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## **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Strategic Operations & Advocacy**

**Title:** Strategic Plan & Disability Advocacy Initiative

**Agency:** The Arc Community Advocates

**Release Date:** August 19, 2025

**Proposal Due Date:** September 22, 2025

### **Contact Information:**

Rhasheda Shepherd, EdD

Executive Director

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The Arc Community Advocates invites qualified individuals, consulting firms, or nonprofit organizations to submit proposals for a strategic initiative aimed at advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities. This project seeks to influence local, national, and international policy, mobilize community support, and build inclusive, anti-oppressive frameworks that ensure dignity, access, and opportunity for all individuals, especially those who experience marginalization at the intersections of disability, race, gender, language, class, and other identities.

The Arc Community Advocates exist as an advocacy organization to make it possible for each person with a developmental disability to participate fully in all aspects of community and to support the effort of each individual to determine their own future. We recognize that ableism often intersects with racism, poverty, and other systems of oppression, and we are committed to dismantling these through an inclusive and justice-driven approach. We are committed to protecting and advancing the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through advocacy, education, and community collaboration. Despite progress, people with disabilities continue to face exclusion, systemic barriers, and limited access to equitable resources. This RFP supports the next phase of our strategic vision; advancing disability justice through policy reform, empowerment, and collaboration.

### **Our Values & Approach**

As an affiliate member of The Arc, Community Advocates believes:

- Everyone is a valued, contributing member of their community.
- The Arc helps self-advocates and their families by creating opportunities, so that they can achieve their goals.
- The Arc fosters respect and protects the human rights of people with IDD and their families.
- For 73 years, The Arc has been a family-focused, grass roots organization.

[www.communityadvocates.org](http://www.communityadvocates.org)

- The Arc is the resource of first choice for people with IDD and their families regardless of the diagnosis and at all stages of life
- The Arc Community Advocates is committed to advancing anti-racism, equity, and justice within all aspects of our work, acknowledging the historical and ongoing impact of systemic oppression on people with disabilities, particularly those from Black, Indigenous, Latine, A.L.I.C.E., and other marginalized and underserved communities.

### Purpose of the RFP

This RFP seeks proposals to develop and implement a comprehensive project that:

- Establishes a 2-3 year workplan to build upon our key infrastructure and partnerships
- Raises awareness of disability rights.
- Influences inclusive policy changes.
- Empowers individuals with disabilities, particularly those from communities that have been historically marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented.
- Strengthens partnerships at local, national, and international levels.

Additionally, this initiative will support and be supported by agency-wide priorities, including increasing visibility through community events and strategic communications, developing new revenue streams, and engaging stakeholders more deeply in our mission. This initiative must be grounded in principles of disability justice, racial equity, and anti-oppression, recognizing the intersecting identities and systemic barriers many disabled individuals face.

### Project Objectives

The selected contractor will lead the design and execution of a project that achieves the following:

1. **Raise Awareness**  
Conduct culturally responsive campaigns, workshops, and public outreach to promote deep understanding of disability rights, intersectional oppression, and the experiences of multiply marginalized disabled individuals.
2. **Influence Policy Change**  
Research, develop, and advocate for anti-oppressive, inclusive policy recommendations in education, employment, healthcare, infrastructure, and social inclusion. The Executive Director/agency will continue advocacy efforts through attendance a variety of community engagement and education opportunities to complement these policy initiatives.
3. **Empower Disabled Individuals**  
Provide tools, training, and resources to enable self-advocacy, leadership, and active participation in civic life. These efforts reflect the ED's commitment to cultivating a strong internal culture, reflected in ongoing performance feedback and capacity building for staff.
4. **Collaborate with Stakeholders**  
Build strategic partnerships with advocacy groups, policymakers, civil society, and international bodies to promote disability-inclusive legislation. The Executive Director's

goals include quarterly and annual meetings with board committees, foundation partners, and donors to strengthen alignment and engagement.

### Scope of Work

The contractor is expected to perform the following activities:

- **Research and Analysis**  
Review existing legislation and identify gaps; generate policy briefs and advocacy tools.
- **Campaign Development**  
Design and implement public education initiatives, using digital and traditional media. The ED will also contribute with monthly blog posts or op-eds to elevate campaign visibility and engagement.
- **Advocacy Engagement**  
Organize meetings with stakeholders and participate in policy discussions and consultations.
- **Capacity Building**  
Conduct training for individuals with disabilities to build self-advocacy and leadership skills. Internally, the ED is leading an agency-wide process to revise job descriptions, implement robust performance evaluations, and cultivate a positive workplace culture.
- **International Participation**  
Align efforts with global disability rights movements and frameworks

### Expected Deliverables

- Comprehensive project plan with timelines and evaluation metrics
- Research report and policy recommendations
- Awareness campaign toolkit and media materials
- At least 3 stakeholder convenings and 2 training sessions
- Final impact report documenting activities, outcomes, and lessons learned

These deliverables will contribute to the agency's ongoing tracking and communication efforts, including monthly organizational updates prepared by the ED for the Board of Directors, which highlight staffing, program, operational, governance, financial, and fundraising progress.

### Budget & Duration

The total budget is contingent on final funding but should not exceed \$10,000.00.

The anticipated project duration is 03–06 months. Proposals must include a detailed budget covering staffing, materials, travel, events, and indirect costs.

This initiative is part of a larger strategy to sustain a diversified fundraising model.

The Executive Director is actively cultivating \$10,000.00 in new individual donor support and seeking foundation commitment for the project in 2025. Engagement with major donors and transparent fundraising reporting are key components of this strategy.

### Proposal Requirements



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Please include the following in your submission:

1. Executive Summary
2. Organization Background and Relevant Experience
3. Approach and Methodology
4. General Example of Strategic Plan Detail
5. Work Plan and Timeline
6. Qualifications of Project Team
7. Detailed Budget
8. References (2–3)

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Demonstrated understanding of disability rights and advocacy (25%)
- Soundness of proposed approach and methodology (25%)
- Experience and qualifications of key personnel (20%)
- Feasibility and clarity of work plan and timeline (15%)
- Cost-effectiveness and budget justification (15%)

Alignment with The Arc Community Advocates, The Arc Michigan, and The Arc United States values of collaboration, empowerment, and strategic impact will be viewed favorably.

### **Submission Instructions**

All proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to [rshepherd@communityadvocates.org](mailto:rshepherd@communityadvocates.org) by September 22, 2025.

Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

### **Timeline**

**RFP Released** **08/19/2025**

Deadline for Questions 09/15/2025

Proposal Due Date 09/22/2025

Selection Notification 09/30/2025

Project Start Date 10/20/2025

### **Questions & Clarifications**

Rhasheda Shepherd, EdD

Executive Director

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Responses to questions will be shared with all interested parties upon request.

[www.communityadvocates.org](http://www.communityadvocates.org)