



# 2025 Advocacy Agenda

At Harc, we provide lifelong support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), helping them lead lives filled with quality, inclusion, and dignity. We proudly serve over 2,000 individuals, from infancy to retirement, through a wide array of programs, including Birth-to-Three services, Employment and Day Programs, Community and Independent Living Supports, Recreation, Respite, and Autism Supports. We provide comprehensive support to people with a wide variety of needs, including those with significant medical and behavioral challenges.

## Our Vision

Imagine a community where every person with I/DD has equal access to housing, employment, and healthcare, fostering independence and dignity.

## Advocacy Priorities

These priorities were shaped directly by self-advocates and families within the I/DD community. Join us in advocating for these essential initiatives to enhance the lives of individuals with I/DD:

### **Housing: A Right for All**

- **Increase DDS Funding:** We urge you to increase DDS funding, to eliminate waiting lists and ensure that everyone can choose where they live and ensure that DDS continues to offer a continuum of residential support options including group homes.
- **Affordable Housing Access:** Advocate for increased access to affordable and accessible housing. Support funding for adaptive and SMART technology that empowers individuals with I/DD to live as independently as possible.

### **Empowering Employment Opportunities**

- **Job Skills and Education:** Ensure that individuals with I/DD have the support they need to learn marketable job skills and engage in post-secondary and vocational education.
- **Community Engagement:** Promote meaningful activities and employment opportunities, ensuring that individuals of all abilities can contribute to their communities.
- **Employer Incentives:** Encourage businesses and state agencies to hire and retain individuals with I/DD in competitive positions, while leveraging current and proposed tax incentives.

### **Inclusive Transportation Solutions**

- **Stakeholder Inclusion:** Ensure that individuals with I/DD are included in transportation development discussions, shaping upgrades and new projects.
- **Accessible Transportation:** Increase the availability of accessible, affordable, and on-demand transportation options for people of all abilities.

### **Improved Health Outcomes**

- **Healthcare Access:** Improve access to quality health, dental, and behavioral healthcare for individuals with I/DD by requiring ongoing I/DD and Autism-specific training for healthcare professionals.
- **Incentivizing Specialization:** Encourage specialization in I/DD and Autism-related medical practices to enhance care.
- **Equipment Accessibility:** Ensure that medical practices are equipped and trained to serve individuals with significant physical disabilities.

### **Ensuring a Strong, Sustainable Direct Support Workforce**

- **Increase DDS Funding for Staffing:** Increase funding for wages, benefits and professional development opportunities for Direct Support Professionals, enhancing their skills and capacity to support the I/DD community.
- **Future Needs Addressed:** Provide additional funding for training in Assistive Technology and specialized support to meet the needs of the increasing number of students with Autism entering adulthood.
- **Market Demand Alignment:** Allocate resources and increase DDS funding to meet market demands for wages for Occupational and Physical Therapists, Nurses, Behavioral Support Personnel and other essential professionals, ensuring comprehensive care for the I/DD community, in both residential and day program settings.

### **Call to Action**

**Your support can transform lives.** We invite you to join us in advocating for a future where individuals with I/DD thrive. Together, we can ensure that they receive the services, respect, and opportunities they deserve. Let's work in partnership to create a better future for all. We welcome the opportunity for ongoing collaboration and regular updates on our progress.