

The Arc of Northeast Indiana, Inc.
(Easter Seals Arc of Northeast Indiana)

2015/2016 Accessibility Policy

Application:

All Easter Seals Arc of Northeast Indiana (ES ARC) administrative staff, clients, contractors, and all other stakeholders will uphold the expectation that all people have the right to be treated as equals regardless of ability level. We are committed to providing exceptional services to ensure that all people with disabilities or special needs and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities.

Policy:

It is the policy of ES Arc to aid in identification of barriers in the following areas: architectural, environmental, attitudinal, communication, employment, and all other areas identified through surveys conducted for our staff, clients, parents/guardians, and any other stakeholders identified by ES Arc management. The timelines and action plans for the removal of those identified barriers are located in ES Arc's Accessibility plan. The Accessibility Plan can be requested at any time by contacting:

Easter Seals Arc of Northeast Indiana's Accessibility Coordinator
4919 Coldwater Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
260-456-4534

Definition of Individuals with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides comprehensive civil rights protections for "individuals with disabilities". An individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or has a record or history of such impairment or is regarded as having an impairment.

"Major life activities" include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

Examples of mental and physical impairments include, but are not limited to, such contagious and non-contagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual speech and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction and alcoholism.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

It is the policy of ES Arc to provide modifications or adjustments that would assist any individual with a disability to access benefits and privileges that are equal to those enjoyed by others and would not result in undue financial burdens to the agency or a fundamental alteration in the services or supports that ES Arc provides. These include, but may not be limited to; auxiliary aids, assistive devices, augmentative and alternative communication, and qualified interpreters or readers.

In the event that a person needs accommodation including but not limited to assistive technology or communication devices, that person should contact the Human Resources Supervisor at 260-456-4534 ext. 215 or by e-mail at kclouse@esarc.org.

Removal of Barriers

Architectural Barriers

The policy of ES Arc is to remove any physical barriers to entering and using facilities when readily achievable, which means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.

If the barrier is not readily achievable, accommodations will be made that will enable an individual entry through the front door, providing services and activities at an accessible location.

All new construction and upgrades to facilities will be accessible to individuals with disabilities to the extent that it is not impracticable.

Attitudinal/Community Integration Barriers

ES Arc will continue to educate our community that each individual has the right to act as an active member of our community in every life area. This includes but is not limited to: education, employment, transportation, social and recreational activities and housing. That all people have the right to make choices in where they live, learn, work, and play and that they should be allowed access to all programs and facilities as people without disabilities.

Environmental Barriers

The policy of ES Arc is to ensure that all individuals have access to our services in whatever way necessary to ensure the equal opportunity to participate in all aspects. ES Arc will give primary consideration to the requests of the person with the disability that needs access to either information or programs.

Service animals will be permitted to accompany the client into any ES Arc sites. ES Arc will accommodate the use of assistive devices, which facilitate consumer access to ES Arc services/supports while encouraging individual independence.

Communication Barriers

Individuals with augmentative and alternative communication devices will be given the opportunity to use those accommodations that will most effectively express their needs, desires, feelings, thoughts and ideas to collaboratively plan with staff, service providers and the agency. ES ARC will furnish materials in alternative formats when needed.

Equipment, training or interpretations necessary to enable communication will be supplied to all providers who interact with the individual with a disability regularly. ES Arc's website will be accessible to all persons who require the use of assistive technology devices by providing all documentation and/or forms in rich text format.

The individual with a disability shall be consulted to identify the way he or she can effectively communicate in the context of the service or support. The client may be asked how to access technical assistance or support for their particular device.

Financial Barriers

ES Arc will be active at both the local and state levels in advocating for increased funding to cover the cost of services. Inherent in this advocacy is the request to be able to pay adequate wages to both recruit and retain a quality workforce. ES Arc will join the efforts of others and is part of a bigger voice through its membership in Easter Seals National, The Arc of Indiana and the United States, INARF, and the local Chamber of Commerce. In addition, ES Arc President and CFO will be active in several state committees that are looking at the provision of service and funding.

The organization will focus its resources on meeting the needs of the persons we serve and fulfilling our mission. ES Arc will develop other resources outside of major funding sources to assist in meeting the needs of persons served and maintaining the financial health of the organization through the submission of grants to various foundations and other sources.

ES Arc will continue to serve as Organization Representative Payee for many persons served and will not charge for the service.

Transportation

ES Arc will provides transportation for many clients with its fleet of vans, some with wheelchair lifts.

ES Arc will monitor the age and function of the fleet and replaces vehicles as resources allow. This includes acquiring various types, sizes and seating configurations as well as accessible vehicles that can better meet the changing needs of persons served.

ES Arc will continue to advocate for additional transportation resources for our clients and participate in community advocacy meetings relating to transportation for persons with disabilities.

Technology

ES Arc will continue to identify barriers relating to the technology needs of our clients and staff by evaluating/adjusting its technology plan annually and providing equipment as needed. ES Arc will also continue to evaluate the use of assistive technology resources for clients which move them towards greater independence and health related goals. ES Arc will continue through its employment policies to provide accommodations to staff if requested to the best of our ability and financial resources.