

The Arc of Northern Virginia Special Needs Trust Program

Advocate Program

Benefits, Advocacy, Supports & Services



The Advocate Program is implemented in conjunction with
The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust

THE ROLE OF THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate's services are provided as a fee-for-service arrangement, (can be paid through the beneficiary's trust) where our advocate works with the client and his or her supporters to develop and implement advocacy plans, create and foster support networks around the client, and facilitate the client's future planning. The Advocate can provide support services in various areas of the client's life including: health care, financial, legal, personal care, employment, housing, and social/personal enrichment. The Advocate honors the client's wishes and provides services that promote the client's dignity, choice, self-determination, personal responsibility, and quality of life.

The Advocate's services begin with an initial meeting where the Advocate works with the client and his or her supporters to determine a baseline; identify the initial supports the clients needs; determine the client's aspirations and future goals; and formulate plans to assist client in addressing immediate needs and realizing future goals. Immediate Advocacy Plans, Short-Term Advocacy Plans, and/or Long-Term Advocacy Plans can be developed from this initial meeting. These Advocacy Plans identify services that the Advocate can provide in all areas of the client's life to address needs and attain goals. All services are flexible and are meant to meet the Beneficiary and his or her supporters where they are. As such, Advocacy Plans can be reformulated, subject to the client's approval, to respond to the client's changing needs, interests, and priorities.

Meet Caroline Girgenti, Advocate

The Arc of Northern Virginia is proud to welcome Caroline Girgenti to our staff as Advocate in our Special Needs Trust department. With more than 10 years of work history in the disability services field, Caroline brings both a commitment to the cause and a wealth of expertise. Caroline is an experienced Program Manager who has worked in the mental health and intellectual disabilities fields. She's skilled in nonprofit, program, and project management; as well as leadership, policy analysis, and program development. Caroline earned her undergraduate degree from James Madison University, and holds an Masters degree from George Mason University.



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EXAMPLES OF ADVOCACY SERVICES

Health Care and Wellness

- coordinate services and care plans
- help acquire and maintain health insurance
- respond to any changes in Medicare, Medicaid, or other health care concerns
- assist in making and keeping necessary medical appointments
- provide medication reminders
- provide safety and fall prevention information

Financial Needs

- assist with the coordination of public benefits, waivers, etc.
- develop and amend budgets
- assist in learning how to manage Trust disbursements
- promote financial literacy and financial planning skills
- attend budgeting class and financial meetings as an advocate
- purchase clothing, medical equipment, supplies, or other personal items as authorized

Legal Needs

- provide referrals to attorneys and legal clinics as needed
- attend meetings and appointments as an advocate

Personal Care

- maintenance of calendars, schedules, and reminders
- skills building to promote well-being and healthy living
- coordinate home maintenance and repair
- address needs for home modification

Employment

- assist in identifying desired employment
- connect with employment services providers
- foster vocational goals
- provide feedback and support about employment concerns

Housing

- provide information and referrals for housing vouchers
- provide assistance in filling out housing applications
- research new housing options to meet current needs
- make planned and unplanned visits, as authorized, to assess current living arrangement
- report to Grantor/Primary Representative if there is a need for change in current living arrangement or level of care being provided.

Social/Personal Enrichment

- identify, develop, and promote hobbies
- use self-determination exercises to identify future goals and aspirations
- visit at least once every six months to monitor new needs and interests
- facilitate social networking and mentoring
- strengthen and encourage healthy relationships and support networks
- promote spiritual health