



Family Advocacy Program

For families of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Thanks to You - FY 2016 Budget Victory!

The Arc of New Jersey is thrilled to announce a monumental victory for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. After proposing a State FY 2016 budget which included increases for services for people with I/DD, **Governor Christie on Friday, accepted the Legislature's additional \$3 million increase to further address the Waiting List in the Division of Developmental Disabilities and \$2.5 million for Family Support Services through the Department of Children and Families.** While the Governor line-item vetoed a number of other items from the budget submitted to him by the Legislature, he left intact the increase for these critical supports and services. This is a remarkable win for people with I/DD and their families especially in light of the fiscal challenges facing the state right now. In an environment that left very little room for increases, our advocacy resulted in millions more to help those we represent live inclusive lives in the community.

We should not forget that the budget signed today includes a significant amount of new money as outlined in the Governor's original budget to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. **A breakdown of the funding, which includes new state and federal dollars is as follows:**

- **\$4 million** for the Waiting List (this figure represents the initial amount of Waiting List money put in by the Governor before the Legislature added \$3 million)
- **\$11.7 million** for individuals aging out of their educational entitlement
- **\$49.7 million** for emergencies however rolled up in that \$49.7 million is \$2 million that will go toward housing vouchers for approximately 200 individuals receiving support services through DDD
- **\$19.7 million** for Olmstead which will go toward approximately 180 people
- **\$11.4 million** for the Supports Program

Including the \$3 million additional waiting list dollars and \$2.5 million DCF family support dollars put forward by the Legislature, the FY16 Budget amounts to more than \$100 million in new money for people with I/DD living in New Jersey. We must be very grateful that all of that money was not only included in the first place, but then maintained as the budget underwent review, debate and ultimately was signed by the Governor.

The power of grassroots advocacy cannot be overstated and so we must take a moment to acknowledge and thank all of the families, self-advocates and local County Chapters of The Arc who unified behind this budget message. When entering a new fiscal year, we look to these groups to inform our initiatives. They are the ones that alert us to the challenges happening on the ground. Before we assemble our budget advocacy for the year we take into account the voices of those most impacted and as the year progresses it is the families, self-advocates and Chapters who support the charge we lead. Raising the awareness level of developmental disability issues to the Legislature, having additional money included in the Budget bill, and then having the bill signed by the Governor are huge wins and we thank you for everything you did to make this happen.

As for the line-item vetoes, the Governor removed language that would have stopped the Return Home New Jersey program and deleted a one-time transition payment for providers shifting to fee-for-service from a contract reimbursement system. The Governor said he red-lined \$1.6 billion in spending from the Democratic budget, a \$35.3 billion plan that was \$1.5 billion higher than Christie's own \$33.8 billion budget.