

2021 Advocacy Days



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40th Annual Statewide Disability Legislative Reception

with a

Developmental Disabilities Briefing

January 27, 2021

2:00—7:00 pm

A time where People with Disabilities and the organizations that represent them meet with Legislators from across the state to discuss issues critical to People with disabilities.

Developmental Disabilities Public Policy Briefing

2:00 - 4:00 pm ~ Zoom

Community of People with Disabilities Statewide Legislative Reception

5:30 - 7:00 pm ~ Zoom

Invite your Legislators to attend the reception!

Questions about the Advocacy Days?

Email Diana@arcwa.org

Questions about the reception?

Email Shelby Satko Satkosm@dshs.wa.gov

For reasonable accommodations & interpreters

Emily Heike by December 31, 2020

360-902-9440 or EHeike@ESD.WA.GOV

Here is a sample email you can use and modify to invite your legislators to the Disabilities Reception:

Dear Senator XXX:

I am your constituent and I have concerns about [\(INSERT YOUR CONCERNS HERE\)](#)

I'd like to invite you to attend the 40th Annual Disabilities Legislative Reception. It will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

This event, typically attended by over 300 people, includes people from many organizations concerned with issues affecting people who have disabilities and their families. Because of the pandemic, we can't meet in person this year, so the virtual gathering will be a little different.

I really hope you will attend! If you can't attend, please send a member of your staff. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the reception to share our thoughts with you on the budget and other policy issues that affect me, my family and hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities in our state.

What: 40th Annual Disabilities Legislative Reception

When: January 27, 2021

Time: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Zoom link - [\(coming soon\)](#)

Questions: Diana Stadden, Diana@arcwa.org

Please let me know if you can attend. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,



2021 Advocacy Day Schedule

WHAT TO EXPECT AT ADVOCACY DAY

Advocacy Day begins at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays during the legislative session. We start with an hour and a half briefing on current issues and end with an afternoon of advocacy. While we feature a highlighted topic each week, the morning briefing will also cover late breaking news on budget items and bills of interest relating to individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families. We meet on Zoom each week. You can register each Advocacy Day at <https://arcwa.org/advocacy/advocacy-days>

NOTE: Each meeting link is unique and you must register for each one separately!

January 27th—Legislative Briefing

Our theme this year is “Zooming in on Developmental Disabilities” as we encourage legislators to champion bills/budget items that are important to people with developmental disabilities (DD). Join us on Zoom at 2 pm for a briefing of the current issues of concern.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

January 27th—40th Annual Disability Legislative Reception

The Statewide Disability Legislative Reception Webinar will be held on Zoom as a webinar from 5:30 - 7:00 pm. **YOU MUST REGISTER SEPARATELY for the reception. (It is a different link than the briefing!)**

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

February 3rd—Community Residential

Supported living providers have been on the front line of this pandemic, taking care of their clients even when they get COVID. as well as self-advocates, family members and others join to let legislators know how important living in the community is and ask them to ensure that providers of these supports are paid a fair living wage. There is currently a huge inequity as supported living providers do exactly the same care tasks as state employees in State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLA), yet receive much lower wages. Adult Family Homes and Assisted Living are also community settings struggling during this pandemic.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

February 10th—Employment Supports

Having a job means that individuals with DD can be productive citizens, contributing to our economy by paying taxes, while also providing valuable services. Being gainfully employed builds self-esteem, but our state still allows people with disabilities to be paid sub-minimum wages, as little as 2 cents an hour! Join self-advocates, families and employment service providers as we work to make wages equitable.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

February 17th—Families Save Money

Families provide the majority of care at home for people with DD, saving our state millions of dollars. Respite care is a critical service, but its difficult to find a provider. Teens and adults with DD and challenging behaviors are taken to hospital emergency rooms and left there with no medical need because the behavior supports they need are not available. Some families can’t get services for their child because the family doesn’t meet Medicaid financial eligibility. A Katie Beckett Waiver would allow families to “buy-in” to Medicaid. Unlike other waivers, there can be no wait list. If you qualify, you get served.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

February 24th—March is DD Awareness Month

Each March, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities ([NACDD](https://nacdd.org/)) partners with Association for University Centers on Disabilities ([AUCD](https://aucd.org/)) and National Disability Rights Network ([NDRN](https://ndrn.org/)) to create a social media campaign that highlights the many ways in which people with and without disabilities come together to form strong, diverse communities. We will educate legislators and have the Governor’s staff share the Governor’s Proclamation for this important awareness campaign.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

March 3rd—Education During COVID-19

The pandemic has had a huge affect on education services and early intervention for children with DD. With in-person school cancelled and the districts try to figure out virtual classes, children with DD are not receiving the services required in their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). What can the legislature do to ensure the needs of children who need special education services are not falling further behind? Join us as we learn more about this inequity.

Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91195199036>

(continued)

March 10th—Rights and Protections: No New Institutions!

Two years ago, a Ruckelshaus workgroup was charged with creating a plan for the future of the RHCs (Residential Habilitation Centers) in our state. Although the plan would downsize and close our RHCs, it also would build a new 120 bed nursing facility on the grounds of one of the RHCs, Fircrest. We do not want to build new institutions!
Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrcuhrj8qH9KOilpZTPGQP6PkszBtn22>

March 17th—Self-advocacy: Nothing About Us Without Us

The last few years have seen the legislature convene work groups about developmental disabilities, but without representation of the self-advocates that the work group outcomes would affect. Last year a report to the legislature proposed to build a new nursing facility on the grounds of Fircrest, something self-advocates strongly oppose! Learn about this new bill that will change this inequity and give people with DD a voice where it matters most.
Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAtfuCrqz8pGNOzMfHgoULLi2oiG54DYpnR>

March 24th—Budget: NO Cuts!

Creating a balanced budget is the one thing legislators are required to do during this legislative session. With many new legislators, it is important that you educate yours about the needs of people with DD. Because COVID-19 has created such an economic catastrophe in our state, revenues are woefully short of what is needed to keep current programs going in this biennial budget. Learn what services and supports are proposed for cuts or increases and what you can do to help.
Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZloduyqrjMqG9VkfNhyI43pVpmGD9EOMoRO>

March 31st –April is Autism Awareness, Acceptance & Appreciation Month

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations declared April 2nd to be World Autism Awareness Day, to be observed every year. In 1970, the Autism Society began spreading awareness about autism in the month of April and it is now recognized nationally. It is not enough to be aware of what autism is. We need to be accepting of the many gift autistic people have to share and appreciate the diversity they bring.
Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYucumtpj8rHdDoWa2LFxQZb3adW83bek0P>

April 7th—Multi-Cultural Awareness—Law Enforcement & Community Services

People of color or of indigenous backgrounds, immigrants or LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer or other identities) experience racism and other systemic discrimination challenges. We need to ensure that justice and equity in services is a right afforded to everyone. Our state has passed legislation to work on police injustices, but much needs to be done in other areas such as schools, disability services, mental health needs, housing supports and more.
Zoom link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYof-6qqTkoGd1UkOskkNdBukXspEKnWt6Y>

LET US KNOW HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE WAS?

We want to know how Advocacy Day was for YOU! After each Advocacy Day event you will be able to share your experience with us. Our evaluation form is short and easy to fill out, find it online by going to:

<https://forms.gle/KSSpYyeCkZS7N6Zd7>



The Arc's Action Center



Visit The Arc's Action Center using *Phone 2 Action*. Sign up for easy-to-use action alerts at <https://arcwa.org/action-center> and find much more to keep you up-to-date on what is happening in Olympia!

- * Budget and Policy Alerts
- * Advocacy Events including weekly Advocacy Days and Topics
- * Background data about your elected officials
- * Senate and House Committee membership
- * Petitions to gather online signatures about important issues
- * An online bill tracker for both state and federal concerns
- * And so much more!

How to Testify in Committee

Washington State has one of the most open legislatures in the country. A bill has a public hearing before Senate and House committees before being considered on the floor of the House and Senate. Your opportunity to testify comes at the committee hearings. If you cannot appear before a committee, contact your legislator, making your position on a bill known. Write a letter or an e-mail, call the legislator's office or the Legislative Hotline at 800.562.6000.

Committee Hearings:

Legislative hearings are conducted informally. The rules are somewhat relaxed, but are intended to help preserve decorum and allow respectful, courteous debate. (Reminders of hearing room rules are [here](#) for the House and [here](#) for the Senate.) Anyone can testify; you do not need formal training. To find out when a hearing is scheduled:

- Click [Schedules of committee hearings](#) to obtain electronic copy of the weekly and daily schedules.
- Call the toll-free Legislative Hotline number (1.800.562.6000).
- Subscribe to the [Legislature's Committee E-mail Notification Service](#).

Before the Hearing:

- **Prepare Your Remarks.** Time is usually limited to 2 minutes or less, so be brief and direct. Committee staff will distribute copies of written testimony to members of the committee if you email it to them. Writing your comments in outline form will be helpful when you speak, and you should summarize your written testimony.
- **Avoid Duplication.** If other persons will be offering similar testimony at the hearing, try to coordinate your testimony and avoid duplication. Well organized testimony is the most effective.

At the Virtual Committee Meeting:

- **Be punctual!** Usually there is only one public hearing at which testimony is taken on a particular bill.
- Sign-in is now done electronically in all committees.
- Check to see if proposed amendments or substitute bills are available.

How the Meeting Is Conducted:

Be present at the beginning of the hearing. The committee chair will open the hearing on a particular bill. Frequently, opening comments will be made by the bill's sponsor or by committee staff. Sometimes, however, the chair will ask for testimony from proponents and opponents immediately. **The chair will organize the hearing to ensure that the committee members hear relevant information, that interested persons are given the opportunity to express their positions, and that the hearing does not exceed the time available.**

Most committee hearings are limited to two hours and may have several matters pending. The chair will attempt to be fair and provide each person an opportunity to testify. It may be necessary, however, to restrict testimony so that everyone is given an opportunity to express his or her opinions. You may be called to testify with others to save time.

Making Your Remarks

- 1) Begin by introducing yourself to the chair and committee members and stating your purpose. For example, "Mr. or Madam Chair and members of the committee, I am John Doe from Spokane. I am here representing myself. I support this bill because . . ."
- 2) In your opening remarks, make it clear whether you are representing other citizens or a separate group.
- 3) Be brief and be sure your remarks are clear. Avoid being too technical and do not repeat previously made remarks. You do not need to be nervous or worried about how you present your testimony.
- 4) Be prepared for questions and comments from committee members. These are designed to gain additional information, but don't answer if you are not sure of the answer. Tell the members you will send a written answer to the committee, and then follow through.

How to Submit Written Testimony:

If you are unable to attend a hearing, you may use the following method for submitting written testimony:

- In the House. Email your written testimony directly to all committee members as well as to the Committee Chair or the Chair's LA. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. A list of Committee Chairs can be found at this website: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/Rosters/CommitteeMembersByCommittee/House>.
- In the Senate. You may email your written testimony directly to committee members as well as to the Committee Chair or the Chair's LA. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. Another option is to email your written testimony to committee staff, as an alternative or in addition to submitting testimony to committee members. A list of Senate committees and staff can be found at this website: <http://leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/Pages/default.aspx>.

More information will be available in January 2021. Check online at

2021 Legislative Session Bill Advancement Guidelines

The realities of conducting legislative session during the COVID-19 pandemic will substantially limit the volume of bills that can be taken up in committee and on the House floor. Process changes will increase the time to conduct business and will increase workload on staff. Budget challenges will also constrain what is possible in a tangible way.

Members are asked to limit bill introductions to no more than 7, and committee chairs will be asked to reduce the number of bills heard and passed out of their committee. We recognize that each member has individual authority and responsibility for developing their legislative agenda, but we will need to hold each other accountable to these limits in order to focus our work on the critical needs of our state and to avoid untenable workloads for our legislative staff.

First and foremost, bills should only be introduced if they urgently needed and important to pass DURING the 2021 session. If that is not the case, please wait to introduce your bill until next year.

Ask yourself NEXT, does this bill:

- Advance racial equity?
- Address response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Advance economic recovery?
- Address the global climate crisis?

AND, does it:

- Save money or increase the efficacy of appropriations within the upcoming biennium?
- Help Washington access federal funding?
- Help other levels of government do their job to respond to the pandemic or advance economic recovery?

Other considerations to help NARROW your list of bills for introduction:

- Has this policy been thoroughly vetted with stakeholders?
- If it is likely to cost money, have you discussed its viability with the Appropriations chair given budget challenges?
- Is the Senate aware and if so, is the bill likely to also advance in the Senate?
- Is it likely to generate substantial opposition in committee and/or on the floor?

For many reasons, please avoid:

- Omnibus bills, unless absolutely necessary - these attract amendments and have a tendency to crush under their own weight;
- Advancing dueling companion bills, unless absolutely necessary - while easy to introduce, moving two vehicles through the process will take time away from other legislation;
- Bills that are not expected to advance this year - interim work sessions are an alternative for creating awareness about your especially ambitious policy idea;
- Taskforce bills - these generate substantial interim work for legislative staff and executive branch agencies, when there may be other, less work-intensive methods to advance, evaluate or build consensus for your policy idea.

We acknowledge and appreciate the work members have engaged in over the interim on policy issues. Even if a bill is not introduced or passed into law in this next session, that work is laying the groundwork for moving policies forward consistent with our core values and the needs of our constituents.

Make Your Voice Heard—Advocate!

Many legislators use technology to reach their constituents, share their views on issues and quickly work to inform and educate each other.



Be a Fan on **Facebook**. Sign in at www.facebook.com, search for The Arc—Washington State. Events including each Advocacy Day can be found on our page.

Twitter



Do you tweet? You can follow us on **Twitter** at www.twitter.com/TheArcofWA



Our Hot Tips booklet prepares you to be an effective and informed advocate in Olympia or at home using your phone or computer. The Advocacy Day Schedule is included with contact for information for important advocacy resources. View it in English or Spanish at www.arcwa.org/resource-library/publications or call us today for a copy!



Opportunities to advocate from your home computer are just one click away when you visit The Arc's online action center - **Phone to Action**. Sign up for easy-to-use action alerts at <https://arcwa.org/action-center>



See our web site at www.arcwa.org, click the ADVOCACY tab where you will find useful information including the links above and:

- **Advocacy Day** information is under this tab with dates and topics, a list of our elected officials and much more, just a click away!
- Join The Arc's **Action Center** to get notified when legislators need to hear from YOU to help them decide how to vote on a bill or budget item. Your voice does make a difference!
- **Annual Legislative Notebook for Advocates** containing one-page information sheets on current issues as well as associated data and charts is under the 2021 Legislative Session tab. The current version is posted each December.
 - ⇒ Find **Bills and Budget** charts that provide a brief summary of and links to legislative bills and budget overviews, as well as hearings on our bills updated weekly during legislative session.
- NOW IN SPANISH! Get these booklets: Consejos Prácticos, Hechos Sobre Los Cinco Programas de Exención en el Hogar y en la Comunidad, Beneficios Federales y Servicios Estatales, Tutela: Preguntas Frecuentes, La Historia de Actividades, Eventos y Políticas Estatales y Nacionales as well as a number of brochures: The Arc—Para personas con discapacidades intelectuales y de desarrollo, Proyecto de Abogacía en Alianza, Proyecto de Abogacía en Alianza, Centro de Acción Legislativa de The Arc, Sea un Defensor Eficaz, ¿Ahora qué Sigue?, Su Idea Puede Ser una Ley del Estado.

If you need help or more information, email Diana@arcwa.org