



Final FY21 Budget Raises DSP Wages, Avoids Any Cuts to Services

The Arc of New Jersey is happy to report that the revised Fiscal Year 2021 Budget signed by Governor Murphy on September 29, 2020, includes \$40 million to increase wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) while also avoiding any cuts to services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is a tremendous outcome in light of the significant financial challenges facing the State of New Jersey as a result of COVID-19. The DSP wage increase will go into effect on January 1, 2021 so that DSP wages are a step ahead of the state's rising minimum wage. In addition, DSPs working in licensed residential settings will receive a temporary wage enhancement of \$3 per hour starting October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. This temporary wage enhancement is a recognition of the extra challenges, brought upon by COVID-19, that DSPs are facing as they continue to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This workforce can't work from home and they can't support people with I/DD while social distancing. We are grateful for all they do and we are thrilled to see the state acknowledging their hard work. [To continue reading, click here.](#)



Chapter Spotlight: With Impending Retirement, The Arc/Morris Exec Looks Back at Tenure



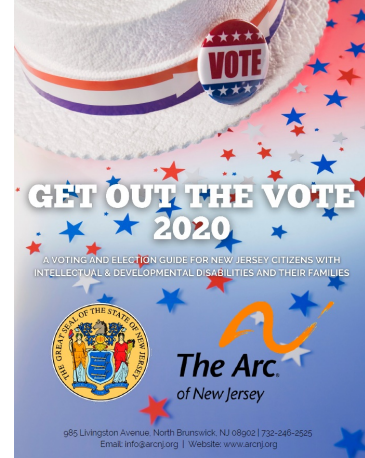
After 38 years at The Arc/Morris, serving and supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, Executive Director Bill Testa will retire in November. His contributions to the field and his dedication to people with I/DD cannot be overstated. Ahead of his departure, we shine the spotlight on Bill and his long tenure as a member of The Arc family.

1. How many years have you worked at The Arc/Morris, and what originally attracted you to this field?

I have worked at Morris for 38 years. While consistent with my academic major, the work appealed to me from both a spiritual/religious and social justice basis. I began my career three years earlier in the mental health and geriatric fields. My oldest child, who was born about a year before I started, had craniosynostosis. This is a condition developed in utero that manifests as a premature fusion of the skull and almost always leads to developmental disability if not diagnosed and treated early. We were blessed that it was detected and corrected, hence avoiding the accompanying challenges that usually result. Additionally, a personal disability as a child and several relationships with people with special needs growing up, also drew me to work specifically with people who we now refer to as having developmental disabilities. **To continue reading, [click here.](#)**

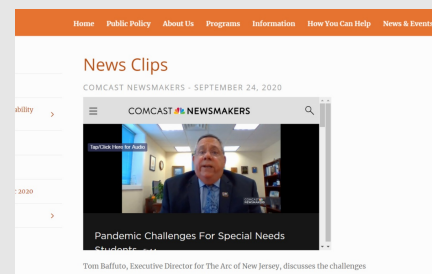
Download Now: 2020 Get Out the Vote Guide

this year's voting process will look very different than it has in the past. All active registered voters will automatically receive mail-in ballots for voting in the 2020 General Election without the need to submit a vote by mail application. ***(And don't forget, the last day to register to vote is October 13.)*** With this in mind, The Arc of New Jersey is proud to present our annual Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Guide, which you can download by clicking the image to the right. Our 2020 GOTV Guide was created to help you navigate the new way of voting, but it also provides resources, insights from individuals who vote, and important deadlines you'll want to keep in mind as Election Day approaches. In addition to the Guide, make sure you visit our Get Out the Vote web site, www.gotvnj.org, for additional resources and information.



View TV Segments, Including Last Month's Comcast Newsmakers Spot, on The Arc of NJ's New Media Page

Executive Tom Baffuto was recently interviewed on [Comcast Newsmakers](#) about the challenges students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are experiencing as they return to school during the pandemic. Tom spoke about the difficulties children are facing when trying to access the supports and services that are part of their educational entitlement as well as the roadblocks presented by virtual platforms and how hard it is for students to receive their therapies during this time. Tom also spoke about the role of The Arc of New Jersey and how we're working to connect students and their families to resources and assistance. Check out the [video by clicking here](#).



Additionally, we have created a new page on our web site cataloging The Arc of New Jersey's media spots so you can easily access them at any time. If you've missed our recent clips, including Executive Director Tom Baffuto on Pix11 News or One-on-One with Steve Aduato, be sure to check them out by [clicking here](#).

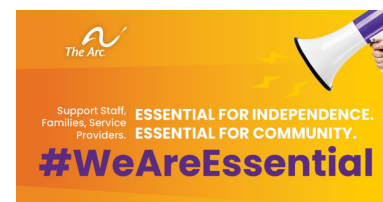
Tell Congress #WeAreEssential in Coronavirus Relief Bill

A new coronavirus relief bill is currently being negotiated in Congress and may be voted on soon. Even if you have sent a message before, please take action again now!

The pandemic continues to disproportionately affect people with disabilities, their families, and the workforce that supports them. **[Your Members of Congress must hear from you](#)** so they pass a relief bill that includes:

- Dedicated funding for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS).
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for direct support professionals.
- Paid leave for all caregivers.
- Economic impact payments for all people with disabilities.

Take action now by [clicking here](#).




Important Info if Receiving SSI and Unemployment Insurance

Please note: This information is pertinent only for individuals who have been receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and also received a large amount of unemployment insurance during the coronavirus pandemic. It is a federal requirement that if anyone who receives SSI is eligible for another type of income, they must receive that other income. It has come to our attention that there is a new concern for individuals

with I/DD who have had SSI, were employed, and were laid off during the coronavirus pandemic. These individuals received \$600/week due to the CARES Act, in addition to other unemployment income. Many of these individuals were receiving more than \$3,200/month, and this high amount of unearned income for SSI beneficiaries has led to this problem. If this information applies to an individual with I/DD, [click here to read more.](#)

SHARE: [Join Our Email List](#)



Dear Colleague,

Please note: This information is pertinent only for individuals who have been receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and also received a large amount of unemployment insurance during the coronavirus pandemic.

It is a federal requirement that if anyone who receives SSI is eligible for another type of income, they must receive that other income.

It has come to our attention that there is a new concern for individuals with IDD who have had SSI, were employed, and were laid off during the coronavirus pandemic. These individuals received \$600/week due to the CARES Act, in addition to other unemployment income. Many of these individuals were receiving more than \$3,200/month, and this high amount of unearned income for SSI beneficiaries has led to this problem.

If this information applies to an individual with IDD, this is what you need to know:

1. It is a Medicaid regulation that no one should be terminated from Medicaid during the coronavirus pandemic. If you know of anyone who has been terminated from Medicaid since March 2020, please contact me immediately at bcoberts@arcnj.org
2. Although the \$600 per week in CARES Act unemployment insurance payment results in the loss of SSI, it is important to note that it is not viewed as countable income for NJ Medicaid. The County Medicaid offices are required to review these cases to determine

Chapters to Host Outdoor, Virtual Events This Fall



Although events may look a little different than previous years, local County Chapters of The Arc will continue to host events throughout the fall. Check out the virtual and outdoor happenings near you and register today to support our Chapters and the people they serve! *Above is a photo from The Arc Mercer's 70th Anniversary Celebration event.*

Upcoming October & November Events

- [The Arc Ocean Run Walk Ride](#)
- [The Arc of Bergen & Passaic Counties Golf & Tennis Classic](#)
- [The Arc of Atlantic Pro-AM Golf Event 2020](#)
- [The Arc Mercer 2020 Virtual Gala](#)

Looking for more upcoming events? Check out our [calendar.](#)

The Arc US 2020 National Convention – Free Online Event!

The Arc's National Convention will be held virtually this year. [Click here](#) for more information and registration details.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Every October, we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) as a way of recognizing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities working in their communities. NDEAM aims to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. 2020 marks the 75th observance of NDEAM which is led annually by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. To read more, [click here.](#) And if you or someone you know with I/DD is interested in finding competitive integrated employment in the community, learn more about The Arc of New Jersey's [Project HIRE program here](#) or email Adam Kubler at AKubler@arcnj.org.



INCREASING ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Celebrating 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act

30th ADA... 75th NDEAM

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
#ADA30 | #NDEAM75 | dol.gov/odep

OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Planning for Adult Life Will Offer Virtual MAPs Classes for High School Students

With so much uncertainty surrounding the 2020-2021 school year, we know children receiving special education services and their parents are concerned about how COVID will impact learning as well as progress toward graduation and next steps. With this in mind, The Arc of New Jersey's Planning for Adult Life (PFAL) Program will now offer virtual Making Action Plans (MAPs) classes for any high school student receiving special education services in New Jersey.

These online classes will focus on, among other things, making decisions, problem solving, how to set priorities, managing disappointment and failure, dealing with uncomfortable situations, and how to ask for help.

Using different techniques, students will practice skill-building and stay engaged by interacting with peers and PFAL Transition Navigators. We know COVID-19 will change the way schools operate in the fall, but your child's planning for adult life does not need to take a back seat because of it. The MAPs classes are available to any student, regardless of whether the student's school district is connected to the PFAL program. For more information, visit the PFAL web site [here](#), or email Jerisa Maseko at jmaseko@arcnj.org



Upcoming Virtual Events!



We've added additional webinars to help individuals with I/DD and their families during this difficult time. Register today and be sure to check out our [calendar](#) for other upcoming events.

Webinar: Reflections on Everyday Coping During a Pandemic When a Family Member has I/DD: Lessons Learned from COVID-19

Tuesday, October 6 at 7 pm

Participants at this webinar will learn to recognize and effectively respond to the daily challenges of social distancing, disruptions in normal routine and following risk reducing strategies that have become a way of life during this pandemic. They will also learn to recognize when these stressors trigger reactions for family members with I/DD that need additional professional attention. The emphasis of the webinar will be on promoting awareness and practical problem solving when a loved one has I/DD. The presenter for this webinar is Dr. Lucy Esralew, Licensed Psychologist in NJ and CA, and a Clinical Neuropsychologist who specializes in neurodevelopmental disorders.

[Register here!](#)

Webinar: Navigating the DDD Service System

Tuesday, October 6 at 12 pm

This workshop will provide an overview of the intake and eligibility process related to the Supports Program and the Community Care Program operated by the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The presentation will include the relationship between Medicaid eligibility and program eligibility, available Medicaid Waiver services, the support coordination agency process, and the role of the support coordinator as well as sharing the RECIPE for a meaningful life. The presenter for this webinar is: Nkechi Okoli, Senior Coordinator of Transition to 21 Education, Division of Developmental Disabilities.

[Register here!](#)

Webinar: REV UP NJ - Make the Disability Vote Count

Wednesday, October 7 at 6 pm

REV UP New Jersey is part of a national movement whose aim is to promote the turn out of people with disabilities at the polls, remove barriers to voting, promote accessible voting machines and polling places, educate voters about issues and candidates and protect voters' rights to participate in elections.

[Register here!](#)

Equal Justice Talks Webinar Series: Changing the System to Improve the Response to Victims with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Thursday, October 15 at 2 pm

Please join us in this one hour presentation with guest speaker Pamela Stafford, Public Policy Director at The Arc of New Mexico for "Changing the System to Improve the Response to Victims with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities." Her presentation will discuss how this Arc Chapter is promoting systems

changes through legislative initiatives, training and direct services for victims with IDD, focusing on their victims' advocacy training and the challenges and successes these initiatives have brought.

[Register here!](#)

Virtual Tour: The Achievement Center at Raritan Valley Community College

Friday, October 16 at 10 am (second virtual tour scheduled for [November 3, at 6 pm.](#))

Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute for a **virtual** tour of The Achievement Center at Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC); a partnership program of The Arc of Somerset, The Arc of Hunterdon and RVCC. The Achievement Center is student centered, with a recommendation of core skills classes important to future success. Students and families will have the opportunity to learn about the curriculum, support

[Register here!](#)

Webinar: Finding Support as an Adult Sibling of a Person with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability

Monday, October 19 at 6 pm

This webinar will discuss the challenges an adult sibling faces when trying to support their loved one with an intellectual and developmental disability. Some adult siblings may feel isolated or they may not know how to access help for themselves. Please join us to learn more about what an adult sibling should consider when seeking support for themselves

[Register here!](#)

Virtual Tour: Mercer County College DREAM Program College Tour

Wednesday, October 21 at 6 pm

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute for a **virtual** tour of Mercer County Community College's DREAM program. Students and their families will have an opportunity to virtually visit Mercer County Community College and learn about the different aspects of a college experience. The DREAM program is student-centered, which means that each student's course of study is determined by the student's goals and needs. Areas of study include: Academic Experiences, Career Related Experiences, Independent Life Experiences, Socialization Experiences.

[Register here!](#)

Healthy at Home - a webinar series hosted by The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project - takes place every Tuesday at 2 pm.

The series covers a variety of topics related to self-advocacy and healthy living, and what you can do at home due to the current "stay at home" order. Live viewers can share comments and ask questions.

[Register here!](#)

Healthy Lifestyles Project LIVE - takes place every Wednesday at 11 am

This is a new interactive series of Zoom events hosted by the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project (NJSAP). These are live, interactive events to promote healthy living for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Topics will relate to healthy living, and some events will feature guest speakers who will lend their expertise. Certain events will utilize supplies that NJSAP will send directly to your location, FREE OF CHARGE. Live viewers will be able to share comments, ask questions, and participate in real time. All webinars will be recorded and archived below to view after airing.

[Register here!](#)

A Message from The Arc of New Jersey

Thank You

Thank you to all our generous donors who, over the past few weeks, have made donations to support us. These critical funds will help us in our efforts to assist individuals with I/DD and their families, as well as our local county chapters, through the COVID19 crisis. To put your donation to work for individuals with I/DD and their families, [click here](#). If you have questions or need assistance, our staff is here to help. [Click here](#) to access information about our Programs.

Use Your Amazon App to Support The Arc of New Jersey

If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support The Arc of New Jersey, Inc. in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device!

Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
3. Follow the in-App instructions to complete the process.

If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon shopping App, update your App. Click [here](#) for instructions.



Need help or more information? Want to become active in our advocacy network?

- **Visit our website** to access lots of great information that can help you navigate service systems, find resources and keep you informed as to the important issues facing children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- **Join our advocacy network** to add your voice to the thousands who are working hard to promote and protect the quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

[Visit our website](#)

[Join an Advocacy Network](#)

The Arc of New Jersey | 732.246.2525 | info@arcnj.org | www.arcnj.org

STAY CONNECTED

[DONATE NOW!](#)

