



*Achieve with us.*

## 2021 Annual Report

Dear Members and Friends of The Arc Michigan:

I am honored to serve as The Arc Michigan's Board President. 2021 was another year of persistent public policy advocacy. With the ongoing world of Covid-19, The Arc Michigan continued and strengthened its public policy efforts toward increasing direct care worker wages and access to vaccinations for people with disabilities. Additionally, The Arc Michigan continued to advocate against Senate Bills 597 and 598 which would hand behavioral health dollars in Michigan over to the Medicaid Health Plans. 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 maintaining a public mental health system where everyone has access to authentic Person-Centered Planning, Self-Directed Services, Independent Facilitation and Conflict-Free Case Management. We believe that integration is at the person level, not at the administrative/financial level as some would lead you to believe. 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 29 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", as the saying goes. To keep the energy, direction and efforts going, we will continue to need your help. Thank you very much for all you do.

*Maria Messina Wiersma*

Maria Messina Wiersma  
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 1660 parents to review/prepare for IFSPs or IEPs or help problem solve an issue a parent was facing, including navigating special education services during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.**

In 2021, MAF trainers, along with our state partners and RPMs offered 105 virtual learning opportunities. Learning opportunities were held regionally and statewide. We had a total of 3569 participants, of whom 1973 were parents, 1581 were professionals, and 15 were students with a disability.

Topics include:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Special Education and COVID-19

- Participating in Virtual IEP Meetings
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports
- Mental Health and Education
- Planning for Future Employment
- Rethinking Guardianship

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MAF will continue to offer a full calendar of virtual learning opportunities, including live and archived webinars, videos, and courses. Families can watch 55+ different webinar and video presentations at home, at their own pace at [www.youtube.com/michiganalliance](http://www.youtube.com/michiganalliance).

All of our archived webinar presentations have been closed-captioned through a partnership with Michigan Department of Education's Center for Educational Networking (CEN). Additionally, accommodations are available for all of our live learning opportunities.

Families can access many resources at [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org), by calling 1.800.552.4821 We also have a new Spanish Information and Referral Line that families can contact by calling 313.217.1060. All families can also email us at [info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org](mailto: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](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/newsletter)

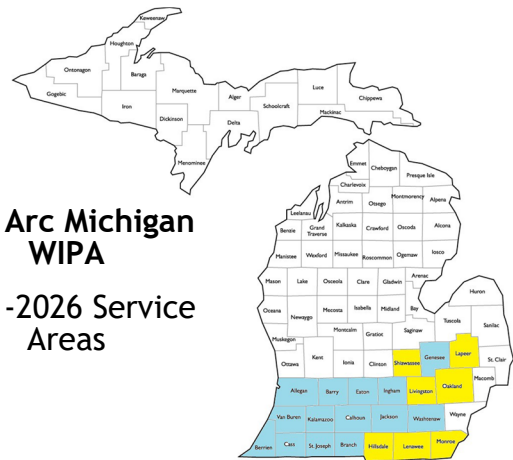
MAF is funded by grants from the Michigan Department of Education - (1) Office of Special Education and (2) Office of Great Start /Early Childhood Development and Family Education; and the US Department of Education - Office of Special Education Programs as our state's Parent Training and Information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



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

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

The ongoing pandemic resulted in a decrease in referrals from non-pandemic years but the fact that WIPA services can be delivered remotely allowed us to continue to meet individual needs, and to provide valuable information and assistance on pandemic related issues, such as: stimulus payments, Medicaid continuation and unemployment payments.



The Arc Michigan WIPA  
2021-2026 Service Areas

On June 30, 2021 the Arc Michigan concluded a two year extension of its WIPA project and the next day began a new five year WIPA project, granted by the Social Security Administration and serving 21 counties. Between January 1, and December 31, 2021, over 300 individuals had been referred to our WIPA project, with about 35% receiving an in-depth Benefits Summary and Analysis, 55% receiving personal assistance, and another 22% receiving information and referral, to assist in achieving their goals.

For more information please go to:

[Choose Work! - Ticket to Work - Social Security \(ssa.gov\)](https://www.chooseworkmi.org)

Cathy McRae, the project coordinator, can be reached at 800.292.7851 ext. 119 or [cathy.mcrae@arcmi.org](mailto:cathy.mcrae@arcmi.org)



Our Facebook page, located at <https://www.facebook.com/TheArcMichigan/> has 2,398 “Likes” and 2,845 followers.



Our Twitter account is located at <https://twitter.com/ArcMichigan> and has 604 followers.



New for 2021, we’ve joined Instagram! Found at <https://www.instagram.com/thearcMichigan/> currently with 285 followers.



Partners Advancing Self-Determination (PAS) is a grant project designed to improve self-directed services, also known as self-determination in Michigan. PAS is a collaborative effort with the Michigan Behavioral and Physical Health and Aging Administration, Division of Adult Home and Community-Based Services and is funded by the Michigan Developmental Disability Council.

### Training

During 2021 PAS developed educational sessions for people with disabilities and their families about the updated Self-Directed Services Policy and its Technical Requirements. Unfortunately, due to a delayed adoption of the policy by CMHs and PIHPs, training was rescheduled for 2022.

### Advancement Teams

PAS provides free state-level technical assistance, training, and support to local Advancement Teams wishing to improve or refine their self-direction processes. Advancement Teams are no longer a primary focus of PAS, though we will work with groups interested.

A team from LifeWays Community Mental Health in Jackson completed the PAS process in 2021. This was the first time the sessions were held virtually. We held shorter sessions over a longer period which was successful.

### Advisory Council

The Advisory Council's goal is to develop/refine state requirements and standards that ensure consistent, quality self-directed services that result in changes in MDHHS/ BHDHA policies, procedures, guidance, and technical assistance.

During 2021, the Advisory Council helped with the development of the new Self-Directed Services policy training, provided technical assistance as the Advancement Team sessions were adapted for virtual presentation, and continued to monitor the status of self-directed services.

### 2022 Projected Activities

We anticipate working with one new Advancement Team in 2022.

Virtual educational sessions will be held for people with disabilities and family members about the updated Self-Directed Services Policy and its Technical Requirements.

For more information, contact Jill Gerrie, Project Coordinator at 517 492-5029 or toll free at 800 292-7851, ext. 114, or via email at [jill.gerrie@arcmi.org](mailto:jill.gerrie@arcmi.org)



## Direct Care Worker Wages

The Arc Michigan facilitates a coalition of a dozen state-wide disability rights organizations and disability services providers that focuses on increasing the wages of direct care workers who provide support to Michiganders receiving services via the state Community Mental Health system. The group influences policy makers to increase Medicaid funding, which is the source of direct care worker compensation within the public behavioral health care system. The coalition was successful in 2020 at securing pandemic related “premium pay” wage increase for this group of workers. In 2021 we successfully advocated to make the pay increase permanent. More information about this important issue and the work of the coalition can be found here: <https://arcmi.org/micarecrisis/>



The Arc Michigan's Person-Centered Planning Quality Improvement Project, which began in 2019, is a partnership with MDHHS BHDDA 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 and Community Mental Health 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 CMHSP system, access to person and family-centered service delivery, HCBS indicators, and understanding of available services and supports. Baseline data has been collected from Michigan's 10 current PIHP systems and is being used in partnership with MDHHS BHDDA to inform system improvement activities and develop statewide support and training needs. Interviews will continue over the next 2-year Site Review Cycle.

### **Development of Training and Technical Assistance**

#### **Monthly PCP Webinar**

Using data collected from a Statewide Training Needs Assessment and 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 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 will also feature a FAQ on Self-Direction that can be used as a resource for individuals, families, advocates, and those working in the system. The SD Help Desk went live in February 2022. <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 3rd annual and will be held June 21, 2022 at the Lansing Center.

Information and resources about the PCP Quality Improvement Project can be found at the project's new webpage: [Person Centered Planning Quality Improvement Project - Michigan \(arcmi.org\)](https://arcmi.org/projects/pcpqi/)

Funding source: MH Block grant from MDHHS/ Grant administered by CMHAM

Project Coordinator is Marie Eagle, [marie@arcmi.org](mailto:marie@arcmi.org) . Project Assistant is Heather Hallett, [heather@arcmi.org](mailto:heather@arcmi.org)

## Supported Decision-Making Group



Supported decision-making means giving people the help they need and want, to understand the situations and

choices they face, so they can make their own decisions, without the need for a guardian. Because we 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, the Arc Michigan, along with the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, facilitates a broad statewide coalition of organizations and individuals to provide advocacy, education, training, and resources around supported decision-making.

In 2021, we added webinars to our tools of videos, a position statement, and a brochure. Through presentations and webinars we were able to reach 165 family members, 53 individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, 101 transition staff, and 165 individuals working in various agencies. As this group moves forward into 2022 we will continue to promote the use of supported decision making through trainings and

presentations, and we will work on developing a robust tool-kit available to make supported decision-making easier to use at all stages of life.

In Michigan, according to the National Core Indicators report for 2018-2019, 80% of people with a disability were under some form of guardianship, compared with 54% nationally. We will continue our advocacy work to limit the use of guardianship in our state, and to make sure that those individuals who do have a guardian appointed are treated with due process, including; having a “finding of need” for guardianship on the court record, having frequent and regularly scheduled meetings with the guardian, and limiting the number of wards a professional guardian may have on their caseload.

For more information on Supported Decision-Making check out our web page at <https://arcmi.org/resource-center/documents/> or the Developmental Disability Councils web page [https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550\\_2941\\_4868\\_4897\\_97701---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4868_4897_97701---,00.html). You may also contact Cathy McRae, the Project Coordinator, at 800.292.7851 ext. 119 or [cathy.mcrae@arcmi.org](mailto: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.

As of December 31, 2021, The Arc Michigan Pooled Amenities Trust held assets totaling \$1,234,137 with 32 sub-account holders, and had paid over \$24,000 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](mailto:PooledTrust@arcmi.org).



## Committees & Boards

### Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

- MDDC Public Policy Work Group
- MDDC Quarterly Meetings
- MDHHS Quarterly Stakeholder Group
- HCBS Heightened Scrutiny Review Team
- Michigan Employment 1st Work Group
- MDHHS Child & Family Issues Committee
- Michigan NCAPPS Team
- MDHHS Person-Centered Planning (PCP) Committee
- MDDC CoP on Charting the Life Course Leadership Team

### Michigan Department of Education

- *Early On* Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council Standing Committees
- Parent Involvement Committee
- Parent Leadership in State Government Advisory Board
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- MI Interagency Transition Team

### 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

### 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 Board

### Executive Committee

**Maria Messina Wiersma**  
President

**Patti Nowak**  
Vice President

**Tom Kendziorski**  
Secretary

**Ron Kimball**  
Treasurer

**Andrea Lane**  
Past President

**Sondra Thorn**  
MCE Representative

### Directors at Large

**Robert Steinkamp**  
Holt

**Robert White**  
Clarkston

**Tom Lerchen**  
Saline

**Maureen Dempsey**  
Tecumseh

**Liz Leach**  
Calument

**Shari Fitzpatrick**  
Warren

**Mark McWilliams**  
Lansing

**Nina R. Bihani**  
West Bloomfield

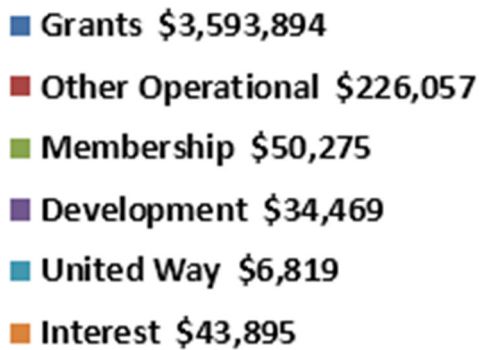
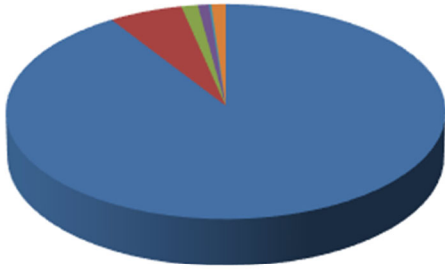
### Arc Michigan Newsletters, Action Alerts, Appeals & Governmental Affairs Updates

The Arc Michigan sent an average of five newsletters per month to **2,857** subscribers. Don't miss out on what's happening, sign up at <https://arcmi.org/newsletter-signup/>. Past e-Newsletters can be found on our website under **Newsletter Archives**, or by visiting <https://arcmi.org/resource-center/newsletter-archive/>

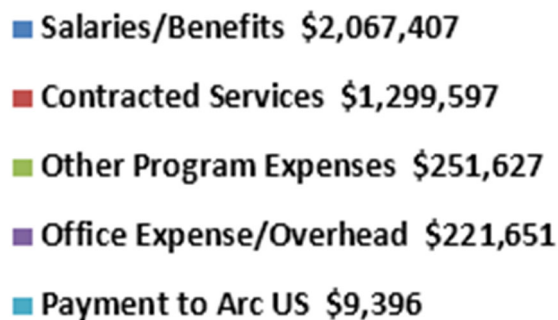
## The Arc Michigan 2021 Financial Summary

## The Arc Michigan Chapters

### Revenues \$3,955,409



### Expenses 3,849,678



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](http://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 Mon-Arc of Monroe, Inc.
- The Arc Muskegon
- The Arc/Newaygo County
- The Arc of Oakland County, Inc.
- ARC Ogemaw/Roscommon Counties
- ARC Advocacy & Resource Center  
(Ottawa County)
- The Arc Mid-Michigan
- 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