
6. Defining the relationship between the state chapter and local chapters through a formal affiliation agreement.
7. Providing a mechanism for affiliated local chapters to annually assess the state chapter.

D. To operate an effective state chapter by:

1. Training officers, board of directors and staff for the performance of their roles.
2. Complying with IRS and other applicable federal and state regulations for not-for-profit organizations
3. Maintaining licensure or certification for services provided as required by local, state and federal authorities, and beginning January 1, 2006, including progress toward accreditation from The Council on Quality and Leadership and Supports for Persons with Disabilities (The Council), The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or through a peer review process to be developed by The Arc. Other accrediting bodies with specific standards for people with disabilities may meet these requirements upon review of the board of directors of The Arc of the United States.
4. Striving toward best practices in advocacy and service provision statewide.

E. To maintain organizational links with The Arc by:

1. Identifying their affiliation with The Arc in appropriate identifying materials, such as brochures and letterhead.
2. Submitting to The Arc changes in leadership, articles of incorporation and constitution and/or bylaws within 30 days of occurrence.
3. Paying affiliation fees and remitting dues when due.
4. Submitting required financial information annually. Pursuing appropriate grant funding opportunities to improve and support chapter best practices.
5. Cooperating with resource development initiatives that benefit state and local chapters and The Arc.

VIII. Responsibilities agreed to by The Arc of the United States

A. To advocate nationally for children and adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities and their families and for programs and research that prevent the causes and effects of mental retardation and related developmental disabilities by:

1. Initiating and formulating, in cooperation with other, related organizations or by itself, responses to policy initiatives.
2. Working with the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the federal government.
3. Working with other national organizations to develop and improve programs for The Arc's constituents.
4. Influencing public opinion, through advocacy, education, public awareness and other methods as appropriate.
5. Providing information and referral and educational materials, both web-based and printed to members and to the public.
6. Developing and proactively advancing positions on important issues for the constituent group.
7. Building and serving a substantial, committed and informed membership that shall reflect the racial, social, economic, cultural and demographic diversity of the United States. The board of directors reflects this diversity. Families of constituents and self-advocates shall have significant representation on the board of directors.

B. To assist state and local chapters in their advocacy and service provision by:

1. Identifying advocacy and programmatic "best practices" and strategies and encouraging their use through education, technical assistance and training.
2. Creating and sharing a strong national identity through use of The Arc's name, logo and other identifying information.
3. Developing and sharing public awareness materials and public relations/media support.
4. Working with other national organizations and leaders to expand understanding and implementation of The Arc's position statements, core values and best practices in the field.
5. Responding to the needs of chapters promptly; professionally and effectively.
6. Providing technology linkages among leadership, membership representatives, development professionals and other volunteers and

professionals.

7. Developing an effective quality management assistance system for chapters, so that quality improvement can be conducted effectively and economically.

8. Creating a vision for the future of The Arc and its constituents.

9. Laying the groundwork with other related national disability organizations and organizations that serve the public, so that similar partnerships can be achieved at the local and state level.

10. Pursuing appropriate collaborative grant funding opportunities to improve and support chapter best practices.

11. Implementing and maintaining cooperative resource development programs that benefit state and local chapters and The Arc.

C. To encourage participation of state and local chapters in policy formulation and implementation by:

1. Holding biennial meetings of the National Congress of Delegates.

2. Holding open meetings of the board of directors and encouraging members and chapters to attend and participate in those meetings.

3. Soliciting input on major issues being considered by the National Congress of Delegates, the board of directors, committees or task forces and allowing adequate time for chapters to respond.

4. Making available copies of board minutes to affiliated chapters.

5. Establishing and utilizing communications systems with state and local chapters.

D. To assist state and local chapters in efficient and effective operations by providing exemplary membership services, including:

1. Frequent and meaningful communication concerning issues and programs.

2. Staff and volunteer training.

3. Technical assistance.

4. Public policy materials tailored to national, state and local levels.

5. Mass purchasing, volume discounts and development of other benefits and services directly to individual members.

E. To provide accessible training for officers, board members and staff for the performance of their roles.

F. To comply with IRS and other required federal and state regulations for not-for-profit organizations.

G. To maintain fiscal integrity and function effectively in administrative operations.

H. To work nationally with media to make The Arc and its constituents more visible in all areas of the United States.

I. To provide a mechanism for affiliated chapters to annually assess The Arc.

IX. ENDORSEMENT

The bylaws of The Arc of the United States describe a process to enforce serious breeches of this agreement. All three levels of The Arc movement agree to work together to develop mechanisms to improve operations and effectiveness of each level and to assist each level in continuously improving its services to The Arc's constituents.

(President of Local Chapter)

(President of The Arc of The US)

(Executive Director of Local Chapter)

(Executive Director of The Arc of The US)

Name of Chapter

(President of State Chapter)

Date

(Executive Director of State Chapter)