EDUCATION ADVOCATE
POSITION

Arc of Southwest Colorado
Durango, Colorado

For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

Organization Description
The Arc of Southwest Colorado is part of a national network (The Arc of the US) that serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We believe that all people deserve to love, work, play and learn in the communities in which they choose to live, and that all people with or without disabilities, have inherent value with innate abilities and strengths and are equal before the law.

General Job Description
A full-time education advocate position is available starting August 2018. The primary purpose of the Education Advocate is to represent the rights and interests of individuals ages birth to 21 with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families/guardians in obtaining services and supports. The education advocate monitors supports and services to persons with I/DD in La Plata, Montezuma, Archuleta, Dolores, and San Juan Counties and initiates and promotes quality services for persons with I/DD.

Individual Advocacy Responsibilities
• Assist persons with developmental disabilities and/or parents/legal guardians in evaluating and obtaining individualized support services afforded by FAPE, IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
• Provide guidance in identifying needs, strategies, options, and resources and develop advocacy plans based on in-depth parent/child conversations and records reviews.
• Attend meetings related to IEP and/or 504 plans to assist families, guardians, and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) in obtaining appropriate support services.
• Provide ongoing support to persons with developmental disabilities and/or their parents/legal guardians as they monitor the effectiveness and execution of IEP/504 plans and request changes to plans as their needs evolve.
• Educate and inform families, guardians and individuals with I/DD about documentation, communication, and meeting planning strategies to empower individuals with developmental disabilities and/or their families, to effectively self-advocate.
• Empower individuals with developmental disabilities and/or their families to impact the Developmental Disabilities system through general self-advocacy and participation in governing bodies and other action/outcome oriented committees.
• Plan and facilitate parent support activities as determined by the agency’s annual plan.

**General Advocacy and Responsibilities**

• Promote community and institutional advancement by representing the rights, desires and interests of individuals with developmental disabilities with the community, educational institutions, and/or other relevant agencies and service providers.
• Assist The Arc of Southwest Colorado with public education to promote community understanding of persons with developmental disabilities through presentations, newsletter articles, membership recruitment, etc.
• Provide feedback to the Executive Director related to the quality of local schools and support services.
• Represent The Arc of Southwest Colorado and forward its mission on assigned committees.

**Other Responsibilities**

• At least annually, assist the Executive Director in preparing and reporting an assessment of the current needs of children and parents; an evaluation of the appropriateness, effectiveness and sufficiency of The Arc program goals; and recommendations to improve program goals, initiatives, and priorities to better meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and guardians.
• Communicate to the Executive Director any staff, volunteer and/or third party problems that are not being resolved and which are or have the potential to be damaging, embarrassing or derogatory in any manner to The Arc of Southwest Colorado.
• Keep abreast of current and pertinent regulations that directly impact how and what services are legally afforded to individuals with developmental disabilities.
• Keep abreast of the latest technology and best practices in supporting persons with developmental disabilities.
• Weekly regional travel required. Occasional state travel required.

**Required Qualifications:**

**Education:** Minimum of a bachelor’s degree in social work, counseling, education, policy, psychology or other area related to the provision of advocacy services to people with disabilities.

**Experience:** Minimum of two years of experience in working in the field of I/DD and/or advocacy. Applicants must have knowledge of advocacy techniques, negotiations, mediation, and group dynamics. Must demonstrate excellent interpersonal and collaboration skills including but not limited to verbal, written, and listening skills. Must have demonstrated skill and experience in dealing with sensitive family situations and
working with persons from culturally diverse backgrounds. Must have demonstrated the ability to effectively work independently, be self-directed, manage time, and prioritize tasks. Computer literacy and familiarity with MS Word, Excel, and Outlook is required.

Other: Full background check required, clear of criminal record or child abuse history. Must have valid driver's license.

Preferred Qualifications:
Knowledge of laws and regulations affecting individuals with I/DDs including policies and processes associated with securing and maintaining IEP and 504 plans. Knowledge of I/DDs and programs, services, interventions, and best practices to support children with I/DDs.

Salary: Annual salary is budgeted at $40,000.00, based on experience.

Benefits include health and dental premiums partially paid for the employee after a three-month waiting period, opportunity to participate in an employer matched IRA plan and four weeks of paid vacation.

Application Instructions:
Send cover letter, resume, and a list of three professional references to arcswco@gmail.com

Position closes May 25, 2018 with an anticipated start date in the beginning of August 2018.

Chapter Description: The Arc of Southwest Colorado was established in 2015 as an official chapter of the Arc of the United States and is a member of the Arc of Colorado. The Arc of Southwest Colorado serves La Plata, Montezuma, Archuleta, Dolores and San Juan Counties and has its headquarters office in downtown Durango, CO. The Arc of Southwest Colorado is governed by a local board of directors and is primarily funded through The Arc Thrift Stores.

Applications: Send or email (1) a letter of application addressing how you meet the qualifications and (2) resume to:
Liz Mora, Executive Director
The Arc of Southwest Colorado
1199 Main Ave., Suite 216
Durango, CO 81301
Email: arcswco@gmail.com

The Arc of Southwest Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or veteran status. Accordingly, equal opportunity for employment shall be extended to all persons.