



Annual Report

2024-25



Executive Summary

If I had to choose one word to describe this past year at **The Arc Tennessee**, it would be **“success!”** One of our goals was to expand our outreach, so more people would know who we are and how we support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). With the hiring of a new Director of Communications and Public Awareness came a new perspective and some fresh ideas. Since Wil Herrmuth has been in his role, our newsletter subscribers now total 2,584, which is a seven percent increase, and our Facebook followers **grew by an impressive 10 percent to 5,286.**

Our number of subscribers and social media presence no doubt contributed to the success of our annual Tennessee Disability MegaConference. This year’s conference welcomed **240 attendees** from across the state and **57 exhibitors**. The two-day event featured keynotes from experts in the field of disability, **45 breakout sessions**, and an awards ceremony. Without months of hard work by our staff and generous sponsors, this event would not have been possible.

For 29 years, the Mutual of America Foundation has celebrated the achievements of nonprofits across the country with their Community Partnership Awards. After receiving over 1,400 applications, Mutual of America recognized six nonprofits for their outstanding contributions to society, and our **TN Center for Decision-Making Support (CDMS)** was one of them.

Along with program director Penny Johnson and transition specialist Breanna Atwell, I traveled to New York City to accept the 2024 Social Impact Award and **a check for \$50,000.** While this was a highlight of the year, it underscores the importance of the work being done by CDMS. This year saw a **43% increase** in one-on-one consultations, and a **100% increase** in participation at transition and resource fairs. CDMS was founded on the belief that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the right to make their own decisions whenever possible, and the message is spreading.

Most of our successes do not receive the national spotlight, but they are just as important because they improve the lives of people with disabilities. The Arc Tennessee employs advocates across the state to intervene when someone with IDD experiences crisis – and this year our **advocates helped 451 individuals, an increase of 27 percent.**

Family Engagement in Special Education connects families and schools so that students with disabilities receive the support they need to be successful. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, this team provided over **593 mentoring sessions** to families and schools, which is a **30% increase** from the previous year.

The **PASS (Personal Assistance, Supports, and Services)** program allows people with IDD to direct their own personal care, so they can be more fully integrated within the community, while our **People First Tennessee** program empowers people with disabilities to be self-advocates. This program is special because it is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.

With so many life-changing programs, it is imperative that The Arc Tennessee thrives, and we can only do that if we are financially stable and fiscally responsible. For the **first time since FY 2020-21, we are ending the year with a positive total net revenue.** The guidance of our executive committee, finance committee, and fiscal manager has made this possible.

We have turned a corner and are headed in a new direction. This annual report is a celebration of all we have accomplished and a commitment to the community we serve and represent.

– Robbie Faulkner | The Arc Tennessee’s Executive Director



Who We Are



"The Arc Tennessee empowers people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to actively participate in the community throughout their lifetime."

The Arc Tennessee is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities through its services and programs. We have been creating opportunities and advocating for individuals with disabilities and their families since 1952.

We are driven by the following values: **Integrity, Justice, Courage, and Respect.**

We are a chapter and membership organization composed of **people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)**, their families, friends, and professionals who assist them in reaching their goals.

Our organization **does not** discriminate based on race, color, national origin, Limited English Proficiency, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender, or level of disability.

Strategic Plan

As we approach 2026 and develop our next strategic plan for the back half of this decade, we are excited to build off our team's accomplishments and positive momentum while continuing to prioritize our organizational goals:

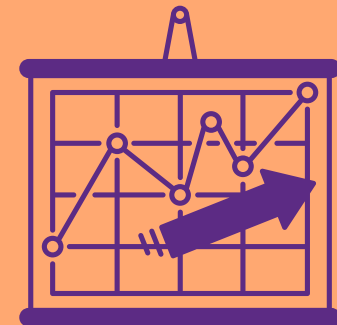
The Arc Tennessee is recognized and respected as the leading advocacy organization for people with IDD and their families in the Volunteer State.

The Arc Tennessee shapes public policy, influences systems, and strengthens collaborations to positively impact people with IDD and their families across their lifespan.

The Arc Tennessee identifies, promotes, and implements best practices for supporting people with IDD and their families to lead meaningful lives in their communities.

The Arc Tennessee is a culturally responsive organization.

The Arc Tennessee is a financially stable organization.



Board of Directors

The Arc Tennessee's **Board of Directors** develops the strategic plan, hires an Executive Director, creates policy, and approves the organization's annual budget. Their commitment to the organization is made clear by their generous donation of **time, expertise, and in-kind donations**.



Don Redden
President



Adele Dunkin
Vice President



Shontie Brown
Secretary



John Lewis
Treasurer



Karen Downer
Past President



REPRESENTATIVES:

Jessica Wyatt | Dr. David Cox
Ginny Miceli | alt. Jan Ryan
Phil Garner | Debi Crouch
Glenda Bond | Darlene Bearden
Donna Bryant | Robyn Lampley
Kathy McGee | Christina Pearce
Teresa Grimmett | Linda Brown
Malessa Fleenor | Katy Clouse
Kevin Edwards | Scott Finney
Landon Hensley | Kevin Krieb
Doria Panvini | Waverly Harris

The Arc Tennessee Team

Dr. Robbie Faulkner, Executive Director
Jennifer Aprea, Director of Family Engagement in Special Education
Heather Henderson, Director of Advocacy
Penny Johnson, TN Center for Decision-Making Support Director
Regina Garrett, Manager of Fiscal Services
Ingrid Moody, Office Manager/Intake Specialist/PASS Coordinator
Wil Herrmuth, Director of Communications and Public Awareness
Angela Braach, Human Resources Manager/Membership Coordinator
Allison Martin, Strategic Initiatives Manager
Jen Fisher, Communications Manager
Emily Whitson, Family Support and Training Coordinator
Breanna Atwell, Transition Specialist
Megan Cobb, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Angie Cutrell, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Shannon Efteland, Regional Family Engagement Specialist



Annette Graves, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Beth Harrison, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Sandra Hawkins, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Kristie Irvin, Regional Family Engagement Specialist
Angela Mull, Data Specialist
Leigh Wilson, Transition and Digital Media Specialist
Tracey Cunningham, Advocate
Caitlyn Freeze, Advocate
Theresa Smisor, Advocate
Lamont Tucker, Advocate
Meghan Gragg, MAPs Coordinator
Hal Baker, Community Resource Specialist II
Susan Bryant, Community Resource Specialist II
Rion Humphries, People First Coordinator
Jamie Bohannon, Housekeeper

Membership & Local Chapters

Powered by our **1,735 members** and **14 local chapters**, The Arc Tennessee was heavily involved in the community during the last 12 months. From school resource fairs to our annual MegaConference, it was a great year that allowed us to connect with self-advocates and their families across the state.



Fundraising & Development

This year, our programs received exclusive grant funding from both the Mutual of America Foundation and Hays Foundation. In 2026, we will continue to be proactive when searching for grant opportunities.

Private donations remain the cornerstone of our organization, and we are thankful for those that support The Arc Tennessee's mission. Below is the list of our donors from the last year, alphabetized by last name.

Baker, Cheryl	Herr, Joelle
Baker, Hal	Hipp, Ricky and Cynthia
Barca, Stephanie	Hobbs, Charles
Bearden, Darlene	Hobbs-Guiden, Carrie Ann
Bogas, Janis	Hodapp, Robert
Bond, Glenda	Horne, Jennifer
Braach, Angela	Hunter, Joshua
Brown, Linda D	Johnson, Delita
Campbell, Christy	Jones, Richard
Columbia, Richard A.	Knox, Jim
Cox, David	Krieb, Kevin J.
Crabtree, Durinda	Lampley, Robyn
Crabtree, Seth	Lewis, John
Cunningham, Tracey	McCormick, Ronald
Downer, Karen	McGee, Kathy
Dunkin, Adele	McKown, Louise
Edwards, Kevin	Morgan, David
Faulkner, Robbie	Panvini, Doria
Fisher, Jen	Redden, Donald
Fox, James	Satterfield, Judy
Garner, Phillip	Simerl, Martha
Graves, Annette	Smith, Sara
Graves, Larry	Spears, Diane C.
Harris, Waverly Ann	Wallace, Gerald



Communications

The Arc Tennessee has continued to expand its digital footprint as proven by our **online newsletter reaching 2,584 subscribers**, marking a **seven percent growth** year-over-year, while our **Facebook followers grew** by an impressive **10 percent to 5,286**.

After a short hiatus, **MegaConference** made its highly anticipated return in May and thanks to over **50 exhibitors** and **nine generous sponsors**, we were able to have a very successful two-day showcase that resulted in the event producing **its highest revenue in over five years**.

For the upcoming year, we are focused on continuing our social media success while expanding The Arc Tennessee's **brand awareness** through more **local media opportunities, partnerships**, and **donation drives**. We will also complete our organization-wide overhaul of our printed program handouts (flyers, brochures, etc.).



The Arc Tennessee's **total website views jumped** from **62,205 to 85,389** --- a stunning **37 percent** YOY increase!

2025 MegaConference

Tennessee Disability MegaConference was held May 22–23, 2025, at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel in Nashville under the theme **“Past Reflections, Future Directions.”** The event brought together **over 325 individuals** – self-advocates, family members, professionals, and community leaders – from across the state. MegaConference 2025 offered two days of powerful **keynote addresses**, multiple **breakout sessions**, and dynamic **networking opportunities**.

We hope to carry that powerful energy forward into the next year. The reflections we shared and the future we envisioned together affirm that **real progress** happens when people with disabilities are **leading the way** and **fueled by support, respect, and opportunity!**



2025
TENNESSEE DISABILITY
MEGA CONFERENCE
Empowerment | Inclusion | Self-Determination | Choice

**A MEGA ‘THANK YOU’ TO
OUR EVENT SPONSORS!**



J & I Advisory



Advocacy Team

The **Advocacy Team** believes in showing up, speaking out, and standing beside people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families as they navigate complex systems. Over the past year, we **provided direct support to 451 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state**, helping them navigate challenges and access the services they need to thrive.

Through meaningful partnerships – like **our collaboration with Family Voices of Tennessee** – we led statewide trainings to help individuals and families understand the Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES enrollment process and ensure families were informed and equipped to make the best decisions for their future.

Our team also **worked to equip** Independent Support Coordinators (ISCs), providers and advocates with the tools to navigate complex TennCare redeterminations that saw many of the 1915(c) waiver recipients being wrongly disenrolled from TennCare and the waiver. This urgent issue allowed us to partner with the Department of Disability and Aging (DDA) and Tennessee Justice Center to ensure no one was left behind.

This year, we had the opportunity to **collaborate with The Kelsey and DDA** to explore innovative, inclusive housing models and co-host a critical housing conversation at the 2025 MegaConference. This opened the door to DDA agreeing to be a keynote speaker – headlined by **Commissioner Turner**, who kicked off their keynote in front of a packed house that included over 10 members of the DDA leadership team. Following the event, DDA committed to continuing this partnership with advocacy, so we can **amplify the voices of self-advocates at the decision-making table**.

In addition to systems change, our Advocacy Team addressed urgent individual needs, **providing direct advocacy for 108 behavior-related referrals and 73 legal or police interaction cases**, many of which stemmed from gaps in needed services. We helped individuals access the appropriate supports, assert their rights, and find stability.

Whether it's through training, policy engagement, or one-on-one advocacy, the Advocacy Team continues to be a trusted champion for people with disabilities and their families as **we make sure every voice is heard and every person is empowered**.

Advocacy Team (continued)

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING
ADVOCACY SERVICES '24-'25

451

(27% increase YOY)

NUMBER OF NEW REFERRALS

227

NUMBER OF CLOSED
REFERRALS

65



Through grant support from the Department of Disability and Aging, The Arc Tennessee **supports four individuals** with developmental disabilities to self-direct their supports and services. Individuals in the **PERSONAL ASSISTANCE, SERVICE, AND SUPPORTS (PASS) Program** do not receive other home or community-based services but need supports to live independently in the community. We support these individuals to manage their budgets, pay their support staff, and find creative technology solutions that increase their quality of life and allow them to maintain an independent lifestyle.

Family Engagement in Special Education

The **Family Engagement in Special Education** program is excited to be part of such an amazing team of providers. Along with the other TN-TAN partners, the network includes support in the areas of intensive behavior, preschool, autism, assistive technology, post-secondary transition, family engagement, and Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) for academics and behavior.

The FESPED project, through The Arc Tennessee, has been working with the Tennessee Department of Education since 2018 to **increase family engagement in special education to improve outcomes for students with disabilities**. The FESPED work primarily focuses on two groups – educators and families.

The goal for FESPED is to support schools through training, planning opportunities, and professional development that will help strategize ways to empower families to be more involved in their child's special education journey. **Our services are free and meant to lighten the load for districts and schools.**

FESPED also empowers parents and caregivers to increase family engagement in special education. The team **provides family support groups, educational events, resource fairs and other special education resources** for families around the state.

Federal law assures that every child is entitled to a free and appropriate public education. However, sometimes students with disabilities and their families face challenges navigating the special education system. The Tennessee Department of Education contracts with The Arc Tennessee to provide services and supports to **help prepare young adults for life after high school**.

2024-25 FESPED Stats	
Mentoring Assistance	E-Newsletter Subscriptions
593	1,897
Facebook Reach	Website Hits
36,831	21,672



**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

TN Center for Decision-Making Support

The **TN Center for Decision-Making Support (CDMS)** had a milestone year by expanding services, reaching more people, and earning state and national recognition.

State Investment: A Governor's budget grant funded a full-time Transition Coordinator, expanded travel for trainings, and certified three new LifeCourse Ambassadors.

Major Impact: We recorded **48% more presentations, 43% more one-on-one consultations,** and **doubled our participation** at transition and resource fairs.

Broader Reach: CDMS expanded beyond disability services to support individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia, and mental health needs, building new partnerships statewide.

State Influence: Program director Penny Johnson was appointed to the Tennessee Conservatorship Taskforce to help reform laws and practices.

National Stage: Our team served as keynote speaker and presenter at the 2025 LifeCourse Nexus Annual Showcase.

Top Honor: We won one of only four Mutual of America Social Impact Awards out of 1,400 applicants nationwide, earning a grant, national publicity, and an unforgettable trip to New York City.

The CDMS team is deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve Tennessee and looks forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.



People First Tennessee

People First Tennessee is a grassroots group led by people with disabilities who are passionate about making sure their voices are heard. It was started by self-advocates who wanted real change — and today, it's a growing movement for equality, inclusion, and independence.

People First is all about **empowering people with disabilities to live the lives they choose** — lives with meaningful work and the supports they need to be part of their communities.

It's also **a place of connection**. Making disability a point of empowerment and not a deficit. Shared experiences are the common thread that let others know they are not alone in this journey.



RECENT NOTABLES:

- Coordinator Rion Humphries connected with the community at both **Disability Day on the Hill** and **MegaConference**.
- Attended **Next Steps at Vanderbilt and Lipscomb IDEAL's resource fair**.
- Held **11 member-exclusive interviews** with people from across the country with disabilities.
- Presented at **Children's Advocacy Days**.
- Served on the **Community Advisory Council at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** as well as **The Kelsey's housing steering committee**.



Public Policy Advocacy

Advocacy has always been, and will continue to be, the heart of The Arc Tennessee.

Whether we are defending human and civil rights through public policy efforts, partnering with key stakeholders to create change involving how services are delivered, or addressing an individual's personal needs, the goal is always to improve the quality of life for people with IDD and their families.

During the past year, our legislative committee **tracked 83 bills, sent seven Action Alerts, and held 13 meetings** to ensure that The Arc Tennessee was leading the advocacy conversation while staying up to date with the latest developments from the Tennessee State Capitol.



SUPPORTED

SB1178/HB718

Establishes guidelines for service providers to hire qualified family members as a family caregiver

SB344/HB506

Requires training in seizure safety and first aid by school employees

SB1073/HB861

Requires within 10 days of an IEP meeting that LEAs provide families with a copy of all evaluations and assessments administered for the purpose of the IEP

SB233/HB634

Creates the conservatorship management task force

SB897/HB932

Prohibits the use of communication devices in school unless its use is included in a student's IEP, 504 Plan, or individual learning plan



OPPOSED

SB110/HB133

Allows for the expansion of another residential facility for people with disabilities

SB386/HB522

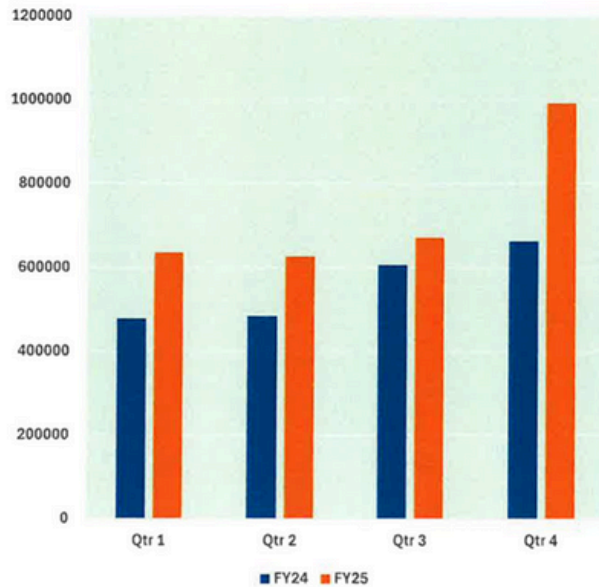
Requires each LEA to create a database for the purpose of tracking behaviors of students by staff and administration

SB6001/HB6004

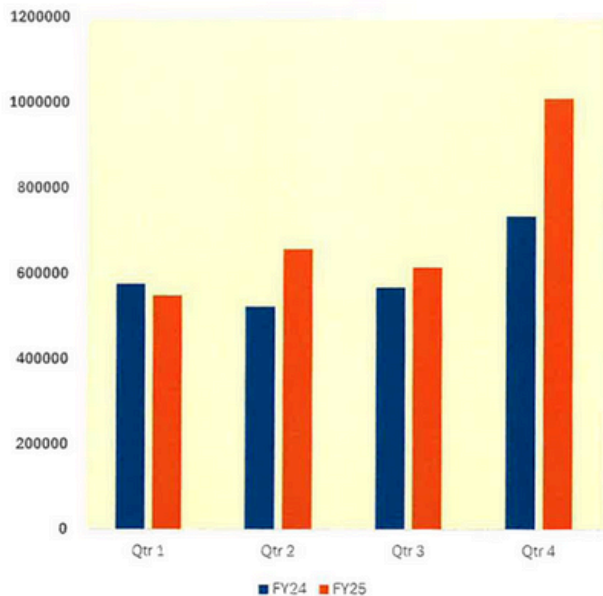
Enacts the "Education Freedom Act of 2025" which creates 20,000 education vouchers and scholarships

Financial Management

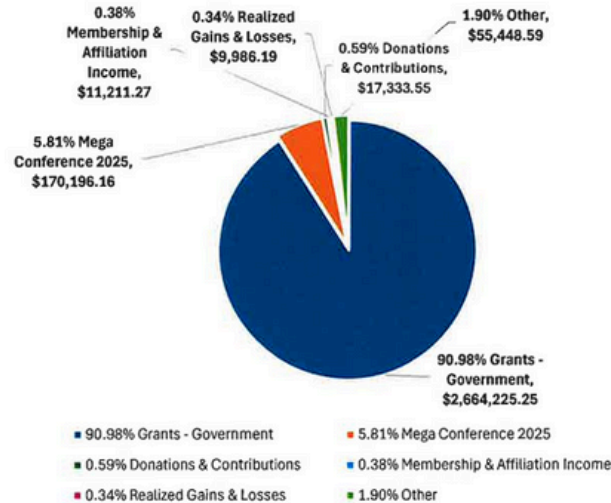
FY24 vs FY25 Revenue Comparison



FY24 vs FY25 Expense Comparison

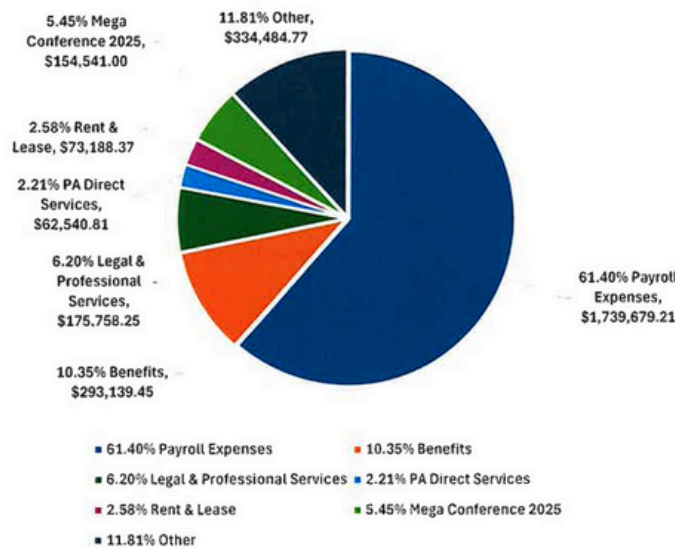


REVENUE



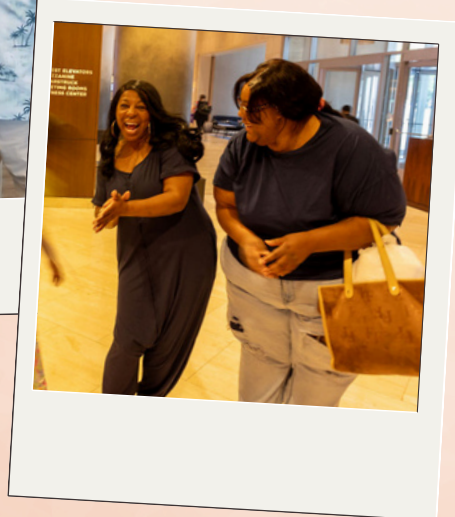
Grants -	
90.98% Government	\$2,664,225.25
Mega Conference	
5.81% 2025	\$170,196.16
Donations &	
0.59% Contributions	\$17,333.55
Membership &	
0.38% Affiliation Income	\$11,211.27
Realized Gains &	
0.34% Losses	\$9,986.19
1.90% Other	\$55,448.59
Total	\$2,928,401.01

EXPENSES



61.40% Payroll Expenses	\$1,739,679.21
10.35% Benefits	\$293,139.45
Legal &	
6.20% Professional	\$175,758.25
2.21% PA Direct Services	\$62,540.81
2.58% Rent & Lease	\$73,188.37
Mega Conference	
5.45% 2025	\$154,541.00
11.81% Other	\$334,484.77
Total	\$2,833,331.86

Ways You Can Help



We'd like to take a moment to share our gratitude for your generous support of The Arc Tennessee. We fight every day for equality for our friends, family, and community, but we can't do it alone...

Which is why we'd greatly appreciate a donation to help with our cause! With your gracious offering, we grow stronger and move that much closer to the inclusive world that we all deserve.

We truly can't thank you enough for your kindness and contribution!



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The Arc™

Tennessee

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