

## 2023 Legislative Session Wrap Up

Major priorities for legislators in the 2023 legislative session included addressing Indiana's expensive health care costs, focusing on mental health issues and creating the state budget for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Here are the legislative wins for Hoosiers with disabilities:

### State Budget

Legislators increased reimbursement rates for providers of home health, dental

services, non-emergency medical transportation, Medicaid waivers and the Child Mental Health Wraparound program. First Steps, early intervention funding was increased by \$7.5 million and special education received a five percent funding increase.

### DSP Workforce

Recommendations from the Task Force for Assessment of Services and Supports for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I102 Task Force) led to the passage of legislation to create a statewide standardized Direct Support Professional (DSP) training curriculum. After receiving the training, DSPs will have the opportunity to increase their skills as part of the development of a DSP workforce career ladder.

Legislation also requires the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services to establish a DSP registry to show a DSP's level of training and allow service providers to learn if DSPs have substantiated incidents of abuse, neglect and exploitation on their record.

### IDD Workforce

Two bills signed into law will provide Hoosiers with disabilities greater access to the workforce. One bill establishes a pilot program for The Arc of Indiana Foundation's Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) to partner with the Department of Workforce Development and manufacturers across the state to identify current entry level workers, skill those workers up to higher paying positions and fill

open entry level positions with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The second workforce bill creates a tax credit to incentivize Hoosier employers to hire and retain individuals with IDD.

### ABLE Accounts

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts allow individuals with disabilities and their families to save money for disability related expenses without impacting eligibility for government benefits. When the ABLE program was established, only individuals who received a disability diagnosis before the age of 26 were eligible. In January federal legislation adjusted the age from 26 to 46. During the legislative session, legislators adopted the newly passed federal act to allow more Hoosiers, including disabled military veterans, to have the opportunity to save funds for the future through an ABLE account.

The 2023 legislative session resulted in \$760 million in new funding for services, supports, education, programs and employment initiatives that will benefit the disability community over the next two years. We could not have done it without your help! We look forward to continuing to educate legislators on Medicaid services, employment, managed care and special education issues over the coming months as we prepare for the 2024 session.



Governor Holcomb—alongside Representative Ed Clere, Senator JD Ford, The Arc of Indiana's senior director of Public Policy, Hannah Carlock and other supporters—signs legislation into law creating a workforce training program in manufacturing in partnership with Erskine Green Training Institute.

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143 W. Market St.  
Suite 200  
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317-977-2375





## Message from Self-Advocates of Indiana

*Nicki Hinkle, President*

Throughout March and April Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI) attended seven different resource and transition fairs across the state. A member of SAI was present at each fair to talk about their experiences with self-advocacy and to answer questions about SAI. We enjoy attending these events and teaching people about SAI and how they can get involved!

SAI has a new partnership with the Indiana Repertory Theater (IRT). We attended a sensory friendly performance of one of their shows to evaluate how accessible the venue and performance was and will be giving them our findings and working with them to make things more accessible. We also took a public speaking workshop from them where we practiced our presentation skills.

As the subject matter experts on life with a disability in Indiana, we are often asked to present about a variety of topics and were grateful to practice our presentation skills with a professional who could provide constructive feedback for us. SAI gave five presentations this spring on employment, service animals, life with autism, self-advocacy, and using the LifeCourse to support decision making skills in youth.

In April, SAI treasurer Melody Cooper went to Boston for the Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) board meeting and attended the Center for Youth Voice Youth Choice (CYVYC) strategic retreat. Mel is a trainer for CYVYC, which is a national organization that aims to educate youth

about alternatives to guardianship. CYVYC has selected three more states to partner with: California, Texas, and Arizona. Mel will be the trainer for California, and she's started working with CYVYC's Community of Practice to make sure that self-advocate voices are involved in all aspects of the CYVYC project. She was one of the members of the selection committee for the new states and will be supporting the current cohort as they finish their final projects and prepare for the state showcases.

As the weather gets warmer, everyone at SAI starts to get ready for our annual picnic!



Shawn Fulton, The Arc of Indiana education and training coordinator, was honored by Tangram with their Community Champion Award. Tangram is a provider of disability services, programming, and care for all ages.



Members of SAI's board of directors with Anna Barnett, the education coordinator for Indianapolis Repertory Theater, following a public speaking workshop.



SAI board member Danie'l Mize, shown with The Arc of Bartholomew County executive director Grace Kestler, was honored with their David Stambaugh Volunteer of the Year award.

This year's picnic will take place in Plainfield, Indiana, on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at Hummel Park's Charleston Pavilion, 10am-2pm EST. Early Bird registration will open on July 3, 2023 so be sure to follow us on social media for updates. Of course, the picnic isn't possible without our generous sponsors. If you're interested in being a 2023 picnic sponsor, please e-mail Becky Shields at [bshields@arcind.org](mailto:bshields@arcind.org).

See you all at the picnic!



# Message from The Arc of Indiana CEO

*Kim Dodson*



Can you believe that I just finished my thirtieth legislative session and this fall I will have been with The Arc for 25 years! My time at The Arc has gone by quickly and I credit our former executive director, John Dickerson, for that as he created a fantastic work environment that allowed us all to be innovative with no time to be bored. As for the legislative part, well, let's just say that things have changed a lot and although I love the process, I am not certain things have changed for the better.

During my thirty legislative sessions, I have seen democrat control, republican control, a 50/50 split and now super majorities. In the early years of my career, bipartisanship was necessary as neither party had huge numbers and legislators needed to work across the aisle. Camaraderie was strong during this time as legislators could debate one another and walk out of the chamber to go across the street to grab a beer or whatever beverage of choice. Now that camaraderie is not needed or even attempted as legislative work can be done in both chambers without a single democrat on the floor. I am a true believer that the best policy comes from working through differing viewpoints to achieve a compromise that both sides can support.

I am well aware that the issues our legislature deals with have changed over the years as more social issues have come to the table and those issues pave a path to divisiveness and ill-will. Those social issues have gotten in the way of legislators seeing each other as colleagues and instead seeing each other through the lens of opposing views.

We are fortunate at The Arc of Indiana to have champions on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers. Disability issues are not partisan issues and we have found ways to be successful in the sometimes tension filled sessions. But, we still need help.

We need people to be engaged. We need more people with disabilities willing to share their story or lived experience. We need

more families reaching out to legislators to make sure that issues are fully understood and bills are passed in a way that makes a difference. It is because of this need that we are proud to be partnering with the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) to create an Advocacy Leadership Network.

We have hired 12 fantastic advocacy fellows from across the state who will be leading a three month training program to help people: (1) Learn how to effectively tell their own story or lived experience; (2) Train people to become leaders in their own lives, including team meetings, case conference committees, etc.; (3) Engage on issues important to them at the local, state and/or national level; (4) Engage on boards, committees, task forces, etc. and lastly; (5) Help others learn these same skills.

I came to the quick realization several months ago that we were trying so hard to get people with disabilities and their families to the table where important issues are being discussed, but we have failed to help them learn how to engage in the conversation once they were there. The Advocacy Leadership Network will help.

We have a goal to train at least 200 people across the state to become effective advocacy leaders. Who better to talk about issues than the people who are the experts living those issues each and every day?

Learn about our advocacy fellows and the Advocacy Leadership Project on pages four and five of this issue of The Arc News in Indiana.

If you want to get involved reach out to me at [kdodson@arcind.org](mailto:kdodson@arcind.org) or Steve Boyer, our chief program officer, at [sboyer@arcind.org](mailto:sboyer@arcind.org).



The Arc of Greater Boone County, The Arc of Shelby County at their SENSES Gym, KCARC, The Arc in Knox County, and "campers" at their 1972 Family Fun Center.



Each year we enjoy traveling across the state to visit our amazing chapters for our "We are The Arc" visits. The Arc of Indiana is now the largest state chapter of The Arc, with 46 chapters covering 68 counties that serve and advocate for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Find a chapter in your area at [arcind.org/about-the-arc/local-chapters](http://arcind.org/about-the-arc/local-chapters).

# Announcing the Advocacy Leadership Network

The Arc of Indiana has launched a new program, the Advocacy Leadership Network, which will work to build a network of at least 200 people across the state to advocate for the issues important to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and share their experience to make a positive difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Twelve advocacy fellows have been hired who are either a person with a disability or a family member of a person with a disability.

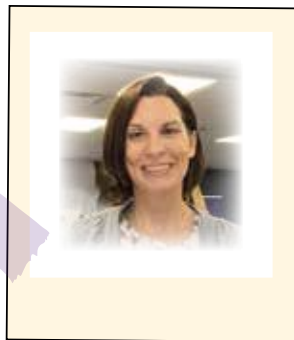
Kim Dodson, The Arc of Indiana CEO, noted, "We are very excited about building a strong advocacy leadership network across the state as we need more people with lived experience engaging in important conversations that impact their lives."

During their initial 12-week training program, advocacy fellows will learn how to effectively share their lived experience/story and how to help others feel empowered to engage in leadership opportunities in their own lives and community. Advocacy fellows will work to recruit people to engage in the leadership network and become advocacy leaders in their own lives, as well as share their experiences to effectively impact change. The project, funded by a grant from the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, runs through 2024, and includes a second phase which focuses on building a peer mentoring network.

## Meet our Advocacy Fellows

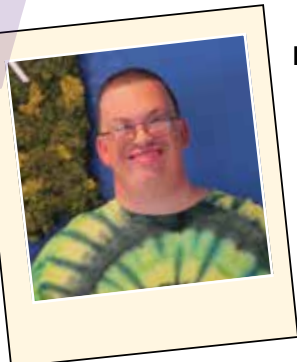
### Angie Arlington, Westfield

Angie, a mother of one, describes herself as empathetic, detail-oriented, driven and funny. She says people most admire her ability to make people feel comfortable with who they are and where.



### Beth Crain, Bloomington

Beth is a mother of three and grandmother to five. She went back to college a decade after graduating from high school and is looking forward to continuing her personal and professional growth through the Advocacy Network program. She describes herself as spiritual, innovative, empathetic and persistent.

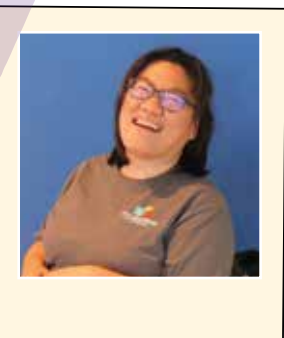


### Nate Breeden, Evansville

Nate is a proud advocate for people with disabilities. He started a successful Aktion Club in Evansville, Indiana, and currently serves as president. Nate shared that people describe him with four words: amazing, exciting, awesome, pizazz!

### Jan Bullington, Zionsville

Jan, the mother of three children, has worked in the special education field and attends advocacy trainings to stay current on policies and programs that affect people with disabilities. People describe her as honest, outgoing, approachable and dependable.



### Courtney Clark, Brownsburg

Courtney, a long time member of Self-Advocates of Indiana and her local self-advocates chapter, was born in South Korea and has a loyal service dog named Shasta. She describes herself as outgoing, dedicated, confident, happy and a people person.

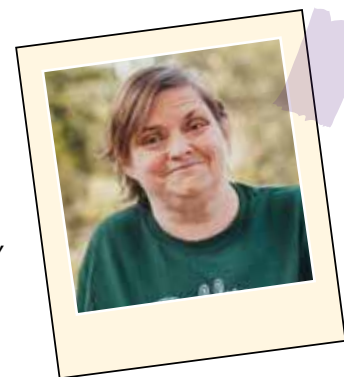


### Alexandra Hall, Indianapolis

Alexandra works in the field of early education and is the mother of twins. Alexandra describes herself as passionate, determined, unapologetic and creative. She hopes the Advocacy Leadership Network program will strengthen her knowledge of grassroots organization and policy change.

### Danie'l Mize, Columbus

Danie'l is a leader in her Self-Advocates of Indiana group in Columbus, Indiana. She enjoys traveling, including to places such as Washington D.C., Texas and Alabama. Danie'l describes herself as nice, dependable, friendly and a good listener.



### Samara Pfeiffer, Columbia City

Samara is the cofounder of an event called "Taking our Voices Back" which is designed for women with disabilities to tell their stories of strength. She is currently your Sr. Miss Indiana Amazing Queen. Samara describes herself as determined, authentic, kind and bold; and notes that she has a high level of determination and never gives up.



**Ryan Steiner, Peru**

Ryan Steiner is the father to one daughter. He says he makes the most out of every situation and is tenacious, kind, verbose and resilient. He enjoys running races pushing his daughter in an adaptable wheelchair and appreciates that this has helped him lose weight. He also shares that he has hyperlexia and could read books before he could even talk.

**Alexis (Lexi) Westerfield, Highland**

Lexi is very close to her mom, dad and stepdad. People admire her ability to persevere in the face of obstacles. She says she is talkative, caring, passionate and persistent; and she loves sushi and her rescue cats! Lexi hopes to gain the knowledge necessary to bring positive community advocacy to Northwest Indiana.

**Noah Upchurch, Fishers**

Noah, a graduate of The Arc of Indiana Foundation's Erskine Green Training Institute, is a Disney fan and loves to travel and cook. He describes himself as passionate, dependable, generous, curious, talkative, and kind. He hopes to grow as an advocate for people with disabilities.

**Traci Yanavich, Indianapolis**

Traci, the mother of two children, loves big dogs and has a 125 pound Cane Corso and an 85 pound Rottweiler. She describes herself as outgoing, passionate, compassionate, and a team player. She hopes to learn how best to empower others to become comfortable advocating for themselves. She is passionate about helping others create their best life and is excited to learn new tools.

## Building the Leadership Network begins with training 12 Advocacy Leadership Fellows



Engaging in 12 Weeks of Training, one year commitment.



Understanding Charting the LifeCourse principles through our partnership with the University of Missouri-Kansas City.



Learning with a curriculum binder developed by The Arc of Indiana for each program participant.



Leading a group of up to 20 participants who also want to become leaders. Our goal is to build the Leadership Network to over 200 people.



Leading / mentoring others around a successful lived experience, via a peer-to-peer advocacy process, utilizing the Quillo Mobile App.

### Project Goals:

- Increase the number of people with disabilities and family members who will become a leader in their own life.
- Increase the number of people with disabilities and family members who can assist others with advocacy and leadership in their own lives.
- Increase the number of people with disabilities and family members who may want to become involved in systems change in their own community.





# EGTI Creating Manufacturing Training Program in Partnership with Allison Transmission



**Andy Kirby**  
COO, The Arc of Indiana  
Executive Director, The Arc of Indiana Foundation

Manufacturing represents access to high-paying, stable careers with advancement opportunities and the chance to contribute to projects that are important to the changing landscape of our state. Some of our nation's most iconic brands, from Toyota and General Motors to Eli Lilly and Allison Transmission, have a significant manufacturing presence in Indiana. Their goals and products differ from each other, but they all have one thing in common – none

of them can find enough high-quality, dependable employees.

These billion-dollar global corporations use terms like hard work, commitment, empowered, world-class team, inclusive culture, entrepreneurship, diversity, and inclusion to describe their work environments and the characteristics they desire in employees. When I see or hear those terms, I immediately think of the hundreds of people with disabilities that have been trained and prepared for long-term employment through The Arc of Indiana Foundation's Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI). I am convinced that there are thousands of people with disabilities in Indiana who would be perfect candidates for open manufacturing positions and, with the proper training, will go on to have long-term successful careers at manufacturing facilities across the state.

It is with this in mind that The Arc of Indiana decided to pursue support for a comprehensive manufacturing training program and curriculum that will be added to EGTI's existing programs. As a global leader in the production of automatic transmissions for large commercial equipment and an organization that believes that the most productive workforces are diverse and inclusive, Allison Transmission was the perfect partner in this new venture. Combined with support and resources from the State's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), this project moved from dream to reality earlier this year. We are excited about the future of this project and believe that the results will be transformational, both for individuals with disabilities and the manufacturers that hire them.

We are currently in the planning phase with the leadership team at Allison Transmission, which includes education and training for staff, curriculum development, and student recruitment. Before the end of 2023, we will welcome our first manufacturing students and by 2024, Allison Transmission will be benefiting from EGTI graduates.

We know that one of the clearest paths to "the good life" is through employment. This is true for people with disabilities and it is true for people without disabilities. When individuals with disabilities have a myriad of options and high-quality training to prepare them for their chosen profession, amazing things happen. We have been able to experience success stories since EGTI opened its doors in 2016 – people with long-term careers are happier and healthier and experience significantly higher levels of self-sufficiency and independence. Training at Allison Transmission and career opportunities with that organization will open doors for people with disabilities and allow them to experience the good life and benefit from everything that experience offers.



The Arc Southwest Indiana's partnership with Toyota Indiana offers a successful model of how people with disabilities can become valued workers in manufacturing. Earlier this year, students in Pike Central High Schools Pre-Employment Transition (Pre-ETS) program visited the newly renovated experience center at Toyota Indiana.

**ERSKINE  
GREEN**  
Training Institute

Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI), founded by The Arc of Indiana Foundation, provides vocational

training in hospitality, food service, healthcare, and inventory distribution.

EGTI provides general tours once a month to prospective students, families, educators, counselors, case managers and other service providers.

#### **Upcoming tour dates:**

September 11, 2023 – 1 to 3 pm EST  
October 23, 2023 – 9 to 11 am EST  
November 20, 2023 – 1 to 3 pm EST  
December 18, 2023 – 9 to 11 am EST

Learn more and register at:

[erskingreeninstitute.org/about-us/visit-egti](https://erskingreeninstitute.org/about-us/visit-egti).

## Support for Caregivers of People with IDD/Down syndrome and Alzheimer's

People with intellectual disabilities, especially Down syndrome, are at higher risk of developing Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. It's something to be aware of, pay attention to and screen for whenever you think it may be appropriate.

The Alzheimer's Association of Greater Indiana offers a virtual support group for caregivers of people with IDD/Down syndrome and Alzheimer's on the 2nd Monday of each month, 7 p.m. ET / 6 p.m. CT.

Register via their 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) to learn more about Alzheimer's and supports for those with Alzheimer's and those who care for them.



## Share your Story

The Arc is collecting stories to learn how Medicaid is working (or not!) for people with disabilities, so we can work together to educate and advocate for changes. Share your story by answering the question "How does Medicaid work (or not!) for me?"

Here are some things you might share:

- What services do you or your family get from Medicaid? How does Medicaid help you?
- Have you ever lost access to Medicaid or had trouble qualifying? What happened?
- Have you had trouble finding staff to fill hours or losing staff? Tell us about it.
- How long have you been waiting for Medicaid services? What does life look like while you are waiting?

The Arc has set up simple ways to share your story in writing or by video. Please note that you can share your story anonymously if you prefer.

Learn more at [arcind.org/news/share-your-medicaid-story](http://arcind.org/news/share-your-medicaid-story).

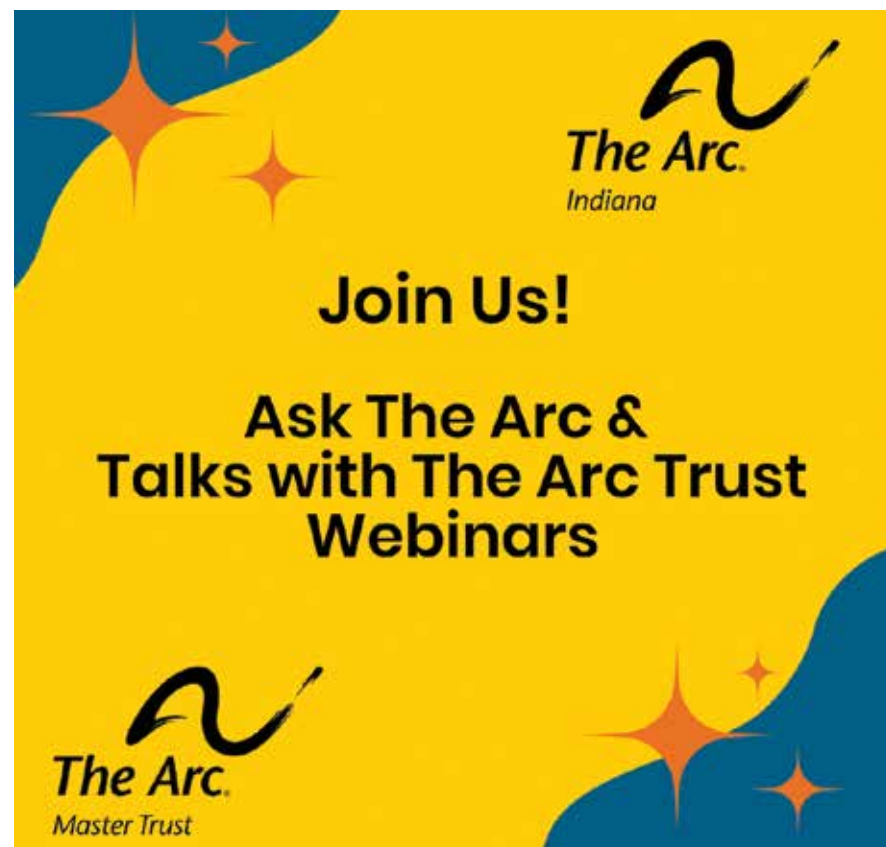


## Ask The Arc

Each month, Karly Sciortino-Poulter, The Arc Advocacy Network director, provides information and an opportunity for discussion on timely topics relevant to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and their support systems in our *Ask The Arc webinar series*.

Webinars take place on the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. EST. There is no cost, but you do need to register. Registration is for the complete webinar series. Register and find past webinars at [arcind.org/our-programs/video-gallery](http://arcind.org/our-programs/video-gallery).

*Ask The Arc is brought to you by the key organizations and trusted partners who join in support of our advocacy efforts through our Circles of Support initiative.*



## Talks with The Arc Trust

Do you or a loved one receive government benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid? Not sure on how to save for the future and keep these benefits? In our new monthly webinar series, *Talks with The Arc Trust*, Sarah Geis, The Arc Master Trust senior director of engagement, covers critical topics about saving for the future if you or a loved one has a disability.

Webinars take place on the third Wednesday of the month at 12:00 pm. EST. There is no cost, but you do need to register. Registration is for the complete webinar series. Register and find past webinars at [thearctrust.org/webinars-videos](http://thearctrust.org/webinars-videos).

*Talks with The Arc Trust is brought to you in partnership with The National Bank of Indianapolis. Through its personal trusts division, the bank acts as a fiduciary, providing expert administration and investment management services for the benefit of The Arc of Indiana's clients and their families. To learn more about the services offered at The National Bank of Indianapolis, please visit [nbofi.com](http://nbofi.com).*





The Arc of Indiana has served as the state's leading advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 65 years. Our advocacy efforts continue to be the core of our mission. Key to that mission is The Arc Advocacy Network's team of family advocates who work tirelessly to provide a critical circle of support to families and people with disabilities.

To support our advocacy mission, key organizations and trusted partners have joined in support of our advocacy efforts through our Circles of Support initiative. Our Mission Circle is our most exclusive Circle, available to organizations that make a significant commitment to ensure our advocacy work throughout the state will continue for years to come. We thank them for their ongoing commitment and support.



## Circles of Support

*Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.*

### Mission Circle Members



**THE NATIONAL BANK OF INDIANAPOLIS**  
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gotoipmg.com



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newstarservices.org



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To learn more, including joining our Circles of Support initiative, contact Alex Parker, director of development, [aparker@arcind.org](mailto:aparker@arcind.org), or 317-977-2375



Schools out for the summer, but students will return before you know it. Why not use the next several weeks to increase your skills to advocate for your child's special education services and supports?

Thanks to a generous donation from the Lids Foundation and The Arc of the United States, we are excited to offer a free online training, TheArc@School, to help families gain skills to better advocate for their children. Visit [arcind.org/thearcschool](https://arcind.org/thearcschool) to learn more and register.



## Don't Wait! Update! Get Ready to Renew Your Medicaid Coverage

If you or a loved one is covered by Indiana Medicaid, including:

- Traditional Medicaid
- Healthy Indiana
- Hoosier Healthwise
- Hoosier Care Connect

take action **now** to help continue Medicaid eligibility.

During the COVID-19 federal public health emergency, Medicaid recipients were able to keep their coverage, regardless of a change in income, resources, or Medicaid category. That requirement ended on March 31, 2023. All Medicaid recipients will be contacted by Medicaid to determine if they are still eligible – what is known as the redetermination process. For some Medicaid recipients this could result in actions to adjust, reduce or eliminate coverage.

### In April and May, over 100,600 Hoosiers lost their Medicaid coverage.

In May, roughly 82% of Hoosiers whose coverage lapsed lost Medicaid due to procedural reasons, such as an incomplete form. 89% lost coverage in April due to procedural reasons. Others are losing Medicaid because they simply have not responded. This could be because Indiana Medicaid does not have current contact information.

It is critical for Indiana Medicaid to have your current contact information and that you watch for and respond to any information you receive from Indiana Medicaid.

### There are three important steps to take now:

#### 1. Go to [FSSABenefits.IN.gov](https://FSSABenefits.IN.gov)

- ✓ Scroll down to the blue "Manage Your Benefits" section
- ✓ Click on either "Sign into my account" or "Create account"
- ✓ Check that your contact information is accurate or enter your contact information
- ✓ Call 800-403-0864 if you need assistance

#### 2. Watch your mail! Be sure to respond to any request for information

#### 3. If you get a renewal form, immediately complete and return the form

If you are told you no longer qualify, contact The Arc of Indiana at 317-977-2375 and ask to speak with a family advocate. We can help determine if you can appeal the decision and/or explore alternate coverage options at [HealthCare.Gov](https://HealthCare.Gov).



143 W. Market St., Suite 200  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-977-2375 800-382-9100



Make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families across Indiana through your gift. Simply scan the QR code or visit [arcind.org/get-involved/donate](https://arcind.org/get-involved/donate) to give a gift online.

