



The Power of Self-advocacy

REV UP Illinois
The Going Home Coalition

June 11, 2026

The Arc of Illinois Executive
Leadership Conference

Who We Are



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ILLINOIS



The Going Home Coalition



Members of The Going Home Coalition, REV UP Illinois, The Alliance for Community Services, alongside ICDD and The Arc of Illinois staff at a joint advocacy day in Springfield, Illinois
April 15, 2026

The Going Home Coalition is a statewide, grassroots network of self-advocates with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), family members, and allies. Since its founding in 2010, the coalition has been a pioneer for disability justice in the state of Illinois. We purposefully advocate to create systems change, transition away from institutional living by increasing community capacity, and empower fair and equal choices and opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We envision a future where individuals with disabilities in Illinois live in a truly individualized, person-centered system with the supports and services they choose.

REV UP Illinois

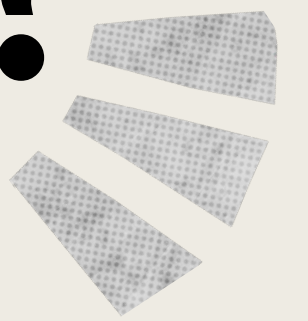


REV UP Illinois is a movement to amplify the voices of people with disabilities and ensure every vote counts. We work to build the power of the disability vote by strengthening civic engagement and making elections accessible to all.

REV UP stands for Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power!

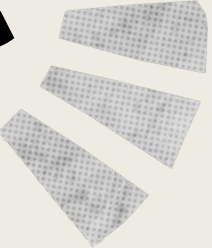
April McClees at Shapiro Developmental Centers' Transition Fair

Beyond “being a voice for the voiceless”: why should self-advocates be leaders in our movement?



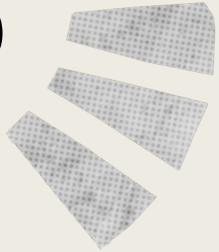
- The power of the self-advocate vote
- Self-advocate stories
- Building self-advocate leadership

The Power of the Self-Advocate Vote



- Why is it important for people with disabilities to vote?
- Why should people with disabilities be engaged citizens?

The Importance of Telling Stories



- Why is it important for self-advocates to share their stories?
- Why should self-advocates have confidence and self-respect?
- Can you give us some examples of successes and challenges that you've had, and what you learned from them?

Building Self-Advocate Leadership

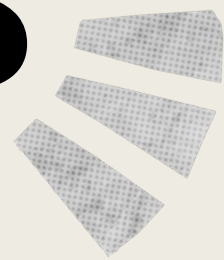
- Why should self-advocates be leaders in our movement?
- What are some concrete ways that you have exemplified leadership in our coalition?

Concrete Ways to Give Power to Self-Advocates



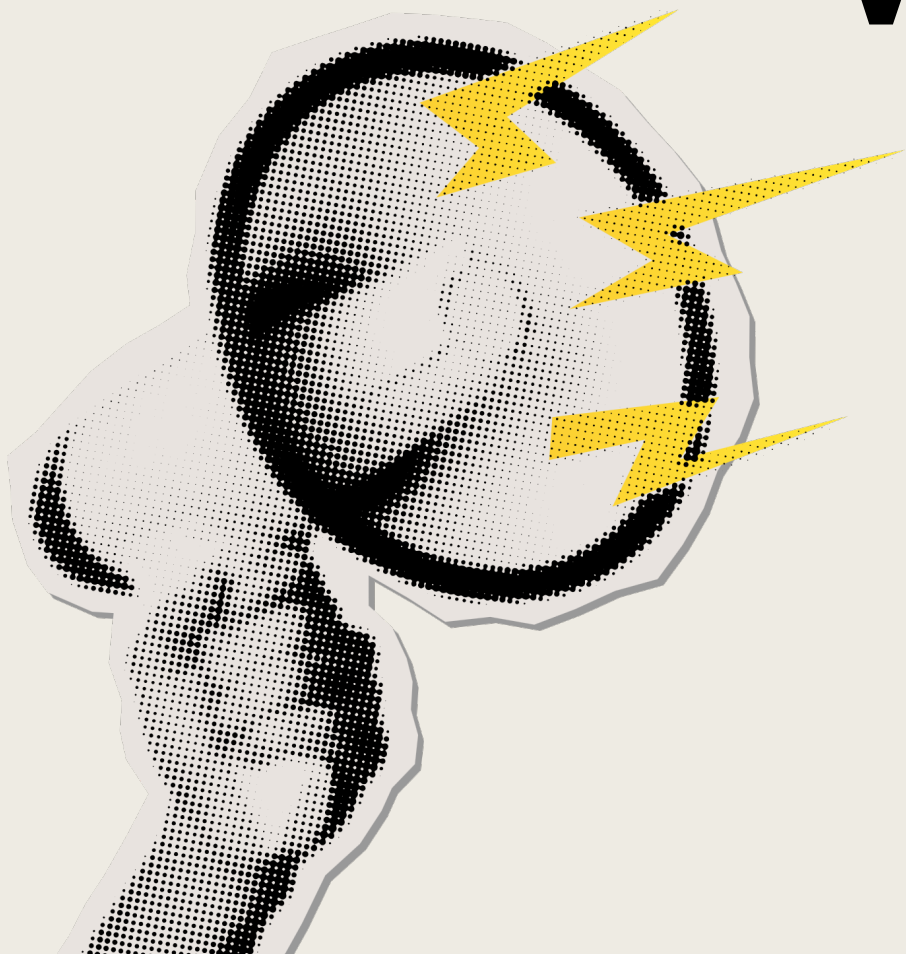
- Hire them as experts
- Involve them in every step of planning processes
- Ask their advice and input and actually use it
- Be open to criticism
- Lean into discomfort
- Listen more than you speak
- Use “would I live here?”, “would I receive services here?” as a guiding principle. People with disabilities deserve high quality housing, services, employment, not the bare minimum

April's Advice to Executives and Leaders



- The people you support are people first
- We all want the same things in life: to be respected, listened to, included, and given opportunities to grow and succeed
- Instead of focusing on what someone cannot do, focus on what they can do and how you can help them reach their goals
- Please don't make decisions for people with disabilities without including them in the conversation
- Empower us!

**Nothing About Us
Without Us!**



Thank you for listening!

