The Arc of the Quad Cities Area Accessibility Plan

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to promote accessibility and remove barriers. The Arc addresses accessibility concerns to enhance the quality of life for those served in our programs and services, implement nondiscriminatory employment practices, meet legal and regulatory requirements, and to meet the expectations of stakeholders in the area of accessibility. The Arc strives to enhance access to programs, services, facilities, and the community.

Assessment of Sites and Practices

In order to assess accessibility, The Arc of the Quad Cities Area examined its identification of barriers in the following areas: architectural (physical), environmental, attitudinal, financial, communication, transportation, community integration, technology, and employment.

Architectural or Physical Barriers

- Architectural or physical barriers are identified and may include steps that prevent access to a building for an individual who uses a wheelchair, narrow doorways that need to be widened, bathrooms that need to be made accessible, the absence of light alarms for individuals who have a hearing impairment, and the absence of signs in Braille for individuals who have visual impairments. These are identified by annual inspections, monthly safety inspections, and observing day to day activities.

Environmental Barriers

- Environmental barriers are interpreted as any location or characteristic of the setting that compromises, hinders or impedes service delivery. In addition to external environmental barriers, internal barriers may include noise level, lack of sound proof meeting rooms, highly trafficked areas used for service delivery or type or lack of furnishings that impact the comfort level of the persons served and personnel.

- Lighting could be a barrier, if fluorescent lighting is used and the flicker precipitates seizure activity in an individual. The physical office environment could present a barrier if it is noisy or is a very open structure and an individual is easily distracted by activity. Fragrances could be considered an environmental barrier as many people have allergic reactions to various smells and do not perform at their best under such conditions.

- The Arc is aware of the need to accommodate reasonable requests in this area. Examples of general environmental adaptations include light alarms for individuals with hearing impairment, hearing protection, climate control, vehicle modifications such as seat belt extenders and lifts, ergonomic accommodations such as chairs, tables, and computer screens, and other modifications.

Attitudinal Barriers

- Attitudinal barriers may include how individuals with disabilities are viewed and treated by the organization, their families and the community, whether or not individual input is

solicited and used, whether or not the eligibility criteria screens out individuals with specific types of disabilities.

- The Arc conducts an annual satisfaction survey of individuals, staff and stakeholders. This survey includes community and center based accessibility, attitudinal behaviors of the agency, and integration of individuals served in the community. Examples of topics covered on the survey:
    - Are The Arc's staff, services, and facilities accessible to meet your needs?
    - Does The Arc provide prompt communication and resolution for concerns?
    - The Arc also hosts two informational meetings with the Executive Director that families are invited to attend.

- To educate the staff and community on the advantages of eliminating barriers and promoting opportunities for people with disabilities, The Arc speaks to organizations, groups, and the media. The major source of education comes from the individuals served and their family members who are the biggest advocates for The Arc programs and services.

- To increase communication on the benefits of promoting opportunities for people with disabilities, the following steps are continually being considered as opportunities arise.
    - Marketing Information Packets
    - Press Releases
    - Radio and Television Public Service Announcements
    - Networking through Membership of Appropriate Professional Organizations
    - Social Media

Financial Barriers

- Financial barriers include insufficient funding for service and supports. The Arc advocates legislatively for increased funding and promotes activities to directly raise money for the support of a service for persons served. The Arc invites their Board of Directors, staff and individuals to write letters to local legislators at the state level to provide input regarding the need for appropriate funding for services and support for our services. The Arc analyzes internal efficiency and staffing needs as well.

Communication Barriers

- Communication barriers include the absence of materials in a language or format that is understood by the person receiving services, or the promotion of a website that presents difficulty to access information. The Arc has a TTY in the reception area and can provide alternative formats like large print that could be developed as needed. The Arc offers an accessible, user-friendly website that makes it possible to share information about our agency and its programs and services.

Transportation Barriers

- Transportation barriers include persons being unable to reach service locations or being able to participate in the full range of services, supports, or activities offered. Transportation has been identified as a major barrier to employment. The Arc attempts to

place individuals in jobs that are on routes that are conducive to assessing public transportation. The Arc staff promote natural supports in meeting transportation needs as well.

Community Integration Barriers

- Barriers to community integration include any barrier that would keep the person served from full participation in community life. Accommodations may be needed for the persons served to access the community for both work and leisure.

Technology Barriers

- Technology barriers could include the evolving technology, the upkeep of equipment, assistive technology, and issues more specific to the populations served.

Employment Barriers

- The Arc recognizes that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its policies prohibit discrimination in all employment practices including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. It applies to recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment related activities. The Human Resource Department reviews and updates policies as needed.

- Human Resource Department may accommodate a request from an employee for reasonable accommodations. All requests for reasonable accommodations are handled on a case by case basis. Examples of accommodations may include, but not limited to: making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, possibility of part time or modified work schedules, adjusting marginal job requirements such as the need to hold a drivers license, that are nonessential for performing specific jobs, acquiring equipment or devices to assist in employee's job, providing reader for persons with blindness, or interpreters for individuals with deafness when feasible.

There may be barriers identified that The Arc doesn't have the authority or resources to remove; effective accommodations may be the appropriate action to be taken in those circumstances.

The Accessibility Action Plan lists the barriers that limit access to programs and services and provides a detailed outline of the methods to be used in removing the barriers and scheduling necessary steps to achieve a barrier-free environment

Leadership and Responsibilities

The Executive Team of The Arc of the Quad Cities Area will be the entity responsible for the review of the Accessibility Plan. The Assistive Technology Specialist will be in charge with the oversight of the accessibility plan and task management. The status of the plan will be reviewed annually. The Executive Team is responsible for prioritizing and reviewing the Accessibility Plan each budget year in conjunction with the Capitol list.

Communication of the Accessibility Plan

The Arc will post the Accessibility Plan on their website. The plan will include progress made in the removal of identified barriers and areas needing improvement. Copies of the Accessibility Plan will be made available upon request to individuals, employees, stakeholders, and the public. Alternative formats will be available upon request.