



The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region Strategic Plan

Background & Strategic Planning Process

The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region (The Arc NCR) current strategic plan will be completed at the end of the 2018 fiscal year. Leadership determined that it would embark on another strategic planning process in the winter of 2018. This process and the resulting strategic plan build on the momentum from the last plan and align with the key result areas that were identified in the previous plan. The board of directors convened a strategic planning committee and charged them with developing a strategic plan that would set out future goals for The Arc NCR. The strategic planning committee reached agreement on the strategic priorities for the plan at a meeting in February 2018. These priorities were confirmed and explored with input from key stakeholders in focus groups and surveys. The board of directors met in April 2018 to outline a broad vision for The Arc NCR and discuss the strategies needed to execute on the vision. The Arc NCR leadership, the staff and the strategic planning committee worked from April to June to develop a plan that sets out how the organization will achieve the board's ambitious vision as more fully described below. The plan was presented to the board of directors at its July 2018 meeting and was unanimously adopted.

Mission Statement: The mission of The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region is to empower people with differing ability to live, work and thrive in their community.

Tag line:

"Advocate. Educate. Participate."

Our Vision

- A world where people with differing abilities lead personally valued lives.
- We drive vision and mission through our Core Values of:
 - Respect
 - Self-Determination
 - Inclusion
 - Responsiveness
 - Community Building

Strategic Objectives:

Since 1953, The Arc NCR has helped people with differing abilities build better lives one person at a time. The Arc NCR currently offers the following services to individuals with differing abilities living in Harford and Cecil Counties:

- Supported employment and career exploration services to adults
- Family support services to individuals (age 0-21) and their families
- Services for transitioning youth
- Treatment foster care services to children and their families
- Community living and personal support services to adults

- Community partners day program for adults

The Arc NCR will continue to provide these services, while delivering excellence in our key result areas of quality supports, engaged team members and financial excellence. This strategic plan establishes priorities, goals and a timeline to ensure that The Arc NCR is effectively delivering its mission and measuring progress toward its goals. The Arc NCR is also aware of state and federal changes occurring for those receiving supports. The organization will be actively evaluating and making necessary changes.

Strategic Vision

Using the arc of an individual's life and a person centered approach as a guide to providing a continuum of services and support, The Arc NCR realizes that it can align its work and impact to continue to support people with differing abilities to lead personally valued lives. Through this robust planning process, the organization identified LIVE, WORK and THRIVE as the three thematic strategic priority areas of the arc of a life. The strategic priorities that will guide The Arc NCR's work over the next three years include:

LIVE - The Arc NCR is aware of the trend away from agency owned homes to independent housing for supported individuals. The organization will focus on the homes they own and enhance the accessibility of those homes. The Arc NCR wants to ensure that all people are living as independently as possible throughout the arc of their lives. Central to helping individuals live independently is The Arc NCR's ability to hire, train and retain employees in a rewarding, but challenging work environment. Staff development, training and support is a focus of the LIVE priority.

WORK - The creation of a training center is central to The Arc NCR's mission of providing meaningful employment for the adults whom it serves. This model encompasses individualized employment of choice. The training center, both the physical location and the model, will help develop skills, provide job experiences and employment opportunities. The training center will be an inclusive model providing jobs, training and skill development for the individuals we serve, their families and the broader community. The training center and individualized employment may require specialized staff training and development in order to be successful. The Arc NCR is committed to developing staff initiatives and communication to support and engage team members.

THRIVE – Our work can only be successful if we also provide a range of robust family supports. During the strategic planning process, The Arc NCR listened to families and understands that communication, community and services are important and needed in order to fully support and sustain family members. This strategic plan will build those family supports to achieve our THRIVE priority. The organization will hire, train and retain employees who can effectively support and partner with the individuals and families with whom we work to deliver high quality supports and services.

Metrics and Accountability. The Arc NCR senior staff has identified key metrics to measure progress on implementing the strategic plan. These metrics will be tracked, measured and evaluated by management and progress will be shared with the board of directors. These metrics will be in addition to the annual goals already in place which are used to align each staff person's work to organizational performance. The annual goals are aligned and support the strategic metrics from the plan. The strategic planning committee is recommending the adoption of a scorecard to be used with the board of directors. This widely used strategic

planning tool will align organizational activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications and monitor organization performance against strategic goals. A task for the strategic planning committee in Year One, is to finalize the elements to be measured in the balanced scorecard. A draft of the scorecard is attached at the end of this document.

I. **Strategic Priorities**

LIVE. The Arc NCR continues to be challenged in identifying and securing accessible and independent housing. In particular we have found it challenging to provide residential services for the frequent referrals we receive for non-ambulatory individuals. Services to these individuals require housing that is accessible and adapted to meet their complex needs. It is extremely rare to find these types of houses for rent, which requires The Arc NCR to purchase housing if we want to be able to serve all the people who need this housing. In addition, many of the individuals being supported by The Arc NCR need to have their homes remodeled to be more accessible or need to move in to more accessible homes. The last strategic plan did not specifically focus on accessible housing, but did have a goal to move toward true independence. The lack of accessible housing has been a barrier to making true independence happen for individuals referred to us. We hope to be able to support more individuals with complex accessibility needs, and allow them to live fully independent lives. In addition, independent living options for people who desire a different model than the current “residential” model are also difficult to locate. Some of the barriers include the cost of housing and the additional costs of food and utilities. The Arc NCR is committed to finding affordable housing resources. This helps us meet our mission and vision.

Strategic Objectives

- A. **Strategic Objective:** Identify and cultivate partnerships within the community that will work cooperatively to build accessible housing.
- B. **Strategic Objective:** Assess levels of independence to ensure that all individuals are able to access a continuum of housing options to live as independently as possible.
- C. **Strategic Objective:** Develop a funding strategy with our foundation, board and other donors to support accessible and independent housing efforts.
- D. **Strategic Objective:** Evaluate and implement a range of assistive technologies and universal design options to ensure that we offer comprehensive, accessible and viable housing alternatives.
- E. **Strategic Objective:** Develop a strategic communications plan to market the organization’s housing offerings and leverage board relationships to build awareness, attract sponsors and promote our work.
- F. **Strategic Objective:** Create and sustain an employee training program that trains staff in the latest models to ensure person centered support is a focus and assisting individuals to be as independent as possible is the standard.

Strategies

Year One

- 1. Define the continuum of accessible and independent living standards that will be used with individuals, train staff and increase supports.
- 2. Create assessment process to use with individuals in determining independent living needs.
- 3. Evaluate and invest in an independent living training program for staff.
- 4. Research affordable housing options with Harford County.

5. Position The Arc NCR to be at the table to inform and access Main Street money.
6. Document the Dresher Home experience to articulate a case study and supporting materials to cultivate other donors and create a strategic communication plan.

Year Two

1. Create two-minute training “snippets” to use with staff
2. Identify individuals who want to live independently.
3. Assess the knowledge/skills of DSPs and independent living and training gaps.
4. Evaluate assistive technologies that can be used to improve accessible and independent living.
5. Identify partnerships based on the assessment of our individuals and our staff.
6. Research foundations, survey board members and analyze the donor database to identify prospects interested in funding accessible and independent living initiatives.

Year Three

1. Identify the next group of individuals to move toward improved accessibility and independent living.

WORK. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016, unemployment among individuals with disabilities was 82%. The Arc NRC’s vision for a training center is both a physical location as well as a model for delivering employment for all. This Training Center location will allow individuals with and without differing abilities the opportunity to learn skills in the hospitality industry. The training center model expands on The Arc NCR’s primary objective, employment for all. It allows us to fully utilize our Discovery and Customization process, staff ACRE certification, and person centered planning model. There are a number of initiatives in the last strategic plan that positioned the organization well for this next step. Those initiatives include more job opportunities including benefits for all individuals and new business partnerships for employment opportunities and joint ventures throughout the community. The primary goal of the Training Center is to provide post-secondary vocational training opportunities that successfully prepare individuals with differing abilities for employment in the hospitality, food service and healthcare support industries. The project provides a resource for Maryland businesses to successfully hire and retain employees with disabilities.

Strategic Objectives

- A. **Strategic Objective:** Develop an inclusive model for the training center that involves collaboration between the individuals served, their families, our staff and the community.
- B. **Strategic Objective:** Establish partnerships with agencies and organizations that enhance training, curriculum and employment opportunities.
- C. **Strategic Objective:** Develop and deliver individualized employment opportunities across a broad range of professions for the individuals we serve.
- D. **Strategic Objective:** Create a strategic communications plan to educate, increase awareness and promote the training center and supported employment services to potential employers, individuals who need services, community partners and donors.
- E. **Strategic Objective:** Implement specific vocational support training, create supports and structure compensation to attract, hire and retain high quality staff.

Strategies

Year One

1. Devise and implement a funding strategy to fund the development of a training institute.
2. Create an operational plan for the training center which outlines all the operational elements of launching the facility and model.
3. Re-evaluate the training assessment and edit to include the inclusive training center concept.
4. Design the training center and bring the partners to the table.
5. Cultivate The Arc Indiana relationship as we work on the training center.
6. Hire, onboard and train the project manager to oversee the training center.

Year Two

1. Implement monthly trainings for vocational staff.
2. Identify the partnerships that will be involved in the training center.
3. Design and draft the architectural drawings and layout for the training center.
4. Secure a location for the training center.
5. Create an organizational structure for the training center and hire the appropriate staff and resources.

Year Three

1. Open the training center.
2. Integrate our employment and training center to bridge them as a one-stop shop to provide and expand individualized employment.

THRIVE. In 1953, the organization now known as The Arc NCR, was established by a group of parents seeking educational and vocational opportunities for their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc NCR wants to focus on the reason we were formed, to support not only the individual, but the entire family and to advocate and educate in the community about why this is important. Additionally, as the Developmental Disabilities Administration transforms their policies and funding processes, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services implement their Final Rule, families, now more than ever, will need support in navigating and understanding the system. These changes will require education, group support, respite, and other resources. The organization has made great progress in this area during the last strategic plan with a focus on developing family resources and training programs to assist families to build and sustain supports across “The Arc” of an individual’s life. The Arc NCR will continue this momentum with a goal of not only having educated self-advocates, but prepared and supported families who understand our mission and philosophical approach to supports. This will help individuals become knowledgeable about how to get their family members the supports they need to lead a meaningful life.

The Arc NCR takes a holistic approach to its staff, including hiring, retention and development as those activities significantly impact the quality of supports provided to those we support and their families. The organization will focus on retention and the ways in which we can improve because strong retention helps ensure a high quality support. The quality of supports is directly influenced by the quality and type of training the Direct Support Personnel receives. Turnover is expensive, impacts quality and burns out other team members. The organization will address turnover with several tools including increased pay, comprehensive benefits and additional training. The Arc NCR will work with the Direct Support Personnel to

connect their work to the organizational goals to highlight and recognize the impact they are making in the lives of those we support.

Strategic Objectives

- A. **Strategic Objective:** Develop a robust respite plan to support families who have children of all ages.
- B. **Strategic Objective:** Enhance supports to our families by developing a strong network of resources, community partners and targeted, relevant trainings.
- C. **Strategic Objective:** Focus on communicating with all our stakeholders to build community, connections and capability to deliver our mission and achieve our goals.
- D. **Strategic Objective:** Identify funding needs and build a case for support to facilitate the fundraising work of the foundation and the board.
- E. **Strategic Objective:** Design a range of trainings, communication and support tools to assist families in person centered supports across the arc of their loved ones life.
- F. **Strategic Objective:** Engage community to open their homes to provide a loving home to children in foster care.
- G. **Strategic Objective:** Educate, prepare and train staff to support individuals regardless of need.
- H. **Strategic Objective:** Support individuals, families and the organization to advocate for complete inclusion in the community and for positive policy change to support inclusion.

Strategies

Year One

1. Define family supports and develop a yearlong curriculum of training and support.
2. Define what is encompassed in offering respite services for adults and children.
3. Market respite and family support services to build and enhance community knowledge and awareness about The Arc NCR's offering using town halls, public speaking and other events.
4. Partner with the Department of Social Services to identify and secure funding for respite services.
5. Educate and empower individuals and families about the term and coverage of family supports through education and empowerment to get people in the waiver.
6. Create a case for support using existing data and anecdotal stories to educate and build awareness among funders about the importance of family supports.
7. Implement MANDT.
8. Analyze the types of individuals who were denied services by The Arc NCR and build referral partners or evaluate whether or not to develop the skills to serve.
9. Research the autism program and determine if there is a need in the community and devise a funding strategy to fund the program.

Year Two

1. Educate families and the community on the waiver and services that are covered by the waiver.
2. Increase advocacy to make sure that families know how to access services.
3. Provide external Behavioral Support Services to the community.
4. Open the autism program.

Year Three

1. Review impact of DDA rate and waiver changes that took effect in FY20 and make necessary changes to programming to meet individuals and families support needs.
2. Continue to educate individuals and families on the impact of these changes.