The Arc
Illinois

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MEMO TO: Interested Parties
DATE: October 26 2026
FROM: Becca Schroeder, Director of Operations, The Arc of Illinois
SUBJECT: Call for Proposals, Annual Convention 2027

The Arc of Illinois has started planning for the 2027 Annual Convention to be held **April 15 – 16, 2027.** The Convention will be a hybrid event; some attendees in-person at the **Marriott in Naperville, IL,** 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.

This year's theme is **"From Our Community, For Our Community".** We are looking forward to providing attendees with the latest information and best practices for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), their families, and the professionals who support them. This year's theme is a celebration of the people, voices, and shared efforts that make our community stronger. It recognizes that we are better together and that every individual has a role in building a more inclusive future. **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 IDD field. Proposals on any topic of interest to any of the groups represented are welcome, particularly a new approach or idea. **The Arc of Illinois would like to offer a track (breakout or concurrent sessions) specific to Spanish-speaking families and individuals.** We would also like to have a track honoring Hometown Heroes – local individuals making a difference in their communities. Topics of special interest include, but are not limited to:

***Ask the Expert – Open Conversation**
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
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 no later than **December 11, 2026.** 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!

Achieve with us.

Call for Presentations

77th Annual Convention

All proposals must reflect the values of The Arc of Illinois. The Arc believes that we are all people first and because of that, regardless of any developmental or intellectual differences, everyone deserves the same rights and opportunities. 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 be in person at the Marriott in Naperville.** While the 77th Annual Convention will be hybrid, speakers must present their session in person. As this is a hybrid event, one track of concurrent sessions will be live-streamed and the rest will be recorded and shared with all attendees.
- We encourage at least one self-advocate as a co-presenter.
- Breakout or concurrent sessions will be 45 minutes in length. We recommend 35 minutes for your presentation and 10 minutes for Q&A.
- Please make sure to keep both April 15 and 16 open on your calendar.

Directions

1. Complete and return the enclosed form. The summary 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 brochure and should be no more than 30 words.
    a. If submitting a proposal for a session presented in Spanish, please provide the summary, abstract, and bio(s) in both Spanish and English.
2. Submit your proposal to The Arc of Illinois:
    a. Mail to 7550 183rd St, Tinley Park, IL 60477
    b. Email to Kim@thearcofil.org
    c. Fax to 815.464.5292
3. The deadline to submit is **December 11, 2026**
4. If chosen, all presentations must use universal design principles and be submitted ahead of time for accessibility review.

The Convention Committee will review all proposals. Decisions of the Convention Committee regarding acceptance and scheduling are final and will be made no later than January 15, 2027.

The Arc of Illinois
77th Annual Convention 2027
Proposal Information Form

Return by December 11, 2026

Presenting in English ☐ Sesión en Español ☐
If presenting in Spanish, please share the title, bio, summary, and abstract in both Spanish and English.

Session Title:	
Name or Main Group Contact:	
Company Name:	Job Title:
Phone: Email:	Mailing Address:
Contact information for Program Book if different from above. Phone: Email:	Who is the target audience for your presentation? (i.e. self-advocates, families, siblings, DSPs, etc.)
Short bio, 150 words or less:	

Audio/Visual Equipment Needs and Room Set Up
A screen, projector, and one handheld microphone will be provided. Please bring your own laptop to connect.

☐ Flipchart & Markers
☐ Display Table
☐ Panel Presentation Set Up with ____ of chairs
☐ Other:

Accommodations Needed:

Dietary Restrictions:

If selected, your registration is waived on the day you present. Conference meals are complimentary. To attend a second day, you must register.

Summary
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:

If your proposal is not selected, would you be interested in joining a panel of speakers?