



# 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Legislative initiatives are designed to support St. Louis Arc's philosophy that all individuals deserve to live, work and play in the least restrictive environment with dignity and respect.

## Fully Fund Rates for Individuals Receiving Residential Services

Fund competitive rates for community providers that serve Missourians with disabilities.

Allocate \$86 million in general revenue to standardize rates to ensure fair reimbursement and to comply with a ruling from Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Solve the Direct Support Professional crisis by fixing outdated reimbursement rates to make sure community providers have the resources to compete for essential direct care staff by paying wages that reflect the rising minimum wage and inflation.

### Explanation and Impact

- 52% of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) receive some form of government assistance
- 25% of DSPs live in poverty and are dependent upon Medicaid and Food Stamps
- The job vacancy rate is 20% leaving people with disabilities without critical services
- 15,000 DSPs in Missouri provide critical support services to people with disabilities
- 56% turnover disrupts and endangers people with disabilities who depend on DSPs to live and work in the community
- Average starting wage for DSPs as of 2018:\$9.95/hr Missouri minimum wage in 2021: \$10.30/hr

## Fully Fund Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities

Establish Employment First legislation for the State of Missouri which is a concept to facilitate the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace and community in which community-based, competitive integrated employment is the first and preferred outcome for employment services for persons with disabilities.

Fully fund DMH-DD supported employment services.

Fully Fund DESE-Vocational Rehabilitation employment services.

### Explanation and Impact

- 75% of Missourians with cognitive disabilities are unemployed
- For every \$1 invested in employment services, Missouri saves an additional \$1.46 and bolsters taxable income.
- 22 other states in the US have passed Employment First legislation

For additional information contact Ann Mangelsdorf, Assistant Director of Family Support & Advocacy, at 314-817-2275 or [amangelsdorf@slarc.org](mailto:amangelsdorf@slarc.org) or Mark Keeley, CEO, at 314-817-2280 or [mkeeley@slarc.org](mailto:mkeeley@slarc.org).