The mission of The Arc of New Mexico is to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages by advocating for equal opportunities and choices in where and how they learn, live, work, play and socialize. The Arc of New Mexico will promote self-determination, healthy families, effective community support systems and partnerships.

**Entitlement Programs & Disability Related Programs Very Vulnerable**

The Budget Control Act was enacted by Congress on August 2, 2011. The Act consists of a three step process to raise the debt ceiling and cut spending by $2.4 million. Steps One and Two will be taking place at the same time this fall.

**Step One:**
Debt ceiling is raised immediately with additional increases authorized through early 2013. Caps placed on discretionary programs. Discretionary spending is that part of the U.S. Federal Budget that is negotiated between the President and Congress each year as part of the budget process. It includes everything that is not in the mandatory budget, which are programs required by law to provide certain benefits, such as Social Security and Medicare.

$1 trillion in cuts are to be implemented over a 10 year period (2012-2021). Congress will work on 2012 – 2013 Appropriations for discretionary funding to satisfy the cuts necessary for the first 2 fiscal years in the first phase of spending cuts.

The cuts will be balanced between defense and non-defense spending which could include important disability related programs like housing, education, employment and transportation.

Entitlement programs (Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are protected from cuts in this step.

**Step Two:**
Congress will cut an additional $1.2 to $1.5 trillion from the federal budget over the next 10 years as per recommendations by a 12 member bipartisan Congressional “Super Committee” called the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.
The Committee needs to propose specific spending cuts by November 23, 2011. Congress will have until December 23, 2011 to vote yes or no with no amendments allowed. The committee’s plan must get the support of at least 7 members to be voted on by the Congress.

**Drastic cuts to important disability related entitlement and discretionary programs could be proposed by the Committee and enacted by Congress at this stage. There are no protections for the Medicaid, SSI, Social Security, Medicare or other programs serving low-income people.**

**Step Three:**
This step will be implemented only IF the Joint Select Committee fails to obtain agreement from at least 7 members to cut $1.2 trillion OR if Congress fails to enact its plan.

- Automatic, across-the-board, spending cuts will be triggered for FY 2013-2021.
- Most non-defense discretionary programs are projected to be cut by 9%.
- Low-income entitlement programs, such as Medicaid and SSI programs, are exempted from the automatic, across-the-board cuts (though small Medicare provider cuts are allowed).

**Call to Action!** **Between now and the end of the year Entitlement Programs and disability related programs are vulnerable – there are no protections for Medicaid, SSI, Social Security, Medicare, or other programs serving low-income people. Contact your Congressional Representative and tell them how important these programs are to you and your family.**

For more information about The Arc’s “Don’t Cut Our Lifeline!” Campaign, go to www.thearc.org.

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**The D.D. Waiver Waiting List**

There are currently over 5200 people waiting for services on the New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Waiver. Each year approximately 1000 people apply for the waiver and about 300 are found eligible and added to the list. This year about 50 people will be taken off the waiting list and will start receiving services.

Here is a scary fact: If we assume that 50 people will be taken off the waiting list each year it will take over 100 years to address the needs of the 5200 people currently on the list.

The Arc of New Mexico - in collaboration with the New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Disability Rights New Mexico, and Parents Reaching Out – is starting a Waiting List Campaign. The goal is to put a face on the issue. Strategies will include a web page highlighting individual and family stories, town hall meetings, and testimony at public meetings and hearings in Santa Fe and around the state.

We need your help. We are asking individuals and families who are on the waiting list to share their stories with us. In this way we can make the issue real to our state legislators, state administrators and other elected officials.
If interested please mail, email (rcostales@arcnm.org or dhusted@arcnm.org), or fax (505-883-5564) your story and photo to The Arc of New Mexico. When writing your story include the following information: name, county, age, and type of disability. Also consider the following questions:

1. What is your situation and why services are needed.
2. How long have you or your family member been on the waiting list?
3. How are you coping now without help?
4. What are some of your dreams and goals for the future and how are they affected by being stuck without the supports and services you need?
5. How do you think the DD Waiver will help you achieve your dreams and goals?
6. If you could say one thing to a legislator about your needs or the needs of your family member, what would it be?

New Mexico Legislative Interim Committees

Legislative Interim Committee meetings are happening around the state October, November and December. These committees are made up of Senators and Representatives, Democrats and Republicans. The purpose of these committees is to hold hearings on the issues affecting New Mexicans. The Legislative website is the easiest way to keep current on dates, places and agendas for upcoming meetings. [http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/agecalendars_interim.aspx](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/agecalendars_interim.aspx) All of the committee meetings are open to the public and most have time for public comment.

The Legislative Interim Health and Human Services Committee (LH&HS) will be, meeting October 5-7 in Albuquerque at the Convention Center. On November 9-11 and December 1-2 the committee will be meeting in Santa Fe. The meeting in October does designate 10/7 as the Disability Subcommittee meeting. Long term care is the main topic. It is important that as many people show up as possible. This meeting will be a good time for individuals with disabilities and their families to make comments on the need to put more money into services for people on the waiting list.

The next meeting of the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) will be October 18-21. The location has not yet been announced. This committee develops the budget and will decide if the waiting list will get any new money.

If you or your family member is on the waiting list for the DD Waiver, come to all of the LFC and LH&HS committee meetings. Tell your story keeping it short. If you can, put your story in writing including your name, address and phone number and bring it with you to the meetings. Give it to the committee staff and if any member of the committee wants to follow up he or she will be able to contact you.

The Medicaid Redesign process is continuing to move forward quickly. It is very important that everyone for whom Medicaid is important contact his or her NM Senator and Representative and explain what Medicaid services are used and why those services are important and should be kept. Some of the critical points to talk about are: co-pays for services, transportation and enough health care providers.
Planning Grant for Individuals with Down Syndrome

The Arc of New Mexico has received a grant from The Arc of The United States to 1) Conduct a thorough statewide and nationwide research of best practices regarding the care, education, and support of individuals with Down Syndrome and 2) Conduct at least 10 focus groups in New Mexico with individuals with Down syndrome, family members, advocates and service providers to identify current available services and gaps in service and 3) Compile a comprehensive report detailing research findings.

After a lengthy search The Arc has contracted with Ann Badway and Shannon Enright-Smith to serve as Grant Consultants/Planners. They have already started meeting with Arc staff, agency program administrators and recently attended the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention in San Antonio.

Based upon their findings Ann and Shannon will work with Arc staff to develop one or more project proposals that provide for the care, education, or support of “deserving” residents of New Mexico with Down syndrome.

This is an exciting opportunity for The Arc of New Mexico to develop a program of national significance that will enhance the quality of life for individuals with Down Syndrome and their families. For more information contact Ann at annbadway@aol.com or Shannon at seslifecoach@yahoo.com.

Upcoming Events

October 5-7 - The Southwest Conference on Disability at the Albuquerque Convention Center

October 27 – 30 – The National Indian Education Association 42nd Annual Convention and Trade Show at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The event brings together Indian leaders, congressional representatives, and educators from throughout the United States and Canada. Forums and workshops will be held for educators to share concerns, ideas, and solutions to education-related issues that affect Native communities. Topics from early childhood through postsecondary education will be discussed. We hope to bring in the highest attendance ever at this year’s convention. For more information go to registration@niea.org.


Donate to The Arc

The Arc of New Mexico is a statewide, non-profit agency that was born 56 years ago as a grassroots movement of families working vigilantly to create services for children and adults with disabilities who were being denied opportunities to receive an education, to work and to participate in their communities.
The Arc works on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families every day to ensure that they have the support to participate in and contribute to their communities. The Arc serves as the Corporate Guardian for over 180 individuals, administers Special Needs Trusts for over 400 individuals and helps over 50 individuals with their Social Security Benefits in our Representative Payee Program. We also serve hundreds of people with disabilities and their families through our Self-Advocacy Programs and our Southern New Mexico Office located in Anthony, NM.

The Arc of New Mexico depends on public donations to sustain our work. You can make a one-time gift or a recurring gift. Make a donation now to support our mission to benefit all individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in New Mexico.

A memorial gift is a beautiful and lasting tribute for a loved one or to a family as an expression of sympathy. Family and friends can be recognized with a gift in their honor. This might be for a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, holiday, wedding, retirement, etc.