



Director's Corner

What is Community Inclusion and Why Is it Important?

The Arc is the largest organization in the US advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc believes that the people we serve should have access to: advocates, information, support, and opportunities for community inclusion. But what is community inclusion and why is it important?

Community inclusion means ensuring that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are fully welcomed, valued, and able to participate in everyday community life. Not just physically present. It's important because it reduces isolation. It improves dignity and feeling of self-worth. It promotes belonging, equal opportunity, and access to relationships, work, and civic engagement. These things are all essential for well-being and human rights. Inequities in employment, education, housing, and healthcare do exist and they must be challenged.

Important elements of community inclusion are access to employment opportunities, building and sustaining friendships, social networks, participation in civic, cultural, and recreational activities of interest, and being recognized for abilities and unique perspectives. Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging: Many people with IDD face isolation due to stigma and systemic barriers. Inclusion fosters connection and combats loneliness. Exclusion perpetuates inequity and discrimination. Social inclusion enhances mental health, self-esteem, well-being, and overall quality of life. Inclusion offers opportunities for personal growth. Being part of community networks opens doors to education, employment, and social roles. Our communities themselves benefit by becoming stronger, more diverse, and more equitable when everyone is included. We need the talent and perspective of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Inclusion creates the "social glue" that holds communities together. We need it in North Dakota, and our whole society needs it...[Read on](#)

Did you know about?

NDAD

Diane Burckhard & Ashley Lemke, NDAD



What does NDAD do?

NDAD provides vital resources to help individuals with health challenges reduce out-of-pocket costs and maintain independence. Through programs like direct financial assistance for prescriptions, out-of-town medical travel, and paratransit, as well as healthcare equipment loans, NDAD helps ease financial strain for essential medical needs.

Do you have to live in North Dakota to apply for assistance?

You must live in North Dakota or the following border cities: East Grand Forks, MN – Moorhead, MN – Breckenridge, MN – Lemmon, SD

Can you tell me about your Autism Spectrum Assistance Program?

The ASAP program can assist with out-of-town medical travel assistance for appointments including: OT/PT, Speech/Language/Behavioral therapy and psychiatric appointments. It can also help with the costs of respite care workers and can also provide specialized equipment (crash pad, calming swing, etc.) Anyone in the areas above is encouraged to apply.

Can I donate my gently used medical equipment?

We would gladly accept donations. Each location varies on what items that they may need, but we can transfer items between locations as well. Typical donations include things like walkers, wheelchairs, knee scooters, crutches, canes, hospital side chairs, etc. If you have any questions about what items are needed, please contact us. The donation list will be available on the website.

tables, rollators, commodes, toilet risers, motorized wheelchairs/scooters and more. The only real restrictions are things that take up a lot of space (like a hospital bed), things that require the purchase of additional pieces (tubing, masks, etc.) or that are difficult to sanitize (lift chairs, CPAP/BiPAP, etc.). We ask that those wanting to donate call ahead to ensure we are able to accept what they're donating.

Visit NDAD's [facebook](#) or visit [ndad.org](#) to learn more or apply for assistance!

Opportunities in our Community



FAMILY SHARING OPPORTUNITY!

Join Pathfinder Services of ND, in collaboration with the ND Department of Public Instruction, for a Family Sharing Event — offered virtually. Your voice matters! Come share your experiences and ideas around attendance and behavior in schools!

December 17th, 2025
12:00pm-1:00pm PDT

Virtual: [Register Here](#)

[More Information](#)

PATHFINDER SERVICES OF NORTH DAKOTA ND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Advocacy Calls

Join us for these focused calls on hot topics to receive current information, share your concerns, and identify ways to advocate for yourself!

A December/January schedule is posted below. These calls will be hosted on Teams and on Central time.

Register for the event with North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities [here](#)

Registration [here](#)

Dates and registration [here](#)

Good Reads

North Dakota News

- KVLY - Report on thefts at The Arc Attic Treasures
- Echo Press - Minnesota woman gives 16 special needs children a home
- KFYR - Spectrum Circle connects families

US Disability News

- The Arc of The United States Joins Lawsuit
- The Guardian - 'This is what real inclusion looks like'





If you're enjoying this content, we'd love it if you would forward the link to anyone you think would benefit from it, or [visit our website](#) to learn more.

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