



Advocacy Matters

A digital newsletter produced by the
New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program

June 2026

We have a lot to say, so make sure to click
"View entire message" if it appears at the bottom of this
newsletter.

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here.](#)

June Events

This month NJSAP was present at 2 Conferences.

On June 8th Erin Smithers attended The Law and Disability Conference.



Opening Session

In July 2025, Congress passed the Budget Reconciliation Act (H.R.1) which made significant modifications to Medicaid and SNAP benefits for certain populations. This session will explain those changes and provide guidance on ways to mitigate any harm due to these changes.

Moderator: Erika Korber, Esq., President/Executive Director, Community Health Law Project

Speakers:

- Kristine Bymes, Esq., Assistant Division Director, Eligibility and Enrollment, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, NJ Department of Human Services
- Alecia Eubanks, MSW, LSW, Assistant Division Director, Division of Family Development, NJ Department of Human Services
- Natalie Korkin, Senior Advisor, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, NJ Department of Human Services

Breakout Session: Immigration Issues

This workshop will explore recent changes to immigration policies, including the escalation in enforcement efforts and the impact on New Jersey residents.

Moderator: Josue Serrano, Senior Manager, Contracts and Development, Community Health Law Project

Speaker:

- Lauren Herman, Esq., Legal Director, Make the Road New Jersey

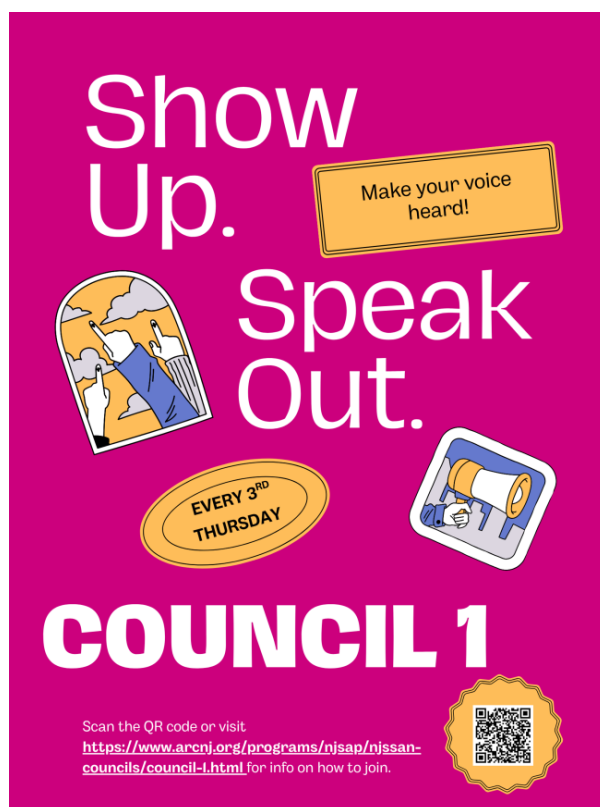
On June 15th Erin Smithers attended The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Justice Innovation Summit.



Council Agenda Items

This month our Council's worked on these items:

- Updating the fundraisers on Bonfire. [You can purchase items to help fund the NJSSAN here.](#)
- Advocate and Author Morgan Neumann spoke at our AM Council to talk about her book and how imperative it is to get the younger generation involved in advocacy.
- Councils were also given information about the DRNJ Goals and Objectives survey.
- Council One created a new flyer to invite new members to join!



Advocacy In Action



"It is not nice to make fun of people, about the way they walk, or their disability. Some people might need a walker or talking boxes, or a wheelchair. You might end up using them too one day"

Ellen Moskowitz
NJSSAN Member

Advocacy Trainings

If you would like the NJSAP team to provide a training to your group please reach out to us at NJSAP@ArcNJ.org or fill out our [training request form here](#).
Our Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator, Bianca, will happily get back and arrange a time and day for the training!

On June 3rd, Bianca Najera delivered a training to SCARC on Ready, Willing, and Anti-Ableism. 150 participants were in attendance! This training is about ableism, how it affects our society, and how we can work to counter it.



Respect in a Professional Setting

New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program
NJSAP@ArcNJ.org

On June 18th, Bianca Najera delivered a training to The Arc of Salem on Respect in a Professional Setting. 23 participants were in attendance! This training is about what respect is, why it's important, and provided examples.

New Resources

This new resource is available on [our website](#), or you can click on them to download them directly to your computer!

Guest Speaker Ideas

Advocacy comes in all forms and guest speakers can help bring in a new voice, idea, or topic!
Most places will come in for free, or offer trainings for free.



01

Public Servant

Fire Chief, Police Officer,
Emergency Prep manager



02

Decision Maker

Legislators, Assembly Person,
Senator, Congress People



03

Trainers

DRNJ, The Arc, The Boggs
Center, Online Webinars



04

Community Members

Local Business Owners,
Organizations, Local Programs



<https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/resources/>

In June NJSAP held it's first Advocacy Group Advisor Support Meeting. These are quarterly meetings designed to help professionals who advise advocacy groups. For June's meeting we discussed ideas for guest speakers to get more out of the advocacy meetings.

Would you like to sign up for our Advocacy Advisor Support Meetings?

Join the email list here!

We also offer 'Quick Tips' on advocating, staying connected, and living independently, on our social media platforms:



Quick Tip:
Practice asking follow-up questions
when you don't understand
something.
Asking for clarification is a form of
self-advocacy and helps you make
informed decisions.

NJSAP Webinars

NJSAP webinars are for adults and students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, their family members, and Direct Support Professionals.

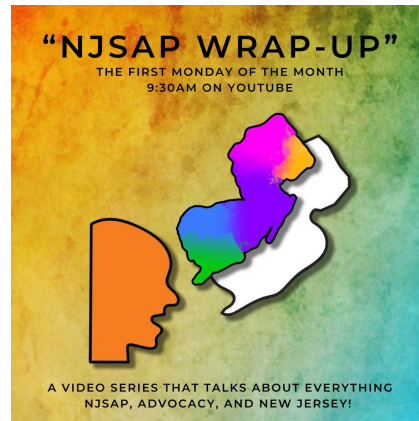
We present hour-long trainings every Tuesday at 2 PM on a variety of topics relating to self-advocacy and healthy living, available to view right from your home, office, classroom or wherever you may be!

View our latest advocacy webinar below: Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities - Part 4, Building Connections and Q&A Follow-Up.



NJSAP Wrap-Up

Every month Erin Smithers presents a short video on different aspects of The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program. Visit our [Youtube Playlist](#) to see all the NJSAP Wrap-Up videos and



This month Erin Smithers talked about Person First and Identity First Language.
Click on the images to visit the playlist or watch the video.

NJSAP Reach

The Director of NJSAP, Erin Smithers, would like to attend your advocacy group to connect our program to yours, provide trainings and resources (including advisor trainings), or to help you start an advocacy group if you don't have one!

Please reach out to Erin Smithers to schedule a visit: ESmithers@arcnj.org



WANT TO START AN ADVOCACY GROUP?

**NJSAP can provide
free trainings to
help you start, and
maintain, a
successful advocacy
group for people
with IDD.**



Visit our website to sign up for your free trainings!
<https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/trainings.html>

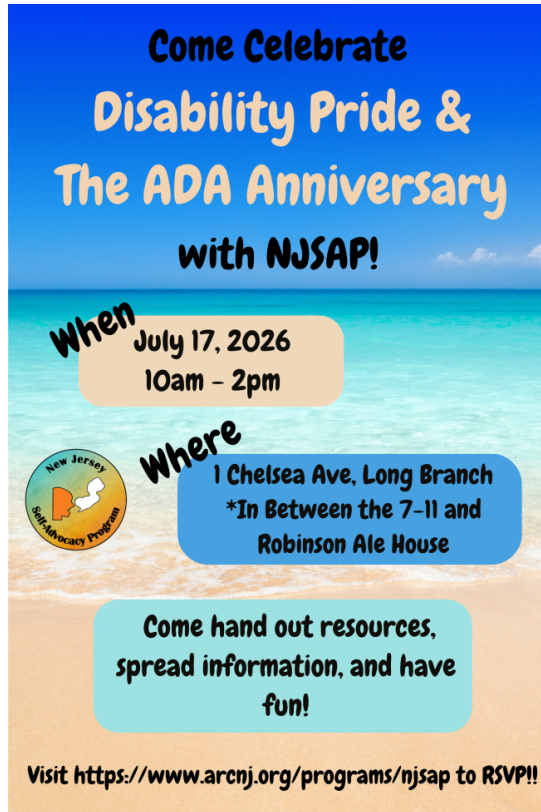
Upcoming NJSAP Events

On July 17 NJSAP will have a table at Pier Village in Long Branch, NJ.

We are inviting advocates from around NJ to come give out information on Disability Pride Month, The Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and information about NJSAP and the NJSSAN.

The table will be set up from 10am - 2pm, in between The Robinson Ale house and 7-11!

RSVP HERE!



**Come Celebrate
Disability Pride &
The ADA Anniversary
with NJSAP!**

When July 17, 2026
10am - 2pm

Where 1 Chelsea Ave, Long Branch
*In Between the 7-11 and Robinson Ale House

Come hand out resources,
spread information, and have fun!

Visit <https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap> to RSVP!!



**Governmental
Affairs
Ambassador Program**

On Zoom ➡ 11 AM - 12 PM

August 7th November 6th

This is a quarterly meeting intended to help individuals with IDD get more involved in legislative advocacy!

Join Erin Smithers and Michael Pearson Jr. to learn about current bills going through the NJ legislature. Each meeting will end with an advocacy activity or training.

Join The Meeting Here:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89555668345>

The Arc of New Jersey

Join us for our **new** Governmental Affairs Ambassador Program!

These are quarterly meetings for advocates. We will discuss current bills going through the NJ legislature. There will also be an advocacy training or activity during each meeting.

No need to register, just join us on August 7th at 11am!

Save the Date for NJSAP's Annual
Fall Conference!
In Person!
October 2nd, 2026 at
Pines Manor in Edison

[Sponsorship Options are now
available!](#)




Save the Date

The 42nd Annual
NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Fall Conference



**OCT
02**

Pines Manor
2085 Lincoln Hwy.
Edison, NJ 08817

Registration opens
this summer

Get Involved

Want to get involved in advocacy campaigns or upcoming events? Here is what is available.

Plan your own event with NJSAP! Reach out to Erin Smithers to get started:
ESmithers@arcnj.org.



Summer EBT is a Federal Child Nutrition Program that provides qualifying families with a **one-time \$120 EBT card** per eligible child to help purchase groceries during the summer. Eligible students will receive a new Summer EBT card each year!

Remember, Summer EBT Benefits have a strict time limit. Eligible Families who receive Summer EBT funds have 120 days (approximately 4 months) to use their benefits. Benefits are not used within the 122-day time period, the funds will be returned to the federal government and cannot be reissued.

Dual participation in the Summer EBT program is prohibited. This means that children may not receive multiple benefit allotments from the same State, or from more than one State, each summer.

To see if your child is eligible to receive a NJ Summer EBT benefit card this summer, use the [Summer EBT Student Eligibility Look-Up Tool](#).

I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT:	WHO DO I CONTACT?
- Activating My Card - My Summer EBT Balance - Changing My PIN - Reporting a Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Card - Request a Replacement Card - Lock/Unlock My Card	EBT Card Customer Service 1-800-997-3333 ConnectEBT Mobile App Available on Apple and Android/Google 
If your child attends a participating school: - My Child's Eligibility Status - The Address Where My Card Was Mailed - The Date of Birth Listed for My Child	Scan Here to Confirm Your Child's Eligibility Or Call Your Child's School to Confirm Eligibility 
If your child <u>does not</u> attend a participating school or is home-schooled and between the ages of 6-16: - My Child's Eligibility Status - The Address Where My Card Was Mailed - The Date of Birth Listed for My Child	Scan Here to Confirm Your Child's Eligibility Or Email: DENSummerEBT@ag.nj.gov 
To <u>Opt Out</u> (Decline) Receiving Summer EBT Benefits	Scan the QR code to Find the "Opt Out" Form And Click This Button to Opt Out 

Summer EBT is a Federal Child Nutrition Program that provides qualifying families with a one-time \$120 EBT card per eligible child to help purchase groceries during the summer. Eligible students will receive a new Summer EBT card each year!



Join the CAU Community Players' 15th Anniversary show, "Seussical Jr.!"

Showtimes are:

Friday, July 17 & Saturday, July 18

Doors: 6 PM

Show: 7 PM

Sunday, July 19

Doors: 1 PM

Show: 2 PM

General Admission Tickets: \$20
(All In Pricing)

Get your Tickets Here!

Take part in these current action alerts!



[Tell Congress: Protect Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services](#)



[Defend IDEA: Keep Special Education Where It Belongs](#)

**Want to see everything The Arc of NJ has to offer?
Sign up below to receive the newsletters from the different programs at The Arc of NJ**



Sign up for CJAP



Sign up for Children's Advocacy



Sign up for Family Institute



Sign up for PFAL



Sign up for Healthcare
Advocacy

Sign up for The Arc of NJ

NJSSAN Calendars



We are holding monthly NJSSAN
Council meetings *virtually!*

[For information regarding your
Council area, please click here.](#)

NJSSAN Council Meetings 2026

-JANUARY-

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-NOVEMBER-

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-DECEMBER-

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Council 1: 3rd Wed. 5:30PM - 7PM
Council 2: 4th Wed. 3 - 4:30PM

Council 3: 2nd Tues. 5:30 - 7PM
Council 4/5: 3rd Wed. 3PM - 4PM

Statewide AM Council: 2nd Wed. 10- 11 AM

Advisory Board: Last Mon. 3-4PM. Every other month. By Invite only.

2026 Calendar

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Click on the image to download
the calendar

Interested in joining the NJSSAN? See below to sign up for emails from
your Council!

Council 1
Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex & Warren
Counties

Join Council 1 Email List

Council 2
Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic & Union
Counties

Join Council 2 Email List

Council 3
Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean &
Somerset Counties

[Join Council 3 Email List](#)

Council 4
Burlington, Camden, Gloucester & Salem
Counties

[Join Council 4 Email List](#)

Council 5
Atlantic, Cape May & Cumberland Counties

[Join Council 5 Email List](#)

Statewide A.M. Council
All NJ Counties

[Join Statewide A.M. Council
Email List](#)

The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN) is made up of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) throughout the state. The NJSSAN is used as a means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. It consists of 6 Councils based on geographic location within the state.

[You can read the current NJSSAN Priorities here.](#)

NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Position Statements

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project (NJSAP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey established in 1983 to challenge individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become involved in events, legislative policies, and issues that affect their lives or lives of others with disabilities.

We work together with these individuals to form The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN), which is used as means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. The NJSSAN consists of five Councils based on geographic location within the state.

1. [Home & Community-Based Services \(HCBS\)](#)

2. [Housing for People with IDD](#)

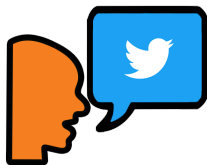
3. [Transportation](#)

4. [Supported Decision Making and Alternatives to Guardianship](#)

5. [Raising Awareness of IDD Issues](#)

NJSAP@ArcNJ.org — NJSSAN POSITION STATEMENTS
www.njsapadvocacyproject.org — 732-749-8514

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[Youtube](#)

https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/self_advocacy.html



New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program & New Jersey Statewide Self Advocacy Network

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

*Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People with
Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project | 985 Livingston Avenue | North Brunswick, NJ 08902 US

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