



# 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Legislative programs 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.

## **Appropriate Increased Funding at the State and Federal Levels to Fully Fund Competitive Rates for Individuals with I/DD**

*Ensuring they receive the services necessary to be live, learn, work, and play in the least restrictive environment with dignity and respect.*

Invest in strategies in order for home and community based providers to recruit, retain and advance the direct care workforce.

A workforce shortage has contributed to high staff turnover rates, coupled with crisis level vacancy rates creating a system of supports that is at the breaking point. Unlike other businesses experiencing workforce shortages in the private sector, community service providers cannot raise their prices to offset the costs of recruiting and retaining workers. Community service providers are dependent on the rates set by the Missouri General Assembly.

Ensure community service providers have the resources to compete for essential direct care staff by paying wages that reflect rising minimum wage and inflation. Raise reimbursement rates for services for people with I/DD to a rate high enough for community service providers to pay Direct Support Professionals at least 150% of minimum wage.

## **Strengthen Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities by Maximizing Federal Funding for Vocational Rehabilitation.**

Funding the VR State Match with \$1.2 million of General Revenue is an investment that will draw down a 4-to-1 federal match, maximizing the effectiveness of our state resources

## **Establish Employment First Legislation for the State of Missouri**

*A concept to facilitate the full inclusion of persons with disabilities that is community-based, competitive, integrated employment as the first and preferred outcome for employment services for persons with disabilities.*

Seventy-five percent of Missourians with cognitive disabilities are unemployed.

For every \$1 invested in employment services, Missouri saves an additional \$1.46 and bolsters taxable income.

Twenty-two other states in the US have passed Employment First legislation.