



The Arc of Somerset County
Guide to Residential Services

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1. Introduction & Overview

The Mission of The Arc of Somerset County is to provide quality services and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to support development and achievement at every stage of life.

The Arc of Somerset County is a private, non-profit membership based organization committed to enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Founded in 1972, The Arc of Somerset County provides an array of quality programs and supports to individuals of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Services are based on a person-centered philosophy, which recognizes and supports each person's individuality and strengths and promotes self-determination and choice.

The Arc of Somerset County has a proud history of success in developing and managing residential services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Over 100 individuals are supported in the residential programs designed to meet the unique and varied needs of Somerset County residents with disabilities.

This guidebook has been developed to provide individuals, their family members, and advocates with basic information about our agency's residential programs, an overview of certain agency-wide offerings, information on policies and procedures, which guide provision of services and have been developed with the input of those we serve regulatory partners, and other stakeholders such as yourself. Information contained in this guidebook is subject to change reflecting any revisions to state and/or agency policies. Individuals are encouraged to view the agency website: www.thearcofsomerset.org, and/or to contact The Arc of Somerset County for up-to-date details and additional information.

We thank the many individuals, parents, family members, volunteers and staff who have contributed to the development of this guidebook through their advocacy, survey response, and focus group participation. Their combined efforts to promote quality in the lives of persons served by this agency have strengthened our ability to provide exceptional programs and continue to promote the provision of quality services.

We welcome your active involvement in The Arc of Somerset County. There are many ways individuals and family members can participate, including educational events, recreational events, fund raising activities, and Board Committees. We encourage you to become a member of the agency, and receive our newsletters and other State and National Arc publications, which will keep you current in developments in our field and on agency events.

1.1 The Board of Directors

A volunteer Board of Directors comprised of up to 20 members, many of whom are the family member of a person receiving our services, governs The Arc of Somerset County. The Board of Directors is responsible for the fiscal integrity and governance of the agency. All members of the Board are recommended by a nominating committee and elected to the Board by the full membership of The Arc of Somerset County.

The principle officers of the Board are the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Much of the work of the Board is accomplished in committees made up of Board members, agency staff, persons served, and other community members whose interest or expertise lies within the subject of the committee. These committees support the Board in its work of overseeing the financial health of the agency, advancing its mission, and monitoring the progress of initiatives throughout the year. Committees in turn, report back and make recommendations to the full Board at bi-monthly meetings.

Please contact the Executive Director with questions regarding membership, committee participation, or donor opportunities.

1.2 Admission / Orientation

Individuals interested in receiving residential services from The Arc of Somerset County must be registered with and referred by the New Jersey State Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), which requires Community Care Waiver (CCW) eligibility. The State of New Jersey, DDD, maintains a waiting list of individuals in need of or interested in residential services. Individuals should know the position they maintain on the waiting list and communicate with their DDD Case Manager about any changes in their life circumstances, which would warrant a priority placement on the waiting list.

If the individual is not registered with DDD or are not on the residential waiting list, you need to contact the DDD Regional Office, 110 East 5th St, Plainfield NJ 07060 # (908) 226-7800. The Arc of Somerset County Family Support Department may be able to assist you in navigating this process. For more information on this assistance, please contact the Family Support Coordinator at (908) 725-8544 x624.

Once accepted for residential services The Arc of Somerset County staff will work to develop a transition plan. An Interdisciplinary Team meeting (IDT) is convened at least thirty days prior to admission to discuss our agency policies and procedures and transition action steps. This meeting provides an opportunity for all of the IDT members, which includes the individual, parents/guardian, DDD case manager, The Arc of Somerset County staff, and other involved professionals and advocates, to exchange information to help bring about a smooth transition to a new residence. During this time, additional opportunities to visit the new residence, learn more about the community, and meet other residents; families and staff may be arranged.

An agency staff person in conjunction with the IDT members will develop an Individual Habilitation Plan (IHP), identifying training and service plans, within 30 days of admission to the residence.

It is important to understand that opportunities for community residential services for individuals with developmental disabilities are limited due to restrictive state funding and high demand. Individuals and their family members are strongly encouraged to take an active advocacy role with DDD to facilitate the best possible options. Additionally, the changing needs of current residents, the aging process, and the time required to work within a large state system often contribute to the challenge of creating or altering residential opportunities for people. The Arc of Somerset County is committed to creating living arrangements that work for all members of a home. This means that over time, changes in housemates, staff, or other environmental items may be needed. Independence in residence is an ongoing process that requires more than just a bedroom. We look forward to many conversations and plans as we try to work with the limited resources available state-wide to assist in your efforts to live in Somerset County.

1.3 Overview of Residential Services

The goal of the Residential Services Department is to provide a safe and healthy place to live, to provide a learning environment, to integrate individuals into their community, to offer varied recreational opportunities, and to provide the supports required for individuals to achieve their goals and realize their dreams.

The Arc of Somerset County's Residential Services Department provides services to 106 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in twenty-five different locations throughout Somerset County. Over 200 staff provide support in one of four types of programs based on the level of support and supervision that the individual requires. These include Group Homes, Supervised Apartments & Supported Living.

Programs and Respite Care Services:

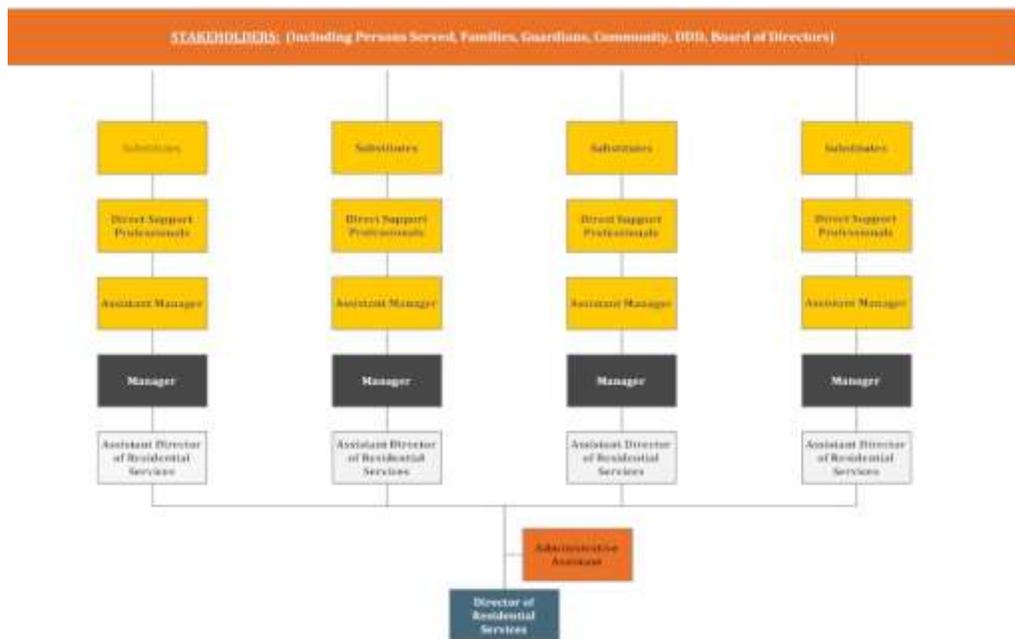
- Group Homes: The department operates fourteen group homes. In these programs, which range in size from three to ten individuals, there is 24 hours support provided. Although intellectual and physical functioning varies greatly from home to home, individuals in this setting require more on-going support than other residential facilities.

- **Supervised Apartments:** The department operates two large and two small supervised apartment program settings. In these programs, individuals live in either a one or a two-bedroom apartment. There are periods allotted of unsupervised time alone based on their individual plans. Staff is on-site in the building 24-hours a day in the case of an emergency.
- **Supported Living Programs:** The department oversees seven Supported Living Programs. These individuals live independently in the community and could receive a limited number of support from 5 to 25 hours each week, based on their individual needs.
- **Respite Care Services:** The department operates one Respite group home with a maximum capacity for seven individuals. Respite provides care, intended to be on a short-term basis for individuals due to the absence or need for relief of the natural care-giver. Respite also provides care for emergency placements.

The Direct Support Professionals, Program Management and Administration for the Residential Department provide a great number of services and supports that include:

- **Medical Oversight-** Many of the individuals in the department have varied and complex medical histories for which nursing staff provide ongoing support. Staff administers medications and provides other medical oversight as directed by the doctor.
- **Accessibility -** The continual reassessment process to ensure that all programs are accessible to ensure independence to the greatest level while ensuring safety.
- **Recreation-** There is a variety of recreational opportunities for adults served. On a weekly basis the Come and Dance hosts over 200 individuals coming from Somerset County. Each Friday evening the department runs an activity, which may include ventures club, live music, yoga, Sisters of The Arc and bingo. The department also runs the excursion club. Organized activities include Medieval Times, Miniature golf, bowling, and pizza, meals at local restaurants, Philadelphia Zoo, laser tag, fashion show, and talent shows.

1.4 Organizational Chart for Residential Services



2 Individual Services

2.1 Individual's Rights and Responsibilities

In accordance with The Arc of Somerset County's Mission Statement and philosophy, the agency will ensure that all rights afforded the general public shall be afforded to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc of Somerset County will support persons served in advocating for

themselves and in accessing their rights as citizens. The Arc of Somerset County, through its Mission Statement, policies and procedures, Self Advocacy meetings, life skills training and Human Rights Committee, supports the empowerment of the individuals we serve.

All of the individuals served in The Arc of Somerset County are provided with a copy of the DDD circular entitled "Rights and Responsibilities of People with Developmental Disabilities and Their Parents/Guardians" prior to intake. Residents and their families should review the circular and ask questions accordingly to the Program Director and/or Program Assistant Director.

The Arc of Somerset County's Residential Department has general rules that are agreed to by each individual prior to entering a program. The current rules are:

- Each consumer must participate in regular fire drills
- Pets of any kind are not permitted in programs
- No smoking is allowed in residences or agency vehicles
- Each house or building members create other "agreements" or "rules" that reflect the home they have created and the things they need to enjoy it. These items might include limiting the hours of visitors or the volume of the television. These "house rules" are signed off by residents and guardians annually or if altered during the year. Interested persons should ask about the items current residents have highlighted as important when considering a residential opportunity.

2.2 Individual's Time Away From the Residence

The Arc of Somerset County encourages families to spend time together and to be involved in their loved ones' life in and out of their home.

Prior to picking up your family member it is preferred you please alert the program at least 72 hours ahead of time for trips requiring preparation to give staff enough time to prepare medications, clothing, etc. Pick up and drop off time should be honored to prevent any inconvenience to the residents. The program staff plans for activities based on the individual's preferences. Families are encouraged to plan visits with respect to the individual's work schedule, medical appointments or other significant commitments. Excessive time away from the residence limits the individual's ability to address IHP goals and to fully integrate into the routine and activities of the home.

Extended or frequent time away from a residential program may require review by an individual's IDT team so as to not jeopardize the currency of an individual's placement.

2.3 Personal Possessions

Whenever possible, an individual's own personal funds will be used to purchase toiletries, clothing and other decorative/recreational/personal items. Family may wish to supplement funds for purchases for their loved ones. The program staff, Program Manager and the consumer are responsible for completing an item-by-item inventory of the individual's personal possessions upon entrance to the residence. The inventory will then be updated as new items are purchased or discarded.

No one will remove or withhold an individual's property without express consent from the individual or his/her guardian. Modifications of this policy for a particular individual can only occur as specified in the individual's IHP. Other residents, visitors to the house and agency staff will respect the personal space and possessions of all individuals in the home. When staff participates in housekeeping chores that necessitate the involvement with the individual's personal possessions, the individual should be present and fully informed prior to actions taken by staff.

2.4 Recreation and Leisure

The Arc of Somerset County is committed to providing a wide range of services to all persons served. Included in this provision of services are individualized leisure and recreation activities.

Families/guardians are encouraged to provide staff with information regarding the type of activities their family member enjoys. This information may be shared at the initial intake meeting, when the yearly IHP takes place, when the Case Coordinator calls to elicit family satisfaction information or by calling the Program Manager or Program Administrator.

The Program Manager schedules community outings and recreation activities with your family member's preferences in mind. Each month a recreational calendar is e-mailed to each program and interested family members detailing potential recreational activities. These are discussed with the residents of the program during their regular house meetings and activities' are scheduled based on interest. Some of the activities offered include:

- Come and Dance- An Arc of Somerset County sponsored dance that occurs several times a year
- Special Olympics trainings and events
- Men's and Women's activity groups
- Special events- arc sponsored events that have included, Talent shows, Hawaiian Carnival, Plays, Michael Jackson night.

There may be fees associated with membership and with registration for specific events. The staff also research community recreation opportunities through the YMCA, cultural and sports events and other inclusive activities. Subscriptions to local newspapers and membership to a video store, gym or a local art or music society would assist staff in providing a wide range of experiences for your loved one.

Vacations or day trips are planned for interested residents with individual preferences and financial considerations in mind. Vacation planning usually begins early to allow individual family/guardians to schedule their vacations without conflicts.

The Arc of Somerset County recognizes the importance of vacations and travel in the lives of those we serve. To this end, the agency can assist in coordination of vacations in conjunction with consumers as per Division Circular #9. The cost of all vacation arrangements is at the expense of the consumer and/or family. Because of budgetary constraints, the cost of staffing a vacation at the level required is also at the expense of the consumer and/or family. Those wishing to arrange a vacation must contact their Program Administrator to begin planning. At that time, a determination about the staffing requirements will be made and the associated costs included in a vacation plan. A donation in the amount equivalent to staff compensation may be made and restricted for use as detailed in the plan. It is recommended that any family interested in pursuing vacation plans review Division Circular #9. It is available through your program director or on the Division of Developmental Disabilities website at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/news/publications/divisioncirculars.html>

2.5 Health Care

All residents living in The Arc of Somerset County residential programs are ensured timely and appropriate healthcare services. The Division of Development Disabilities requires that persons served have a yearly physical examination, including laboratory work, x-rays, and other diagnostic tests at the discretion of the doctor or nurse practitioner. Agency staff and at times, nurses assist in the monitoring of the medical, psychological, visual, dental, and related health care needs of the residents as needed. To ensure proper follow up and understanding of physician recommendations, agency staff MUST attend all Doctor

appointments with consumers. Family members are welcome to accompany their loved one, but may not pursue Doctor appointments without agency employees' notification, participation and attendance. The nurses' may also assist with any adaptive medical equipment needs. They maintain monthly records and assist staff in interpreting the doctor's orders and the follow up instructions for future appointments.

Flu immunization is also recommended yearly. The Nursing Supervisor alerts programs to the beginning of flu season and to the availability of partner clinics to administer shots.

Community based physicians, family practice based groups, and the Developmental Disabilities Center in Morristown are generally utilized for healthcare needs.

2.6 HIPPA

The Arc of Somerset County maintains compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The Arc of Somerset County has established a uniform system to implement the requirements of HIPAA to protect confidentiality of individual health information and provide for individuals' rights as to how their information can be used. Under the HIPAA laws, The Arc of Somerset County may not use or disclose, "Protected Health Information" (PHI) except as authorized by the individual who is the subject of the information or his/her legal guardian.

We utilize a professional pharmacy to obtain our monthly medication, medication records and medication administration sheets. Medication is generally delivered monthly though mid-month changes or travel change can be arranged for a specific person.

2.7 Specialized Services

The Arc of Somerset County has a Clinical Services Department licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, an RN nurse supervisor and support specialists. . The Clinical Services team attends to the physical and emotional well being of all consumers of residential and employment services. The team's offerings include nursing assessments, monitoring of medical conditions, monitoring of medication administration, individual and group behavioral and emotional support, community bridge building, information and referral, and staff training.

The need for specialized services is addressed at the individual's annual IHP meeting or as needed.

2.8 Human Rights

The Arc of Somerset County maintains an internal Human Rights Committee under a memorandum of understanding with the Division of Developmental Disabilities. This committee serves to review issues that could impact or restrict a consumer's rights and assist in alternative planning if applicable to avoid such restrictions. In instances where restrictions are deemed appropriate to preserve health and safety of self or others this committee will recommend planning to remove restrictions at an appropriate future time or changes in service that allow a lesser or no restriction of rights. Recommendations to review issues of proposed service changes or restrictions will be made through IDT or IHP processes.

2.9 Medication Administration

The Arc of Somerset County staff is required to successfully complete a 1-day State of New Jersey medication course focusing on the proper procedure to administer medication and the subsequent documentation process. Staff is also required to pass an in-house Arc of Somerset County medication administration course along with a biannual medication administration re-certification. Our staff must ensure that a valid prescription is available for all medications given and includes specific time it is to be administered. Over the counter medication such as Tylenol, cough medicine, creams, and ointments require a physician's order. Proper documentation of the over the counter as needed medication, including the residents response to the medication must be recorded.

If a family member administers any over the counter medication, while the resident is on a home visit, staff needs to be informed for their records.

All controlled substances administered in our residences, must be counted at least once every shift to assure that the declining inventory is correct and that there is an adequate supply of medication available at all times.

Staff counts all medication once a week to assure there is an adequate supply on hand.

2.9.1 Medication for Home Visits

The group home staff will provide the family with the entire bottle(s)/blister pack(s) of medication for a home visit or vacation. Staff will count the amount of pills and the family member will sign a document stating they are in receipt of the said amount for each bottle. It is imperative that the **medication is returned** to the residence when you drop off your loved one. If you do not return the medication, your family member will not be able to receive the next dose of medication and there could be serious side effects resulting from a missed dose.

Medicaid cannot be billed more than once a month for any medication, therefore we ask you to take this responsibility very seriously.

No medications may be given to or received from a family member unless they are in the original labelled packaging.

2.10 Finances

The NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities is the primary funding source for The Arc of Somerset County's residential programs. Some of our programs also receive federal funding through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All HUD programs are required by law to charge rent equal to 30% of the individual's income, including SSA/SSI. HUD rents are payable directly to The Arc of Somerset County. Rental payments are deducted by DDD's Fee for Service formula so there is no additional cost to individuals residing in a HUD program.

2.10.1 Payeeship/Social Security

When an individual enters a residential program, his or her eligibility for Social Security and SSI benefits may change. Individuals and/or their parents/guardians need to contact the Social Security Administration Office to ensure that full benefits are being received. Prior to placement, family/consumers must consent to name The Arc of Somerset County as the Representative Payee for the individual's benefits.

As the representative payee, The Arc of Somerset County is responsible for receiving the individual's funds and for disbursing the funds to the individual and/or in payment of their financial obligations. The Arc of Somerset County's Payeeship program will provide families members with quarterly or monthly statements and ledgers that outline the use of the individuals SS benefits.

All Social Security and SSI funds are considered by DDD when calculating the individual's fee for service that the State of New Jersey requires from person receiving residential services (about 75% of the individual's assessed income). The remaining Social Security and SSI funds must be used specifically for the individual. The payee is required to maintain receipts and other documentation of expenses and income for review by Social Security for continued eligibility determination.

2.10.2 PNA

The state requires that all individuals in residential services receive a minimum of \$40 per month for their personal needs allowance (PNA). The representative payee of a resident's Social Security, SSI and/or other benefits is legally responsible to provide at least this amount to The Arc of Somerset County at the beginning of each month for the personal needs (personal hygiene products, recreational activities, clothing, etc.) of the beneficiary. Payees and/or family members are encouraged to provide additional money for a resident's use, although the state only allows \$40 to be deducted as PNA before calculating the individual's "disposable income" in the state's Fee for Service formula, additional expenses may be deducted from payments through "special circumstance process".

Monthly payments from the representative payee to the individual are required. Delinquent payments may jeopardize the quality of a resident's life, due to lack of personal funds, and the payee's ability to continue to serve in this capacity, since payment of PNA is a state requirement. The Arc of Somerset County sends representative payees monthly documentation of financial transactions. Residential programs label all expenditures to assist payees in justifying the use of the individual's money should the payee be faced with a Social Security audit.

2.10.3 Individual Assets

Upon entry to an Arc of Somerset County residential program, each individual and/or their guardian sign a Financial Entrustment Agreement with the agency establishing the level of financial support to needs to be provided, as determined appropriate by the individual's IDT. Each resident is allowed to have up to \$100 in cash kept in a secure place within the home and available for his/her use. Any additional monies belonging to a resident must be kept in an interest bearing account or suitable account type as determined by IDT and recorded in an individual's IHP in the individual's name and are monitored to prevent loss of benefits. In some cases, when the predicted balance of an individual's funds may incur fees from a particular banking institution the IDT may agree to place the funds in a non-interest bearing account to avoid such fees. This process requires team approval and a waiver of the above rule from the state. Program management is responsible to assist each individual to the extent agreed upon as needed to maintain the security of the residents' funds, assist in the management of his/her personal funds and provide each individual reasonable access to his/her own money. Program Administrators regularly audit these funds at least monthly.

Individuals may maintain bank accounts that total under \$2,000.00. These accounts include those held by the representative payee, any accounts maintained by the family and/or by the residential program for the individual. Any amount of savings or assets over and above \$2,000.00 may cause the individual to become ineligible for Medicaid, Community Care Waiver services, or some portion of his or her Social Security or SSI. The sum of \$1,500.00 plus interest may be set aside as a burial fund without jeopardizing the Medicaid asset requirement of \$2, 000. Preferably, however families are encouraged to establish an irrevocable pre-paid burial trust for their loved one, which may include the total value of a burial, without losing Medicaid eligibility due to asset requirements.

A life insurance policy without cash surrender value may be maintained for the individual without affecting benefits. Individuals and/or their parents/guardians should make arrangements with the Program Manager or Assistant Director of the residence to assure that assets in all bank accounts do not exceed the limit. The figures stated in this section may change. Individuals can contact Social Security at 1-800-234-5772 for up-to-date information.

2.11 The Department of Housing & Urban Developments (HUD)

All HUD homes are required by law to charge rent equal to 30% of the individual's income. Individuals are required to annually submit verification of income (e.g. SSI award letter, bank statements, W2). HUD rents are payable directly to The Arc of Somerset County. Rental payments are deducted by DDD's Fee for Service formula so there is no additional cost to individuals residing in a HUD program. Security deposits are required for all HUD programs. Rents continue during absences (including hospitalizations and rehabilitation).

2.12 Security Deposits

For individuals residing on our Supportive Living and Supervised Apartment programs, where monthly rent is paid, a security deposit equal to one-month rent will be required. Security deposits must be paid in full prior to the move in date. Deposits will be held in a separate interest bearing account. Upon termination of the lease, apartments will be inspected for damage. All damage caused beyond normal use and wear will be repaired using the security deposit. If no damage is reported, security deposits will be returned in full (with interest) within 30 days of the termination of the lease.

2.13 Guardianship

When a person reaches the age of 18, he or she is legally presumed to be a competent adult. This legal determination applies to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well. A parent does not continue to be, or automatically become their child's legal guardian when that child reaches the age of 18, regardless of the child's disability or functioning level. If an individual is unable to make medical, legal or quality of life decisions in their own best interest, pursuit of legal guardianship is strongly advised.

In order to assume guardianship for an adult a court proceeding is necessary, even if the adult is your own child. This proceeding will require that the parent, family member or friend seeking guardianship retain an attorney. The court will also appoint an attorney to represent the individual. The court will consider the individual's intellectual level, skill levels and understanding of life situations, among other things, in determining if guardianship is warranted.

Although a guardian should be appointed only when, and to the extent necessitated by the individual's actual limitations, the ideal of guardianship is to augment the decision-making opportunities for the individual. Guardianship may be plenary (full) or limited. It is the obligation of the guardian to inform and involve the individual to the greatest extent possible in the decision making process in matters which affect him or her.

The New Jersey State Bureau of Guardianship Services (BGS) is designated by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to provide guardianship services where necessary. Families may apply for the process but a long waiting period should be anticipated. For more information call BGS at (973) 648-4638.

2.14 Communication

2.14.1 House Meetings

House meetings are held on a monthly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to allow each individual the opportunity to discuss issues pertinent to the operation of the residence. Topics addressed include but are not limited to, the development and implementation of house rules, menu planning, recreation planning including vacations, telephone usage, family/friends, consumer rights and responsibilities and personal needs shopping. Individuals are additionally encouraged to voice concerns regarding noted problems and they are assisted with problem resolution techniques.

A pre-printed agenda is provided as a guide for each meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes is submitted with the monthly report and the original is left in the house meeting binder. Minutes must reflect the views/opinions of each individual as much as he/she is capable of expressing them.

In some instances, housemates may choose to limit or eliminate participation in house meetings as individuals or groups. Such desires will be noted in the IHP document.

2.14.2 Staff Meetings

The Program Manager schedules and facilitates staff meetings at least monthly. Meetings may be held more frequently if the Program Supervisor deems it necessary. Attendance at staff meetings is mandatory for full time and part time staff. Regular substitute staff, support staff, and administrative staff may also be invited to the meetings.

The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that all information relevant to the daily operation of the residence is communicated to staff in a timely fashion. These meetings also serve to foster intra-departmental communication by giving staff the opportunity to express program concerns and to engage in problem resolution.

2.14.3 Family Meetings

Programs will hold family meetings if families are interested. All family/guardians along with program staff, support staff and administrative staff are invited to participate in these meetings.

The purpose of these meeting is to promote communication between the families and the residence by providing a forum for families to openly express concerns and to offer suggestions to improve service delivery. Topics that can be addressed include individual's rights & responsibilities, program operations, staffing, physical plant issues, recreation/vacation plans, state & agency policies and Arc membership.

The Program Management or Assistant Director prepares an agenda with input from the families, program staff, support staff and administrative staff. The Program Supervisor ensures completion of an attendance sheet and meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes is mailed to each family member and the original is kept on file at the program. In addition, is shared with the leadership of the department for follow up.

2.14.4 Agency Newsletter

The agency publishes various newsletters that are distributed to Arc members, provider agencies, volunteers, corporate sponsors and staff.

The purpose of the newsletters is to provide information to the community about agency events and accomplishments such as fund raising activities, new development and agency commendations. Many of our newsletters and informational flyers are distributed electronically. We ask that family members keep us apprised of any changes in email addresses.

2.14.5 Agency Website

The agency website can be accessed at www.thearcofsomerset.org. It provides information about residential, vocational, educational, and family support services. Information is also available regarding employment opportunities, upcoming events, annual planning, survey results, social media, and philanthropy.

3 Additional Programmatic Services

3.1 Behavior Support

The Arc of Somerset County employs Clinical Support Specialists who have academic backgrounds in psychology or other related fields.

A Clinical Support Specialist may assist the individual to attain self-regulation skills and to learn appropriate alternative behaviors by implementing Support Guidelines. Support Guidelines are recommended when an individual is experiencing significant difficulty in integrating into his/her home, work, family and community environments. This service is offered after a meeting of the individual's Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) results in agreement by all parties that development of a Support Guideline is desired. The assigned Clinical Support Specialist will then perform observations and interviews to determine the "purpose" of the behavior and to identify precipitating factors. The Support Guidelines incorporate ideas from the individual, his/her support staff, involved family and involved health professionals. Once the Support Guideline is developed, the Clinical Support Specialist will train all relevant staff. Training is done upon development of a guideline, within the initial training period of a new employee and then annually within the individual's residential and employment programs for all staff.

The Arc of Somerset County has its own Behavior Support Manual approved by the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, and Division of Developmental Disabilities. All Arc of Somerset County staff members working in a residential or day program are required to read the manual and sign an acknowledgement that the contents are understood. All staff receive training in Non-violent Physical Crisis Intervention, which is designed to avert or quickly de-escalate acting out behavior. The purpose of the course is to ensure the care, welfare, safety and security of all those involved in a behavior crisis. This training is provided within all new employees' orientation periods and is mandatory. Refreshers on this curriculum are offered annually for each program and as needed. The Arc of Somerset County is guided by Circulars put forth by the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

All behavioral approaches must emphasize positive behavior support and support of individuals in achieving their maximum potential and participation in valued roles in the community.

3.2 Employment Services

The Arc of Somerset County offers a variety of vocational and programming options designed to promote the best interests of each individual. The Department of Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Labor – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services fund these services.

Employment options range from closely supervised, assembly tasks to job placements in the community such as retail stores, restaurants, and corporations. The Arc of Somerset County maintains several programs, which focus on vocational training centers, located in Hillsborough (2), Bridgewater, and Branchburg. These centers offer the opportunity for individuals to earn an income and learn work responsibilities, enhance social, leisure, life skills, and pursue recreational and self-advocacy interest.

Services include vocational evaluation and assessment, skills training, job sampling, job placement, and follow along supports. The Arc of Somerset County partners with many companies and businesses to provide employment opportunities for individuals. In addition, The Arc offers day services for individuals who have decided to retire or who may need a slower paced program due to their age or type of disability.

An individual's work site or day program is determined by a recommendation from the individual's Interdisciplinary Team and approval of the Referral Review Committee.

3.3 Facility Maintenance

The Arc of Somerset County has a maintenance team to help preserve the safety, comfort, and attractiveness of our residences and day program sites. The program staff identifies the need for repairs and prepares work orders to the maintenance staff for follow up. Maintenance staff also conducts preventative maintenance inspections on a monthly basis to assure the safety and beautification of each Arc home and day program facility. Staff has access to emergency numbers should unforeseen circumstances arise. Limited resources may not always allow projects to be completed as quickly as we would like, but health and safety issues are addressed with urgency. The Arc of Somerset County also routinely submits grant applications to third party funders and Major Maintenance Requests to state funding partners to supplement these efforts.

3.4 Self Advocacy

The Arc of Somerset County recognizes the importance of self-advocacy as a right and a significant part of an individual's growth toward independence. As advocates, The Arc of Somerset County encourages

decision-making, free choice and individuality with all the individuals served by the agency regardless of their perceived abilities and challenges.

Individuals receiving services by The Arc of Somerset County have opportunities to participate in self-advocacy forums in various forms. Self-advocacy meetings provide an opportunity for the individuals served to learn and speak about their rights, choice, and personal growth. Participation at meetings is voluntary.

As a group, self-advocates have elections for officers to represent the entire group at internal and external trainings, committees and meetings. The group also interacts with the agency to inform quality initiatives such as surveys, use of language, and mission. The advisors of the self-advocacy group work closely with the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project for guidance and updates on state-wide advocacy functions.

3.5 Transportation Procedures

The Arc of Somerset County maintains vehicles at each residence for the transportation of house members. Transportation to agency work centers is provided primarily through a contract with Somerset County Transportation. In some instances, individuals are transported by the residence or the work program itself. These instances depend upon the available program resources and schedules and are not considered options for incoming referrals at this time. Due to insurance reasons, staff are not permitted to transport consumers in their personal vehicle without authorization from the department director. Residents are only allowed to ride in a vehicle driven by authorized individuals such as family, friend, or Arc of Somerset County staff. Upon request, The Arc may be able to transport family members to special agency events or medical appointments if they would otherwise be unable to attend. Such accommodations are subject to available resources.

The Fleet Manager is responsible for overseeing all agency vehicles regular maintenance for safe and efficient operations and maximum longevity. All agency vehicles contain safety equipment such as a fire extinguisher, first aid kit, spare tire, spill kit, and flares. Residents are required to remain seated and to wear seatbelts at all times while the vehicle is in motion. All staff must maintain a safe driving record with the Division of Motor Vehicles. The Human Resources Department regularly checks the driver's abstract of employees to ensure compliance with agency policies. Staff is required to complete defensive driving and mobility device securement training. Wheelchair accessible vehicles have lifts, wheelchair tie downs, and seatbelt cutters for emergency evacuation.

The Arc of Somerset County has a Safety Committee composed of staff and community members, including representatives from our insurance company. They meet at least quarterly, to review all accidents and any safety concerns brought to their attention. The committee offers safety recommendations on an ongoing basis to the agency and Board of Directors.

3.6 Quality Management

Specific activities of the Quality Department are geared toward the promotion of best practices in our service departments. Recognizing the need to continually change the delivery of service based on the changing needs of the individuals served, the Quality Department engages in researching and promoting current best practices and new initiative in the area of supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Quality Department is currently engaged in the following activities:

- Providing program departments with monthly analysis and quarterly trend reports of General Event Reports
- Increasing communication through the use of web-based communication system that is available to all staff members (Therap Services)
- Participating in various program audits to ensure compliance with Division of Developmental Disabilities, Local Fire Officials and other agencies
- Providing continuous staff training and best practices

- Assessing stakeholder satisfaction through various surveys and feedback tools.

The agency strategic plan places great emphasis on quality and outcomes management that will lead to enhanced quality in all departments. This plan reflects the agencies commitment to the individuals served and the need to continue to work to enhance the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

3.7 Agency Investigations

The decision to conduct an investigation regarding an incident of abuse, neglect, and or exploitation will be made by the Associate Executive Director and the Director of Quality. A swiftly implemented by an administrative team selected and directed by the Director of Quality. The results of an investigation will be shared internally on a “need to know basis” as authorized by the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. Within 5 business days of the close of the investigation, the Director of Quality will write a follow-up letter to the legal guardian. Department Director will implement any programmatic recommendations and ensure follow up immediately as outlined. The Department Director has 30 days to provide the Quality Director with documentation of any and all recommendations. Within 5 business days of the close of the investigation, the Department Director and/or the Assistant Director will follow up with the individual regarding the outcome of the investigation and document that the meeting took place. The Director of Clinical Services will meet with the individual as well to ensure their understanding of outcome as well as emotional or physical impact of the incident.

3.8 Staff Training & Development

The Arc of Somerset County provides a varied training curriculum through the joint efforts provided by the Quality Department Trainers as well as staff from Clinical Services. The pre-service modules are mandatory trainings for all Arc of Somerset County employees and include: Overview of Developmental Disabilities, Pre-Orientation, Sensitivity, Confidentiality, OSHA, Consumer Health, Medication Administration, Preventing Abuse, Wheelchair Securement and Neglect, CPR and First Aid. Employees working in service departments must have current American Red Cross CPR Certification status or they are not permitted to work with any of our Persons Served. This is a mandatory requirement. In addition to the mandatory trainings, the Trainer provides the employees with training in IHP development, Person Centered Training, Unusual Incident Report Writing, etc. The Agency Trainer is an active member of New Jersey Training Network and is approved by DDD to conduct the pre-service training class to all employees. .

4 Appendix: Selected Policies & Statements

4.1 Confidentiality

It is the policy of The Arc of Somerset County, in keeping with DDD regulations, that all information about the individuals served and their families be kept confidential. Its purpose is to protect the individual’s rights, which include privacy and personal dignity. All information and records about the individual served is to be handled in a responsible manner that precludes accessibility to unauthorized persons. No person may release information about the individual or his or her families/guardians to others including other family members, agencies or professionals, without prior written approval from the individual and/or guardian. Written approval is accomplished via a “Release of Information” form that states the specific information to be released, to whom this information may be released and the reason for the release. Information about your loved one may be shared internally only on a “need to know” basis and with representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities and licensing for oversight.

4.2 Grievance Procedure

The Arc of Somerset County is committed to ensuring that the rights of all individuals we serve are not violated. Therefore, we will provide the consumer with procedures to grieve circumstances and appeal agency decisions, which they deem in violation of their rights. These procedures can be pursued at any time by the consumer.

4.3 Family Members' Rights & Responsibilities

The Arc of Somerset County supports maintenance of positive and close family relationships. Family members have the right to maintain enriching family relationships with their relatives. Families are encouraged to participate in meetings concerning their loved one. Family members are also encouraged to become members of The Arc of Somerset County and to participate on various committees offered through the agency.

Parents and family members are responsible for following agency policies as specified in this manual with regards to visiting and calling the residences, confidentiality, physicians visits, medication administration, individual rights and responsibilities and time away from the residence. Parents and family members are encouraged to maintain open communication and a positive working relationship with the program staff and the other residents. Respectful, honest communications is expected between program staff and family/guardians. The Arc of Somerset County staff will work with family members to communicate information through a forum that will work best for them, phone calls, e-mail, and/or monthly reports. The Program Director should be contacted if concerns cannot be resolved with the Program Supervisor.

4.4 Visits/Calls to the Residence

4.4.1 Visits

Parents, guardians and family members are encouraged to visit their loved ones. Visitors are requested to check with the program staff in advance of the visit to assure that the individual will be home. Many homes develop their own house rules related to times people may visit and special circumstances such as sign in books. Barring any special circumstances, we ask family and friends to keep their visits between 9:00am and 9:00pm. Please try to stay within these time frames when you are returning your loved one from a home visit or outing. These measures help housemates live with one another amicably and reduce stress on the men and women who call our program home.

While visiting in the group home, family and friends should remember that the visit should be limited to the loved one's bedroom and the common areas of the home. Entering other's bedrooms is strictly prohibited for reasons of confidentiality and privacy. At NO time may you touch other residents beyond a normal greeting gesture. Similarly, questioning other residents with regard to their service, relationships, or personal interactions is not appropriate beyond the friendly inquiry and cannot be supported.

Guests are not permitted in the home without Arc staff present, except as specified in the resident's IHP. Visits should be planned to avoid conflict with the house routine.

4.4.2 Phone Calls

In consideration of the other residents of the home, it is requested that phone calls occur between the hours of 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM, unless otherwise specified. For reasons of safety, the program phone

cannot be tied up for long periods of time with personal calls – many of our consumers use cell phones. Please refrain from asking to speak with any other residents in the home while speaking with your family member. If you need to speak with staff members, please contact them via the program phone. Similarly, the relationships among adult housemates are complex and often require a great deal of support and time to reach mutually agreeable boundaries. To this end, we believe it helpful to alert staff to challenges and successes your loved one expresses with housemates so that the many sources of information a resident has to deal with are in agreement whenever possible. Supporting housemates in establishing trust with one another is a primary goal; individualized, confidential service within a group is also a requirement of our work. To this point, we will not be able to offer information regarding the service of any other housemate and cannot allow requesting reports of such from your family member or staff.

All visitors and callers should observe the general rules of courtesy, privacy, and dignity and respect in all regards to the individuals residing in the house and the staff working there.

4.5 Donations/Gifts

Gifts of cash, tips, and monetary or non-monetary gratuities to The Arc of Somerset County employees by individuals served and their families are not permitted. Gifts of nominal value may be permissible, at the discretion of director-level staff but in general must not exceed five dollars in value. Families wishing to contribute may make donations to the agency and are encouraged to do so. Monetary donations may be made by check, credit card, or cash.

4.6 Annual Appeal

Each year, The Arc of Somerset County initiates an Annual Appeal to provide our families and friends with the opportunity to make a difference through their donations. The Annual Appeal is designed to secure vital funding that will be used to support the programs and services that benefit the individuals with disabilities that we serve. Families are encouraged to participate in the Annual Appeal to the best of their ability. For more information we encourage you to visit our website's Foundation Page:

<http://www.thearcofsomerset.org/about/the-arc-foundation-of-somerset-county.html>

Additional information and opportunities for donations, philanthropy and planned giving can be discussed with our Director of Foundation and Public Relations at 908-658-3805.
