



***The Arc***<sup>®</sup>

*Virginia*

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# Advocacy Toolkit for 2022 General Assembly Session

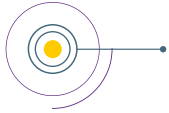
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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Legislative Agenda
- Talking Points
- Mobilizing

**We NEED EVERYONE to  
ADVOCATE for BOLD CHANGE**

# Legislative Agenda



**DD System Rescue Plan** in collaboration with 

## Step **1** *Fund Rate Increases for Waiver Services*

### Talking Points

- In 2011, the DOJ found Virginia in **violation of ADA** due to its failure to provide services to people with DD in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. **A decade later**, Virginia remains out of compliance, and under a Settlement Agreement without sufficient community capacity.
- The Governor's introduced budget began the process of righting Virginia's inadequate rates, however, it left out vital services that support people to live their lives included in the community.
- Rate increases for DD waiver services must be at an equitable percentile to those paid at state facilities, it is time to end Virginia's institutional and congregate bias.
- The workforce crisis has resulted in a **drastic reduction** of available Providers and Staff, causing previous investments by the GA in DD Waiver Slots to go **unused and wasted** while *3K+ people* are in *urgent* need. The most recent data shows almost 1 in 4 waiver slots from ***FY 2021*** remain unused due to a lack of available staff and providers.

## Step **2** *Invest in Innovation*

### Talking Points

- Virginia has never built a Robust Community Based System that serves the needs of Virginians with developmental disabilities.
- It is IMPOSSIBLE to build enough Capacity to serve everyone on the waitlist through traditional models of service delivery.
- Innovation is needed in order to develop inclusive services that builds and drastically expands community capacity.
- 130+ Million is available from the increased Federal Match to the waiver program, that is REQUIRED to be re-invested in HCBS Services.

*Innovation will include New Growth Funding for Providers, Investments in Techology, Workforce Development, and Self-Advocacy Leadership.*

## Step **3** *Eliminate Priority One Waiting List*

### Talking Points

- Over 3,000 people are in Priority 1 category, the most urgent need. With people wait years for a waiver, this is a failure of Virginia to meet its obligation to supporting citizens with developmental disabilities.

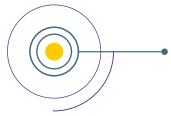
## Step **4** *Develop Core Services*

### Talking Points

- The only way to get a waiver in Virginia currently is to be in urgent need...an inefficient dysfunctional system, CORE Services are part of a larger plan to move from a reactive system to a proactive one.

# Legislative Agenda

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## Relief for Families Devastated by the Workforce Crisis

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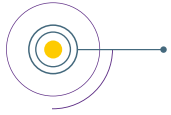
- *Allow parents to continue as paid providers for their minor children receiving waiver services*

## Talking Points

- During the pandemic, parents were allowed to serve as the paid caregiver for their minor child when quarantine made it impossible to have caregivers come into the home.
- This allowance saved many families who had lost their income when one parent had to quit working to care for the child.
- The workforce crisis and insufficient pay rates has meant that even when quarantine restrictions were lifted, families are not able to find and hire employees to provide the care that would enable them to go back to work.

# Legislative Agenda

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## Greater Access to Technology

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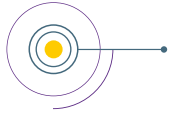
- *Planning with DMAS to combine the annual caps for AT/EM/EHBM services - providing greater flexibility to meet individual needs*

## Talking Points

- The current individual cap of \$5k on Assistive Technology, Environmental Modifications and Electronic Home Based Monitoring technology services, render them practically unusable.
- Combining the annual cap for spending for Assistive Technology, Environmental Modifications and Electronic Home Based Monitoring would give individuals more buying power and flexibility by allowing up to \$15k for any ONE of these services.

# Legislative Agenda

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## ***Protecting Virginians with DD in the Justice System***

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- *Continuing ongoing work with DOC and collaborating with the local jails to ensure appropriate accommodations*

## Talking Points

- People with developmental disabilities (DD) are arrested and incarcerated at higher rates than others. Nationally, 2 in 10 prisoners and 3 in 10 jail inmates report having a cognitive disabilities.
- Virginia conducts mental health screenings on inmates, but does not screen for DD. Screenings are necessary to ensure that people who are in the prison system receive accommodations.
- Legislation will develop and implement screenings and continue the workgroup with the Department of Corrections to continue to improve training and accommodations for DOC staff.

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# Mobilizing - What You Can Do

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## >> TAKE ACTION | Budget Hearings: January 5th

Budget Hearings are key to informing your legislator how you think Virginia should invest its money. This is the time to advocate for the DD Rescue Plan outlined above. People with disabilities will be testifying at these hearings all across the state.

We need **EVERYONE to flood the General Assembly with emails on Budget Hearing Day!**

**Go to our website [thearcofva.org/action-center](http://thearcofva.org/action-center) on January 5th and follow the link to email your legislators using our easy Action Tool.**

## >> TAKE ACTION | DD Advocacy Days

Session will once again be in person this year; however, there may be limits on the capacity of the General Assembly for meetings and gatherings. So we have come up with a creative alternative: **HYBRID DD Days!**

A Hybrid DD Day is a meeting you join via Zoom, while a team member from The Arc of Virginia meets in person with your legislator at their office to answer any technical questions the legislator may have and to provide them with materials.

We will be holding official Hybrid DD Days on the following Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout Session:

January 18	January 20	January 25	January 27
February 1	February 3	February 8	February 10

# Mobilizing - What You Can Do

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## >> TAKE ACTION | Legislative Action Alerts

**Action Alerts** are an important part of all successful advocacy. There are multiple legislative steps that take place, for a Bill or a Budget Item to pass - YOUR VOICE matters most and makes a difference when the time comes for legislators to vote. Our Action Alerts are usually timed around these votes, and focus on the key messaging and talking points that we think will have the greatest impact.

We need a **groundswell of support for this year's bold agenda**. The funding investment we are advocating legislators to make is HUGE...however, the cost of NOT funding the DD System Rescue Plan is much higher and more detrimental for Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families.

So please watch your inbox for Important **Action Alerts and Take Action!**

[Watch for updates](https://thearcofva.org/action-center)  
[thearcofva.org/action-center](https://thearcofva.org/action-center)