Preparing for Meeting with Your Members of Congress

- Establish some ground rules with the Member's staff before the meeting. For example:
    - How long will the meeting be?
    - Will media be invited?
    - Will you be able to take photos with the Member and share them on your social media channels?
    - Will you want to share information about your meeting in the newsletter of your state or local chapter? Or send it to the national office of The Arc? You can submit stories at lifeline@thearc.org

- The fact sheets and sample messages on The Arc's public policy web page emphasize generally the importance of Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), SSI, and other lifeline programs and provide basic facts. Think about how you can make the Member of Congress understand how cuts to these programs would hurt people with I/DD. Does your state have a waiting list? Are people getting the supports and services they need? Provide examples that reflect what's going on in your community.

- Decide who in your group is going to say what and how long each person has to speak—a sample meeting would cover:
    - Introductions—be sure to mention that you live or work in his/her district when meeting with a Representative and your connection to The Arc
    - Tell a story about Medicaid, SSI, or other lifeline programs (based on current threats as described on The Arc's public policy web page)
    - Share facts about Medicaid, SSI, or other lifeline programs (based on current threats and "asks" as described on The Arc's public policy web page)
    - Make the ask—what the Member of Congress should do (*see* current information on The Arc's public policy web page)
- Practice what you plan to say.
- Be sure to take a picture.
- Thank the Member of Congress—even if he/she does not agree with you today there may be other issues that you might agree on in the future.

What makes a good story?

- It is about you or someone close to you.
- It is on topic—it is linked to Medicaid, SSI, or another lifeline program.
- It is short and clear but includes messages about how the programs are important to you and what would happen if the program was cut.
- It helps the person better understand the issue.