

14TH ANNUAL INFORMATIONAL SEMINAR

Presented by The Arc of Illinois Family Support Network & Family Advocate Program

MARCH 25, 2026

AGENDA

9:00 - 9:10 AM Welcome and Overview

Presented by Shirley Perez; Program Director, Ruth Aguilar; Senior Family Advocate, Annie Bruno; Family Advocate, Shakari Asbury; Family Advocate, Jerin Olson; Family Advocate, Veronica Salazar; Family Advocate and Troy Markett; Family Advocate Specialist

9:10 – 10:10 AM Planning for the Future- What you need to Know about guardianship and alternatives and an update on ABLE

Presented by Brian Rubin, JD and Benji Rubin, JD, Rubin Law

10:10 - 11:00 AM Disability Updates You need to Know!

- The Arc of Illinois Update

Presented by Samantha Alloway Executive Director

- Family Matters Update

Presented by Megan Mutti, Executive Director

- CRSA, Illinois State Board of Education Update

Presented by Kimberly L. Johnson, Principal Consultant

- ACES\$ Update Video

Break: 11:00 - 11:10 AM

11:10 AM - 12:25 PM Keynote Speaker DHS Update and More

Presented by Tonya Piephoff, DDD Director and Executive Team

Lunch: 12:25 – 1:00 PM

1:00 PM – 1:15 PM What the Ligas Consent Decree Means to Me

Presented by Curtis Harris, Self Advocate

1:15 – 2:30 PM Special guest

Lorene Regan, Court Monitor, Ligas Consent Decree

2:30 – 3:00 PM Meet a Family Utilizing HBS Services

Presented by Annie Bruno in the form of an interview with the family

3:00 – 4:00 PM Conversation with Your Fiscal Agency- ACES\$

Presented by Tasha Whiteside, Team Illinois Program Director, ACES\$

4:00 - 4:15 PM – Wrap Up and Thank you

Agenda is subject to change

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Samantha M. Alloway is an accomplished and influential leader, known for her expertise in government relations, advocacy, and human services. Samantha has served as a CASA/GAL for Kane County, advocating for the rights of children in the foster care system. Additionally, she has worked as an advocacy coordinator and operations manager at Lazarus House, providing support to unhoused individuals. Samantha is also a certified Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault advocate through the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Samantha is also a member of the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership Training Academy, class of 2024. This prestigious membership highlights her commitment to personal and professional growth, and it positions her as a promising leader with a forward-thinking mindset for the state of Illinois. As a mother of three sons, Samantha encountered a pivotal moment when her middle child was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the age of three. This deeply personal experience has driven her to become a passionate advocate for disability rights. She has emerged as a highly effective and influential communicator, successfully engaging with families, participants, and legislators at both the federal and state levels.

Curtis Harris is an activist, organizer, and self-advocate working toward disability rights and autism acceptance. He serves as a board member of Chicagoland Autism Connection and has worked with organizations including Access Living, ADAPT, Refuse Fascism, and numerous others advancing civil rights and health care for all. Curtis lives in Chicago in supportive housing.

Kimberly L. Johnson is a disability/legislative advocate, grassroots community leader, who believes in leadership through systems change, creating, pursuing goals, and achieving a vision of shared values about people living with disabilities. Through her work as President, Board of Directors of Chicagoland Autism Connection (CAC), The Arc of Illinois (Ligas Family Advocate and later as Board Treasurer), The Office of Diverse Learner Supports & Services (ODLSS) Parent Engagement Specialist of Chicago Public Schools, Kimberly's work, and passion to support families living with disabilities with a specific focus on marginalized communities has supported hundreds across Illinois.

Professionally, Kimberly works as a Regional Coordinator (Cook County), Community Residential Services Authority (CRSA). This position provides technical assistance to families, service providers, educators, and other professionals to help plan and implement appropriate, effective services for children with severe emotional disturbances and/or behavior disorders (SED/BD), in Illinois.

She received her formal education in Business Marketing from Indiana Wesleyan University and has received various certificates awards and acknowledgements as a disability Advocate including REST respite training (2018) and customized employment through Marc Gold & Associates. Kimberly has also served as a speaker for quite a few community and professional organizations sharing tips on parent/caregiver advocacy, service coordination, financial wellness, the benefits of employment (customized), Direct Support Person training and navigating resources within the State of Illinois.

Currently, Kimberly serves on several boards and committees including her recent appointment as Board President of The Arc of Illinois; former Arc of Illinois board Treasurer (2021-2023); the State of Illinois Development Disability Advisory Council; Immediate Past-President of Chicagoland Autism Connection (CAC); Founder of CAC's A-Team & Trailblazers-Self-Advocate groups and Past Board Member of the Community Residential and Services Authority for the State of Illinois. She also serves as part of the Illinois Criminal Justice Task Force; Q Source Kidney Advisory Board and is a Faculty Advisor for Illinois Partners and Policy Making (2018-2023), Caring Across Generations Fellow (2023), and National Kidney Advocacy Committee (2023). She is a certified trainer with NAMI as a Mental Health First Responder (2017) and the Train the Trainer National Disability Institute Financial Wellness Training for families living with disabilities (2021). Most notably, Kimberly created and implemented the Parent Engagement Training Portal for the Chicago Public School's Office of Diverse Learners Supports and Services.

Lastly, Kimberly is the devoted mother of an adult son living with Autism, speech and cognitive delay and gained her lived experience through their journey navigating support services in Chicago and surrounding suburbs of Illinois. Kimberly believes grassroots advocacy is the heart and soul of advocacy and her mission to support families with children and adults living with disabilities began when she realized that state and federal funding, resources, supports and services were limited or non-existent in her community and other underserved/ marginalized communities.

Megan Mutti has been the Executive Director of Family Matters PTIC since 2023. She was most recently a member of the Ligas Family Advocate Team at the Arc of Illinois. Megan is a 2023 graduate of the Illinois Partners in Policymaking Program and a 2020 graduate of the LEND Program at UIC, where she participated as a Family Fellow. Additionally, she is a Charting the Life Course Ambassador. Megan's core interests focus on person-centered planning, family and school collaboration and family engagement.

Megan completed both her BS and MA in Human Development and Family Studies. She spent many years as a member of the Pediatric Supportive Care Team at Children's Hospital of Illinois, where she focused on patient and family-centered care.

Tonya Piephoff is the Director for the Division of Developmental Disabilities for the State of Illinois. She has a bachelor's degree in social work and a Master's in Mental Health Counseling and has dedicated her career to serving individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. The majority of her career has been spent working with individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities in both the state-run Intermediate Care Facilities (SODC) or in community services through the waiver programs. She has also worked for many years in the Forensic Psychiatric system and with those who have dual diagnosis. Before coming to Illinois Department of Human Services, Tonya served as Director of the Kentucky Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and as the Chief Operating Officer of the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities. With over 20 years' experience in assisting individuals and their families to find the best living environment to meet their individual needs and goals.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Lorene Reagan has over 40 years of experience providing high-level clinical, administrative, and consultative support to state Medicaid programs.

During her 20-year tenure at the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Lorene served in various clinical and administrative roles, including Bureau Chief for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) services and Senior Medicaid Health Systems Administrator. During her tenure as a Program Specialist at the New Hampshire Board of Nursing, Lorene served as the liaison between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Board on medication safety and nursing delegation for direct supporters working in the state's home and community-based service system.

Lorene also served as Manager of Care Management for a Boston-based Medicaid managed care organization and was a Senior Principal with Mercer Government Human Services Consulting, providing consultation and support to state Medicaid programs across the nation. She is the former Director of Public Relations for IntellectAbility, a health technology firm committed to identifying and managing health risks for people with IDD.

Lorene is a proud 30+ year member of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (DDNA) and a former member of the DDNA Board of Directors. She is also a graduate of the New Hampshire-Maine Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program and is a former member of the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities. Her volunteer affiliations include her current seat on the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire's Board of Directors and her membership on the committee responsible for the annual New Hampshire Caregivers Conference, as well as the Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Recognition Awards Planning Committee.

Lorene is a registered nurse and holds a Master's Degree in Nursing with a concentration in Clinical Systems Management. She is the Principal of Reagan Consulting and was appointed Court Monitor for the Ligas Consent Decree in March 2025.

Benjamin (Benji) Rubin, JD, Brian's youngest son, Mitchell's "little/big" brother, has been a member of the Law Firm since 2010. Benji graduated from the University of Illinois College of Law, Magna Cum Laude, received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University, and his Graduate Law Degree, an LLM (Tax), with honors, also from Northwestern University. Benji is a member of the Academy of Special Needs Planners, a member, by invitation, of the Special Needs Alliance, is Chairman of the American Bar Association Special Needs Planning Committee, and serves on the SIBS Board (Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters), the Illinois chapter of the national Sibling Leadership Network. Having Mitchell as a brother profoundly shaped who Benji is today, and thus the type of law he chose to practice.

Attorney **Brian Rubin** is the founder of Rubin Law, a former IRS Agent, and former IRS Attorney, has been a practicing attorney since 1976, has been married to his wife Linda for the past 45 years, and is the parent of three children, one of whom, Mitchell, 41, has Autism. Brian's law practice, for four decades, since Mitchell was one year old, has been dedicated to serving the legal and future planning needs of his fellow Illinois families of children and adults with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or mental illness.

Since 2014, **Tasha Whiteside** has held the role of Program Director of Operations at ACES\$, demonstrating exceptional skills in ensuring a high-quality experience for contract administrators, participants, and stakeholders. She has been instrumental in fostering a service-oriented culture within the organization and among her reporting staff. In her capacity, Ms. Whiteside oversees Illinois FMS operations for approximately 11,600 participants enrolled in the HBS waiver program. Ms. Whiteside holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Governors State University and is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator. Her career journey began as a direct support person at Frances House, where she later advanced to the position of Residential Services Director. Throughout her career, she has served in various roles such as Traumatic Brain Injury Case Manager, life skills instructor, and program administrator for disability-related program. Beyond her professional responsibilities, Ms. Whiteside is actively engaged in volunteer work, contributing to projects such as Meals on Wheels, KABOOM, Toys for Tots, and Chicago Coat drives. Additionally, she is a charter member of the Evergreen Park, IL Silhouette.

COST & REGISTRATION

Virtual Seminar
March 25, 2026
9:00 AM to 4:15 PM

Registration Fees for Participants are:

The Arc of Illinois Members:

Professional.....\$50.00
Exhibitors\$100.00
Self-Advocate/Family Member.....\$0.00

Non Members of The Arc of Illinois:

Professional.....\$80.00
Exhibitors\$130.00
Self-Advocate/Family Member.....\$0.00

Professionals and Exhibitors, please complete the attached registration form, fax to 815.464.1832, then mail the hard copy along with your check to:

The Arc of Illinois
7550 W 183rd St
Tinley Park, IL 60477
815-464-1832

Or register online at
www.thearcofil.org/events

Notice of any special accommodations is required two weeks prior to the event. Please contact The Arc of Illinois at 815.464.1832

FAMILIES and SELF-ADVOCATES

THIS IS A FREE EVENT for Families and individuals with disabilities. However, registration is required. Please register online at www.thearcofil.org/events. If you need assistance, please contact Shakari at shakari@thearcofil.org or call 708.331.7370!

CEUs

CEUs will be offered for this training. Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Nursing Home Administrators and QIDP's signing in and out on the day of the event are entitled to five (5) credits.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

Participants canceling their registration 72 hours in advance will be entitled to a credit or refund, less a \$25.00 administrative cost. No refund or credit will be given for cancellation less than 72 hours before the seminar.

REGISTRATION FORM

14th Annual Informational Seminar
March 25, 2026

One form per person, please print legibly.

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

ACCOUNT PAYABLE: _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

____ Fax form and mail check to The Arc of Illinois
(815-464-5292)

____ Check enclosed payable to The Arc of Illinois

____ P.O. or State Voucher #

____ Charge to my Credit Card

Name as it appears on credit card:

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVV Code: _____

Billing Zip Code: _____

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