



MEMO TO: Interested Parties
DATE: October 7, 2025
FROM: Becca Schroeder, Director of Development, The Arc of Illinois
SUBJECT: Call for Proposals Convention

The Arc of Illinois has started planning for the 2026 Annual Convention to be held **April 29-30, 2026**. The Convention will be a hybrid event; some attendees in-person at the **Marriott in Bloomington-Normal**, and other attendees online. We are looking for individuals or panels of individuals who are interested in sharing their experiences and expertise in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. **The Arc of Illinois would like to offer a track (breakout sessions) specific to Spanish-speaking families and individuals.** The Arc of Illinois is committed to empowering persons with disabilities to reach their highest potential in education, employment, and community living.

This year's theme is ***"Together, We Rise: The Need for Collective Action"***. We are looking forward to providing attendees with the latest information on many issues, including early childhood, transition from high school, employment, housing, and improving quality of life. This year's focus emphasizes the importance and power of people coming together to achieve positive change. We are better together. **Please submit a proposal to be a part of this exciting event!**

Convention participants will be a mixture of self-advocates, families, direct support professionals, educators, managers, executive leadership, and other professionals in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Proposals on any topic of interest to any of the groups represented are welcome, **particularly a new approach or idea**. Topics of special interest include, but are not limited to:

Advocacy
Aging
Choice and Inclusion
Community Integration
Diversity
Dual Diagnosis
Early Childhood
Employment First
Housing
Legislative Advocacy
Management Best Practices

Public Policy
Safety with Technology
Self Determination
Siblings
Staffing
Supported Living
Team Building
Training for Direct Care
Transitions from High School to Community
Transportation
Trauma Informed Care

Enclosed are the directions and all the information you need to submit a proposal. Please submit your proposal to The Arc of Illinois, 7550 183rd St, Tinley Park, IL 60477 no later than **December 5, 2025**. Call Kim at 815-464-1832 ext 1024 if you have any questions on the proposal process, convention topics, or the deadline.

We look forward to your participation in our next Annual Convention. Thank you.

Call for Presentations

76th Annual Convention

General Instructions

All proposals must reflect the values of The Arc of Illinois. The Arc believes that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are citizens with the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens. All language must be respectful and must support the value of full participation in all facets of community life. Be sure to confirm the availability of all speakers before submitting. Please review your abstract for accuracy as well as correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Criteria

Speakers must present in person at the Marriott in Bloomington-Normal. While the 76th Annual Convention will be hybrid, speakers must be present. Two breakout sessions will be live-streamed (one in English and one in Spanish), and the remaining sessions will be recorded and shared later.

We encourage at least one self-advocate as a co-presenter.

Breakout sessions will be 45 minutes in length. We recommend 35 minutes for your presentation and 10 minutes for Q&A.

Directions

1. Complete and return the enclosed form, making sure to complete all sections. The description will be reviewed by the Convention Committee and should be clear, concise, and no more than 250 words. If chosen, the abstract will be used in the conference brochure and should be no more than 30 words.
 - If submitting a proposal for a breakout session presented in Spanish, please provide the description, abstract, and bio(s) both in Spanish and English.
2. Mail to The Arc of Illinois, 7550 183rd St, Tinley Park, IL 60477 or email to kim@thearcofil.org, or fax to 815-464-5292.
3. The deadline to submit is **December 5, 2025**
4. All presentations must use universal design principles and be submitted ahead of time for accessibility review. If using a PowerPoint as part of your presentation, please leave the bottom 20% of your slides blank to accommodate captioning.

The Convention Committee will review proposals for their relevance, as well as clarity and compatibility with scheduling limitations, and the values of The Arc. Decisions of the Convention Committee regarding acceptance and scheduling are final and will be made no later than January 12, 2026. Please make sure to keep both April 29 and 30 open on your calendar. All presentations are in-person.



The Arc of Illinois 76th Annual Convention 2026

Proposal Information Form

Return by December 5, 2025

Presenting in English ☐ Sesión en Español ☐

If presenting in Spanish, please share the title, bio, description, and abstract both Spanish and English.

Session Title:

Name or Main Group Contact:

Company Name:

Job title:

Phone:

Mailing Address:

Email:

Contact information for Program Book if different from above.

Who is the target audience for your presentation?
(i.e. self-advocates, families, siblings, leadership, direct support professionals, etc.)

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Short bio, 150 words or less:

Audio/Visual Equipment Needs and Room Set Up

Please plan on bringing your own laptop. A screen and projector will be set up by the hotel.

☐ Flipchart & Markers

☐ Display Table

☐ Screen

☐ Panel Presentation Setup with ____ of chairs

☐ Other:

Accommodations Needed:

State below, in 250 words or less, a short description of your presentation.

Share an abstract, in 30 words or less, for the convention brochure and program:

Additional Speaker(s) Form

Name:	Company Name:
Job title:	Phone:
	Email:
Mailing Address:	Contact information for Program Book if different from above.
	Phone:
	Email:
	Website:
Short bio (150 words or less)	

Name:	Company Name:
Job title:	Phone:
	Email:
Mailing Address:	Contact information for Program Book if different from above.
	Phone:
	Email:
	Website:
Short bio (150 words or less)	