



Achieve with us.

2023 Annual Report

Dear Members and Friends of The Arc Michigan:

I am honored to serve as The Arc Michigan's Board President. 2023 was another year of persistent public policy advocacy. The Arc Michigan continued its focused public policy efforts toward increasing direct care worker wages. These efforts will continue in the new year and beyond. The Arc Michigan will continue to advocate for service system improvements and continue to voice the importance of a public mental health system where everyone has access to authentic Person-Centered Planning, Self-Directed Services, Independent Facilitation and Conflict-Free Case Management. Additionally, The Arc will continue to push for more General Fund dollars to be placed into the public mental health system. There simply is not enough funding in the current budget to provide adequate service to all people with disabilities in Michigan.

We must always remember that Michigan's constitution provides that services for, and the public health of, people with disabilities will "always be fostered and supported." The Arc intends to keep reminding those who are making financial and systems policy in the department, the Governor's office, and in the legislature of that constitutional commitment. The Arc will also continue to help create more inclusive and independent lives for individuals with disabilities through training and support, as well as public policy and systems advocacy.

The Arc Michigan knows our strength lies in the partnerships we have with our 28 local chapters and our many other advocacy partners across the state. Together we can continue to accomplish great things and continue to "fight the good fight" with our goal always being to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families in Michigan. To keep the energy, direction and efforts going, we will continue to need your help. Much gratitude for your past support and many thanks for your continued support.

Thank you very much for all you do.

Thomas Kendziorski

Thomas Kendziorski
President

Sherri Boyd
Executive Director



Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF) provides information, education, and support for families with students (from birth to age 26) who receive (or may be eligible to receive) early intervention or special education services.

The work of MAF is done by Regional Parent Mentors (RPMs) and supported by central Information and Referral staff, all of whom are family members of individuals with disabilities. Regional Parent Mentors can connect families of children with disabilities to resources to help improve their children's education and mentor them in becoming a more active participant in their child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP). This year, mentors assisted 3,769 parents to review/prepare for IFSPs or IEPs or help problem solve an issue a parent was facing. MAF helps facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities. **No matter where you are in Michigan, you can connect with a Regional Parent Mentor in your part of the state. This year, MAF introduced two new mentors who can offer statewide assistance to Arabic-speaking and Spanish-speaking families.**

In 2023, MAF trainers, along with our state partners and RPMs offered 199 virtual and in person learning opportunities. Learning opportunities were held regionally and statewide. We had a total of 5,673 participants, of whom 3,168 were parents, 2,178 were professionals, 140 were students with a disability, and 187 participants identified in more than one category.

Topics include:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- Disability is Not a Bad Word
- FAPE in the LRE
- Section 504 at School: What Parents Need to Know
- Transition from School to Adulthood
- Building Blocks of Self-Advocacy

MAF offers a full calendar of statewide virtual learning opportunities and regional in-person small-group learning, including live and on demand webinars, videos, and courses. Families can watch 55+ different webinars and video presentations at home, at their own pace at www.youtube.com/michiganalliance.

Our on demand webinar presentations have been closed-captioned through a partnership with Michigan Department of Education's Center for Educational Networking (CEN). Accommodations are available for all our live learning opportunities.

Families can access many resources at www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org, or by calling 1.800.552.4821. We also have a Spanish Information and Referral Line that families can contact by calling 313.217.1060. Our Arabic-speaking families can contact us by calling 248.963.0607. All families can also email us at info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Michigan Alliance for Families keeps in touch with families via a monthly e-newsletter and event notification system. Not signed up? Go to: www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/newsletter

MAF is funded by grants from the Michigan Department of Education - (1) Office of Special Education and (2) Office of Great Start/Early Childhood Development and Family Education; and (3) the US Department of Education - Office of Special Education Programs as our state's Parent Training and Information Center.





LIPA is back! Leaders in Policy Advocacy, also known as LIPA, is an intensive leadership training program for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of minor children with developmental disabilities. The training program took a hiatus for several years and has now been funded through Michigan Alliance for Families in a supplemental Parent Training and Information Center grant. LIPA aims to educate and empower selected participants to become leaders in the disability rights movement.

Our participants commit to attending monthly, highly interactive weekend sessions for a series of six months where a variety of subject matter experts train them on a series of topics including disability history, inclusive education, assistive technology, self-determination, person-centered planning, access to housing,

employment, benefits, and systems change. We provide overnight lodging and meals for the in-person training weekends as well as stipend gift cards to help reimburse them for their travel, respite, and childcare expenses.

In September 2023, we had 19 participants graduate from our 2023 cohort. These graduates were connected to the previous LIPA alumni in a virtual Facebook group where over 100 alumni continue to share advocacy opportunities and resources related to disability advocacy. As we gear up for our 2024 program, we are thrilled to be able to continue this work of building future advocates and leaders for both the parent and self-advocacy movements.

Leaders in Policy Advocacy is coordinated by Karah Ley. More information on LIPA including FAQ's can be found at <https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/lipa/>



Our Facebook page, [@TheArcMichigan](https://www.facebook.com/TheArcMichigan) has 3,400 Followers with 2,900 Likes. In 2023, we reached 24K accounts, mostly generated organically (not through paid ads). The Arc Michigan had 2.7K content interactions - an increase of 46.5% from the previous year. And we now have 3.5K followers and 2,956 page likes, by sharing 500 posts.





The Arc Michigan received a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) in Fiscal Year 2023 to coordinate the Foster Care Disability Navigation (FCDN) program. There are 28 contracted agencies across the state dedicated to this work, including many local Arc Chapters. These local agencies provide special education advocacy, consultation, and navigation support services to students who are experiencing foster care and live with a disability. Additionally, we have partnered with The [Student Advocacy Center](#) of Michigan where they maintain the program's statewide toll-free helpline to answer any questions, conduct intakes, and refer callers to their local contracted agency for direct services and supports.

Last year, the program served 80 youth (from December 2022 to September 2023) while also focusing on outreach, training, and building up infrastructure. Our advocates continue to work with the students until their education needs are resolved, which can take several months. There is also funding within the grant dedicated to removing financial barriers to educational success if that should arise. Some examples of items that have been purchased for students are graphic calculators and laptops to help them succeed in their education program.

We anticipate the numbers of students served will continue to expand in 2024, as we have now built a foundation of general awareness of the FCDN program throughout the state from our targeted outreach. More information can be found on our website here: [Foster Care Disability Navigation](#)



A project to assist people receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to:

- understand and use work incentives,
- correctly report wages, including those from self-employment, and expenses that may reduce countable income,
- understand the impact of work on Medicaid and Medicare coverage,
- understand the relationship of work to disability cash benefits, other state and federal benefits, such as food and housing assistance, Veteran's Administration benefits or Unemployment Insurance, and
- improve individual financial outcomes.

On June 30, 2023 The Arc Michigan concluded the second year of a five year WIPA project,

granted by the Social Security Administration and serving 21 counties. Between January 1, and December 31, 2023, nearly 500 individuals had been referred to our WIPA project, with 24% receiving an in-depth Benefits Summary and Analysis, 39% receiving personal assistance toward achieving their employment and financial goals, and many more receiving needed information and referral.

The fact that WIPA services can be delivered remotely has allowed us to continue to meet individual needs, and to provide valuable assistance to people across our service area.

For more information please go to:

<https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

Cathy McRae, the project coordinator, can be reached at 800.292.7851 ext. 119 or

cathy.mcrae@arcmi.org

The Arc Michigan Pooled Amenities Trust



The Arc Michigan Pooled Amenities Trust opened in 2015. A pooled trust offers a way to protect and manage resources for people with disabilities, without risking their public benefits. The assets in this

type of trust are “pooled” together for purposes of investment, but each person is assigned a sub-account to track their individual funds. Pooling makes it possible to join the Trust with less money than is generally needed to create a traditional special needs trust, making it an excellent option for families of modest means and individuals who find themselves with an inheritance, insurance payout, or legal settlement that could threaten their benefits.

Assets in a pooled trust may be used to procure those items and experiences that are not

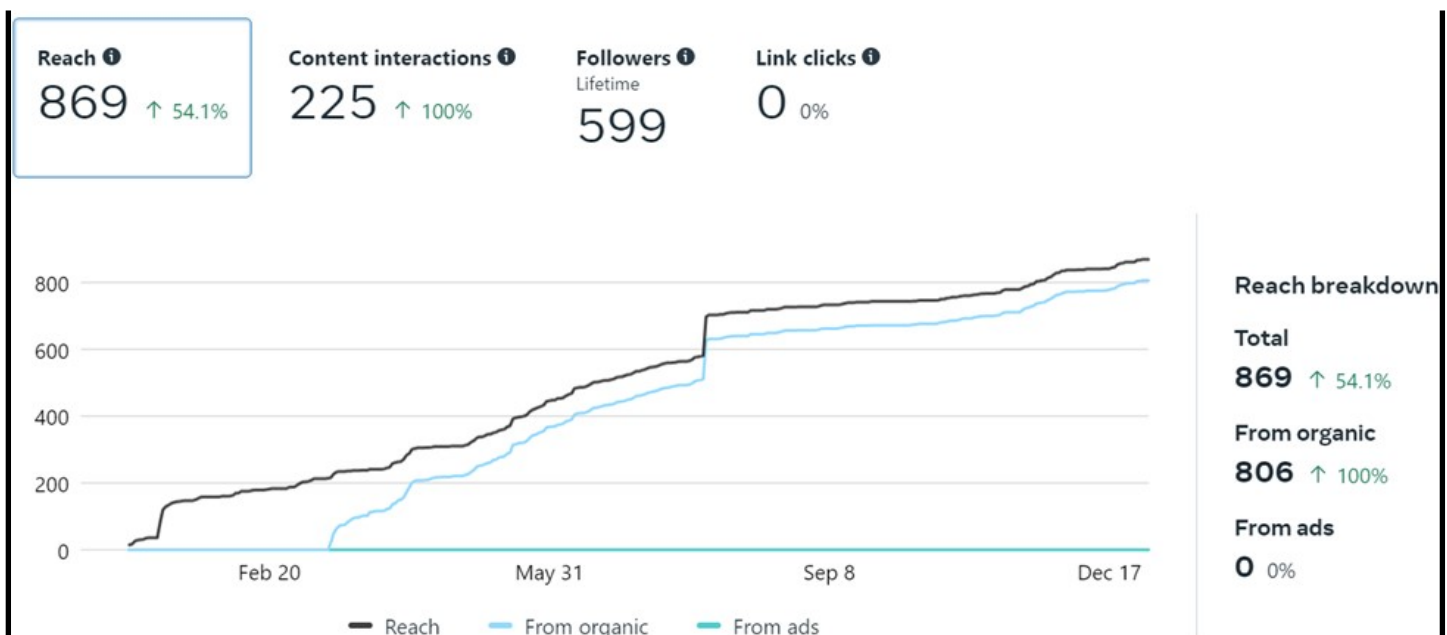
specifically meant to be purchased with public benefits, but which can enhance the person’s quality of life. In 2023 the Pooled Trust enabled people to pay for necessities like dental work not covered by Medicaid, automobile insurance, and clothing. But we were also able to help people have fun with the purchase things like computers, gaming systems, and vacations.

As of December 31, 2023, The Arc Michigan Pooled Amenities Trust held assets totaling \$2,335,480 with 78 sub-account holders and had paid over \$37,000 to The Arc Michigan for the administration of the Trust over the last year.

More information is available at: <https://arcmi.org/projects/the-arc-michigan-pooled-amenities-trust/> or contact Cathy McRae, the project coordinator at 800.292.7851 ext. 119 or PooledTrust@arcmi.org.



The Arc Michigan’s Instagram account @[thearcMichigan](https://www.instagram.com/thearcMichigan) grew to 599 followers in 2023, and reached 869 accounts with 284 posts (an increase of 54%) and 225 content interactions (an increase of 100%).



Direct Care Worker Wage Coalition

The Arc Michigan continues to facilitate the Direct Care Worker Wage Coalition which consists of 14 state-wide disability advocacy organizations as well as participation from disability services providers. The Coalition focuses on increasing wages for the 50,000 direct care workers (DCWs) in Michigan who provide critical life preserving support to individuals with disabilities and mental health diagnoses in the behavioral health system.

Unfortunately, DCW wages in Michigan's behavioral health system are directly tied to Medicaid funding, which has not kept pace with the needs of our state. As a result, Michigan DCWs bring home very small paychecks, and often have no benefits. While direct care workers received a \$0.85 per hour wage increase in 2023, in addition to maintaining the \$2.35 during the pandemic, the average starting wage of a DCW in 2023 is still only \$15.72 per hour. Without meaningful investments, the DCW workforce crisis continues to exacerbate at the person and their family's expense. Due to these low wages, there is frequent staff turnover, caregiver burnout, and medical and mental health emergencies happening all over the state. This ongoing crisis is not only concerning but is also a health and safety risk to our state.

In addition to advocating for wages, the Coalition also has also begun recommending areas to improve administrative efficiencies within the system. Specifically, by establishing uniform contractual standards for behavioral health providers funded through the Prepaid Health Plan (PIHP)/Community Mental Health Services Program (CMHSP) system, it would ideally lead to a more efficient system.

This past year the DCW Wage Coalition continued to educate policymakers about the importance of DCWs through various media campaigns, committee hearings, and individual legislative advocacy. For more information and to take action please go to <https://www.dcw-michigan.org/>

Additional resources:

DCW Wage Coalition Position Statement can be found here: [DCW 2024 Legislative Priorities](#)

Administrative Efficiencies recommendations can be found here: [DCW 2024 Admin Efficiencies](#)



New for 2023, The Arc Michigan's LinkedIn account achieved 260 followers, made 3,434 impressions, had 21 reposts and gained 138 reactions. <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-arc-michigan/>.



X (formerly Twitter) has changed their tracking analytics, so the only recoverable information is that @arc-michigan has 683 followers and made 9K impressions in 2023, with 43 link clicks 6.25% engagement. *(this is likely not accurate, because the report also said we have not yet posted this year and we've had about 50 posts)*

Remember to find and follow The Arc Michigan across all our social media channels. See them all in once place, at <https://linktr.ee/arc-michigan> 



The Arc Michigan’s Person-Centered Planning Quality Improvement Project, which began in 2019, is a partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Behavioral and Physical Health and Aging Services Administration (BPHASA) to evaluate and improve Person and Family-Centered Planning across Michigan’s Behavioral Health Provider System.

Evaluation of Current Person-Centered Practices

As a partner in the MDHHS Site Review process, the project includes interviews with individuals and families who receive services from Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) and Community Mental Health (CMH) entities. The interviews focus on the individual/family experience with Person and Family-Centered Planning, access to information and supports, as well as other identified quality measures. Interviews reflect the individual experience with the Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSP) system, access to person and family-centered service delivery, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) indicators, and understanding of available services and supports. Data collected from these interviews is utilized in partnership with MDHHS BPHASA to inform system improvement needs across Michigan’s 10 current PIHP systems. Data and feedback is also used to develop and update ongoing statewide support and training needs.

Development of Training and Technical Assistance

Monthly Person-Centered Planning (PCP) Webinars

Using data collected from a Statewide Training Needs Assessment and the Site Review Interviews, the project developed a Statewide Training Plan in areas related to Person and Family-Centered Planning, Self-Direction, Independent Facilitation, and navigation of the behavioral health system. This training plan informs a monthly webinar series that provides free technical assistance and training. Webinars are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 3-4pm via Zoom. Webinars are recorded and can be viewed on the project page at the Arc Michigan’s website. <https://arcmi.org/projects/pcpqi/webinars/>

Self-Direction Help Desk

The Self-Direction (SD) Help Desk was developed to provide a central location for people to provide feedback and request technical assistance on self-direction across Michigan. The Help Desk also features a FAQ on SD that can be used as a resource for individuals, families, advocates, and those working in the system. The SD Help Desk and SD FAQ can be found at: <https://arcmi.org/projects/pcpqi/pcpqisdhelpdesk/>

Self-Determination Conference

The project continues collaboration with MDHHS to plan Michigan’s Annual Self-Determination Conference. This year’s conference is the 5th Annual and will be held August 26 & 27, 2024 at Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire, Michigan.

Information and resources about the PCP Quality Improvement Project can be found at the project’s webpage: <https://arcmi.org/projects/pcpqi/>

Funding source: Mental Health Block grant from MDHHS/Grant administered by the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan.

Project Coordinator is Marie Eagle, marie@arcmi.org . Project Assistant is Heather Hallett, heather@arcmi.org

Supported Decision-Making Group



Supported decision-making means giving people the help and support they want and need so they can make their own decisions and avoid guardianship. The Arc Michigan and the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council believe all adults have the right to make decisions, to direct their own lives, to be treated with dignity, and to be respected as autonomous adults. Together we facilitate a broad statewide coalition of organizations and individuals to provide advocacy, education, training, and resources around supported decision-making.

In 2023, through presentations and webinars we were able to reach 357 family members, 174 individuals with developmental disabilities, 167 transition staff, 400 staff from a variety of agencies, and three legislators for a total of 1,150. The [Supported Decision-Making Toolkit \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.arcmi.org/resource-center/documents/sdm-toolkit-michigan.pdf) was completed which details supports available for families throughout the lifespan. Also, the Supported Decision-Making Coalition decided to back legislative language promoting supported decision-making developed by a group led by Amy Peckinpaugh.

In 2024, we will continue to promote the use of supported decision-making through training and presentations and will record personal stories about guardianship and the transition to supported decision-making. The stories will be used in educational and advocacy efforts, and we anticipate supported decision-making legislation will be introduced during the year. It is also our hope that the project looking at court and Community Mental Health records will also be completed.

The Youth Ambassadors, ranging in age from 15 to 22, completed their projects for the Center for Youth Voice, Youth Choice. They exceeded their goal of reaching 1,000 by 150. The Youth Ambassadors also gave their “showcase” presentations which can be found at <https://youth-voice.org/michigan-state-team/>. While their projects are completed, the Youth Ambassadors will continue with the Center for Youth Voice, Youth Choice mentoring new state team members from across the country.

For more information on Supported Decision-Making check out our web page at <https://arcmi.org/resource-center/documents/> or the Developmental Disability Council’s web page https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4868_4897_97701---,00.html. You may also contact Jill Gerrie, Project Coordinator, at 800.292.7851 ext. 118 or jill.gerrie@arcmi.org.

Arc Michigan Newsletters, Action Alerts, Appeals & Governmental Affairs Updates



The Arc Michigan sent a total of 158,937 emails to 3,939 subscribers in 2023 with an above average engagement rate.

Past e-Newsletters can be found on our website under Newsletter Archives, or by visiting <https://arcmi.org/resource-center/newsletter-archive/>.

Don’t miss out on what’s happening, sign up at <https://arcmi.org/newsletter-signup/>.



Michigan Family Voices is a grassroots collaborative to

identify and mobilize family and individual leaders, and allies, to sustain a statewide network who will impact and effect positive change in health care policy, and other policies relevant to families of children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities. Our network of leaders will inform, build relationships, and work in partnership with decision-makers *at all levels*.

We are different from other family organizations in Michigan and other Family Voices in the country:

- We don't provide services.
- We are not affiliated with any governmental agency or department.
- No constraints on informing and educating policymakers.
- Can speak to an issue, without financial repercussions.
- Policymakers listen because we are not trying to save programs that employ us.
- We provide opportunities for decision-makers to hear family voices and to work in partnership to make positive impact on policies and system change.

Policies and Programs Impacted to Date

- Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS)
- Continuation of federal support for Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2FHIC) which helps families of children and youth with special health needs navigate the complex health system
- Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (MCHB)
- Medicaid (Medicaid Expansion; Medicaid Work Requirement Exemptions)
- Funding for Early On
- Ending Non-Emergency Restraint and Seclusion in Schools
- Funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Support for Family Caregiver
- Workforce Investment Opportunity Act

For information on Michigan Family Voices and how you can help ensure families' voices are included in policy making *at all levels*: visit our website <http://michiganfamilyvoices.org> , [Facebook page](#), or contact Eileen Brandt (Project Consultant): Eileen@ArcMI.org

The Arc Michigan Board

Executive Committee

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President

Ron Kimball
Vice President

Mark McWilliams
Secretary

Andrea Lane
Treasurer

Maria Messina Wiersma
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Muskegon

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Detroit

Tom Lerchen
Saline

Katherine Mills
Kalamazoo

Robert Steinkamp
Holt
Robert White
Clarkston

*1 Year Appointment
Open*

Thank you for giving your time to serve!

Committees & Boards

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

- MDDC Public Policy Work Group
- MDDC Quarterly Meetings
- MDHHS Quarterly Stakeholder Group
- MDHHS Administrative Efficiency Workgroup
- MDHHS Child & Family Issues Committee
- MDDC CoP on Charting the Life Course Leadership Team

Michigan Department of Education

- Parent Involvement Committee
- Parent Leadership in State Government Advisory Board
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- MI Interagency Transition Team
- OPTIMISE Task Force and Core Planning Team, Behavior Action Team, Special Education Administrators Credentialing Action Team, Special Educator Credentialing Action Team
- START Sexuality Community of Practice
- Education and Foster Care Workgroup

Board and Advocacy Groups

- National Core Indicators Workgroup
- Statewide Direct Care Workforce Advisory Committee
- Michigan Parent, Advocate, and Attorney Coalition
- Special Education Coalition
- Conflict Free Access and Planning Workgroup
- Michigan Family Voices

- Citizens Advisory Council for the Developmental Disabilities Institute, Wayne State University
- Michigan ADA Steering Committee
- Michigan Adult Foster Care Advisory Council
- Michigan Olmstead Coalition
- Michigan Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Coalition
- Deaf/Blind Central Advisory Committee
- Center for Parent Information and Resources-Parent Center Equity Workgroup
- Michigan Elder Abuse Task Force
- Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)
- Care Can't Wait- Michigan
- Caring Across Generations- National

The Arc Michigan facilitates:

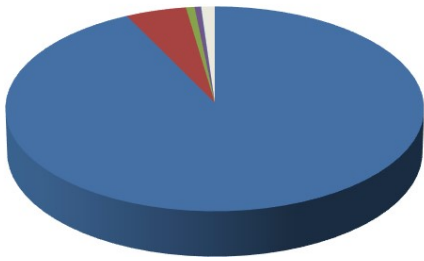
- DD Practice Improvement Team
- MI Statewide Advocacy Group
- Supported Decision-Making Whole Group
- Direct Care Worker Wage Coalition
- Partners Advancing Self-Determination



The Arc Michigan 2023 Financial Summary

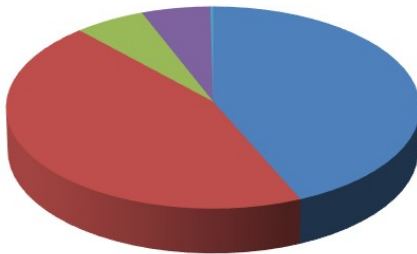
The Arc Michigan Chapters

Revenues \$5,972,763



- Grants \$5,535,774
- Other Operational \$297,121
- Membership \$41,750
- Development \$29,906
- United Way \$2,646
- Interest \$65,566

Expenses \$5,809,120



- Salaries/Benefits \$2,524,220
- Contracted Services \$2,600,180
- Other Program Expenses \$339,850
- Office Expense/Overhead \$332,450
- Payment to Arc US \$12,420

The Arc Michigan is a United Way Agency
1325 S. Washington Avenue,
Lansing, Michigan 48910

517.487.5426 or
800.292.7851
www.arcmi.org



- ARC/Allegan County
- The Arc Arenac Area
- The Arc Bay County
- The Arc of Calhoun County
- The Arc Downriver
- ARC/Gogebic Chapter
- The Arc of Central Michigan
- The Arc Community Advocates
- The Arc Kent County
- The Arc of Livingston County
- The Arc of Macomb County
- ARC/Manistee
- The Arc of Midland
- The Arc Mid-Michigan
- The Mon-Arc of Monroe, Inc.
- The Arc Muskegon
- The Arc/Newaygo County
- The Arc of Northern Michigan
- The Arc of Oakland County, Inc.
- ARC Advocacy & Resource Center
(Ottawa County)
- The Arc of St. Clair County
- Van Buren ARC
- Washtenaw Association for Community
Advocacy
- Arc Grosse Pointe/Harper Woods
- The Arc Dearborn
- The Arc Detroit
- The Arc of Northwest Wayne County
- The Arc of Western Wayne County