



The Arc of Somerset County
Guide to Residential Services

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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. A membership application is included in the back of this manual.

The Board of Directors

A volunteer Board of Directors comprised of up to 20 members, 50% 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.

A complete listing of Board committees is available in this manual and on the agency website. Please contact the Executive Director with questions regarding membership, committee participation, or donor opportunities.

Arc Board Committees

The following committees are a valuable resource to The Arc of Somerset County. Committees consist of agency personnel, families, individuals served and volunteers. Individuals and families that are new to the agency are strongly encouraged to become an integral part of the various committees. Each committee is open to sharing and receiving new ideas for continuous improvement within The Arc of Somerset County.

Finance Committee
Human Resources and Compensation Committee
Governance Committee
Quality Management Committee
Development Committee
Safety Committee
& Other Ad Hoc committees

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 #. 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 Director of Children and Family Services at (908) 725-8544 x628.

All referrals to The Arc of Somerset for residential services are reviewed and considered by the agency's Referral Review Committee. The Committee functions to assure that The Arc of Somerset County is able to provide appropriate and quality supports to all individuals accepted for residential services. Members of the Committee will review all relevant referral information from DDD, including current medical and psychological evaluations, and will want to meet with the individual and their parents/guardians to answer any questions they may have and to obtain additional information if needed.

Our review process also consists of visits to the prospective programs during evenings and weekends and at least one overnight visit. As many of our residential opportunities are in group settings, the input of persons served, staff, and family is critical to making the right choice for both the individual and the group.

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 statewide to assist in your efforts to live in Somerset County.



ACHIEVE WITH US!

Join The Arc of Somerset County in membership.

**2011 will bring a new logo, new tagline, and a renewed
commitment to the mission of the Arc Movement.**

**Become a member of The Arc and lend your voice to a network of advocates dedicated to ensuring
quality services are available for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.**

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Member Renewing Member

Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization name (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Individual / Family Membership - \$25 Association or Non-profit - \$250
 Self-Advocate - \$10 Corporation - \$1,000

Payment by: Cash Check / Money Order Visa/MC AmEx

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Please make checks payable to: The Arc of Somerset County. Arc membership dues are tax deductible.

Send this form with your dues payment to:

The Arc of Somerset County
141 South Main St, Manville, NJ 08835

Questions: Please Tara Abbott at 908-725-8544 x610 or via email at taraa@thearcofsomerset.org

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 115 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.

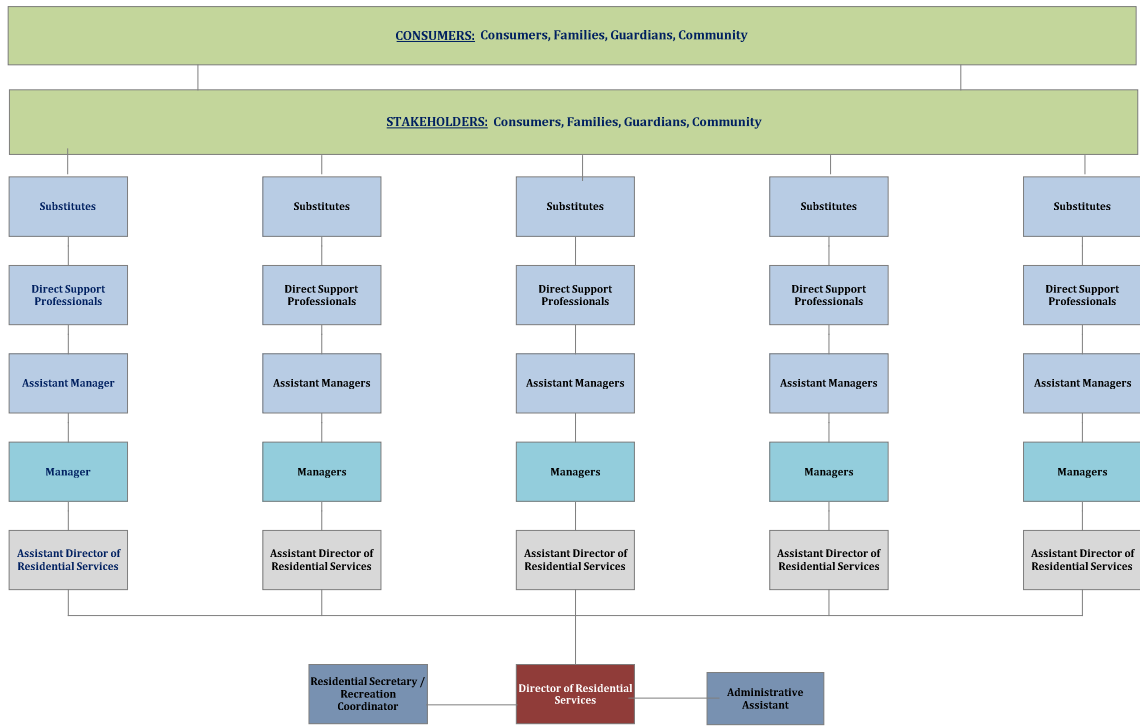
Programs and Respite Care Services.

- **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 on going support. Staff administer medications and provide 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 ensuing 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.

Organizational Chart for Residential Services



INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

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
- Restriction on pets 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.

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. A monthly calendar will be sent to you by the residential program staff to allow you to plan for family activities around this schedule. 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.

Personal Possessions

Whenever possible, an individual's own personal funds will be used to purchase toiletries, clothing and other decorative/recreational items such as computers, DVDs, CDs, and televisions. Family may wish to supplement funds for purchases for their loved ones. When a resident served by The Arc of Somerset County has no funds available for the purpose of purchasing personal possessions, the agency will assist the individual as it is able by funding a reasonable amount to meet their essential needs.

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 resident's personal possessions, the individual should be present and fully informed prior to actions taken by staff.

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 held each Monday evening
- Friday activity Night- An Arc of Somerset County sponsored activities including art classes, yoga, music classes and bingo
- Excursion club trips- arc sponsored trips that have included, Medieval Times, Camden aquarium, bowling, Point Pleasant
- Special events- arc sponsored events that have included, Talent shows, Hawaiian Carnival, Plays, Michael Jackson night.

There are 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>

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 nurses assist in the monitoring of the medical, psychological, visual, dental, and related health care needs of the residents as needed or, in the case of some homes provide coverage during business hours. The nurses' 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.

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.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Protected Health Information (PHI)** is any individually identifiable health information. Protected Health Information is confidential and the procedures of the Confidentiality Policy and Procedures are to be adhered to.
2. This policy encompasses all means of communicating (written, oral, and electronic) PHI. This includes, but is not limited to: copies of records, phone calls, personal conversations, faxes, and emails.
3. PHI will be released:
 - A. To the consumer,
 - B. As specifically permitted or required by the HIPAA Privacy Rule (refer to DDD Circulars #53,53A, and 53B), and
 - C. Upon approval by a Program Administrator, in response to a written request. The Program Administrator can only give approval after authorization is granted.
4. PHI used for treatment, payment, or health care operations does not require consent or authorization. Authorization is required for all other disclosures of PHI. An authorization shall be required before the release of psychotherapy notes that are not included in the consumer record. The following individual(s) may authorize the release of information:
 - A) A consumer who is over the age of 18 and who does not have a court appointed guardian.
 - B) The consumer's legal guardian.
 - C) The consumer's parents if the consumer is a minor.

The authorization will include:

 - A) Consumer's name
 - B) An expiration date;
 - C) Brief description of the information disclosed;
 - D) Purpose of the disclosure;
 - E) Name, address, phone number of person requesting the information; and
 - F) Name and signature of person granting authorization.
5. Only the minimum amount of necessary information will be released.
6. Each department will maintain a Disclosure of Confidentiality/Protected Health Information Log (attached) that documents the disclosure of PHI. The log will include;
 - A) Consumer name;
 - B) Program name;
 - C) Date of request of information;
 - D) Date information was released;
 - E) Name, Title, Address of individual requesting information;
 - F) Description of information disclosed;
 - G) Purpose of disclosure;
 - H) Name, Title of person granting authorization to release information;
 - I) Initials of staff giving the information.
7. During pre-orientation, the Protected Health Information Policy and Procedures will be reviewed with staff. All staff will be required to sign a statement indicating that they read and understand the policy.
8. Volunteers are defined as any non- paid person involved in activities for The Arc of Somerset.

Volunteers will have access to consumer information on a “need to know” basis. The policy will be reviewed with the volunteer once their application is approved. The volunteer will sign a statement indicating that they read and understand the policy. This information will be maintained in the Department in which the volunteer is assigned to.

Physician's Visits

The Arc of Somerset County maintains policies and procedures related to the health and safety needs of persons served. The primary care provider is responsible for conducting evaluations, ordering tests, and prescribing medications. It is imperative that The Arc of Somerset County staff attend all medical/psychiatric and other appointments in order to ensure all agency required documents are completed and agency staff have an opportunity to communicate. Family members and guardians may attend visits and certainly, if a resident becomes ill on a home visit medical care should be sought and the group home staff notified that a medical appointment took place. The family member will obtain documentation from the health care provider regarding the nature of the visit and provide it to the staff. This documentation assures that proper care is given and follow up care is provided.

The Program Management team or LPN is responsible for scheduling appointments. Should a family member or guardian wish to do so, we ask that they coordinate the date with the management team. An Appointment Validation Form is filled out at the time of each appointment and signed by the health care provider. This form is maintained in the Residence and Day Program when appropriate.

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.

Specialized Services

The Arc of Somerset County has a Clinical Services Department consisting of 5 licensed practical nurses, 2 registered nurses, an RN nurse supervisor and four support specialists. When funding allows, we also have the services of a consulting chaplain who assists individuals with issues of grief and loss and questions on spirituality. 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.

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.

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 a 2-day in-house Arc of Somerset County medication administration course along with a bi-annual 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 need 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.

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 labeled packaging.

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.

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 and to confirm who they want the representative payee to be for the individual's benefits.

A representative payee may be any person or organization approved by Social Security to serve that capacity, such as the individual, parent or The Arc of Somerset County Payeeship Program. The representative payee is responsible for receiving the individual's funds and for disbursing the funds to the individual and/or in payment of their financial obligations.

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.

Fee for Service

Every individual receiving residential services through the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities is legally responsible to personally contribute to their cost of care and maintenance (N.J.A.C. 10:46). Determination of the ability to pay and agreement to pay is part of the DDD's eligibility process for individuals seeking residential placement. On September 8, 1998, the state implemented a fee for service process based on formula developed by the NJ Department of the Treasury. Currently, the payment to the state amounts to about 75% of an individual's "disposable income" for most residents. The DDD has contracted with a private collection agency, which is called Maximus, to collect the fees on their behalf. The individual or the Representative Payee must provide Maximus with specific financial information. The individual's required contribution to care will be based on their wages, and/or unearned income such as federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI). For more information concerning Maximus please visit the DHS DDD website at:

http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/documents/Documents%20for%20Web/C2CAdult_3.10.pdf

Although The Arc of Somerset County neither collects nor receives the money from this fee for service, our staff is available to assist individuals, their families and/or their payees in complying with the state regulations including completion of necessary forms and to assure that our residents retain the Maximum amount allowed.

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.

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. The guardian must circle exactly what they are funds they are entrusting to the agency on the form. 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.

Department of Housing & Urban Development (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).

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.

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.

Communication Systems

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.

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. Topics addressed include but are not limited to consumer updates, maintenance issues, training, IHP/IDT meetings, agency policy & procedures, personnel issues, program assessments, documentation and financial issues. Some staff meetings are designated for in-service trainings such as medication review, incident reporting, practices of crisis techniques and IHP tracking.

A pre-printed agenda is available as a guide for each meeting. The Program Supervisor can solicit additional input from program staff, support staff, or administrative staff. The Program Supervisor is responsible to ensure that an attendance sheet and meeting minutes are completed. If a staff misses a

staff meeting, they must review and sign off on the meeting minutes. A copy of the meeting minutes is filed with the monthly report and the original is kept at the program.

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.

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.

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.

Notification System

The Arc of Somerset County subscribes to ParentReach, an emergency notifications service that allows us to reach our service recipient parents and guardians, as well as our staff and related parties, more quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency, closure or agency update.

How it works: In an emergency, a member of our staff will call into the ParentReach emergency notification system to record an informational message. The broadcast will begin immediately and will call you within approximately three minutes. If your line is busy, or your phone rings but you do not answer, ParentReach will retry every three minutes up to a maximum of ten times. It will consider the message delivered when it connects to a live person or to an answering/recording device. You will recognize this informational call as coming from us by our Caller ID: "908-725-8544" or the ParentReach Caller ID: "411-411-4111."

Be sure to answer the call as you would normally, and then remain silent. The system will begin delivering our message only after first hearing a response and then a one-two second silence. If your answering machine picks up, the system will listen for the end of your outgoing announcement, and then after a second or two of silence will begin delivering our message.

Please take this opportunity to provide us with your contact information so that we can enter it into the ParentReach system. *ParentReach does not sell or rent personal information, including personally identifiable information, to unrelated third parties.*

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Christopher Corvino at 908-725-8544.



Registration Form

Name: _____

RE: Consumer Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Preferred email address: _____

Preferred cell phone: _____ Preferred land line: _____

Additional phone #: _____ (if applicable)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

To sign up for alerts and notifications through the ParentReach system,
please return this completed form to:
The Arc of Somerset County, 141 South Main Street, Manville, NJ 08835

Visit us online at www.thearcofsomerset.org for additional agency news and announcements.

Monthly Reports/Quarterly Financial Statements

At the annual IHP Meeting, all guardians will be offered the option to receive reports that include information on IHP progress of goals, medical information, financial information and recreational opportunities provided. Reports are available on either a monthly or quarterly basis.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES

Behavior Support

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

A Behavior Specialist may intervene to assist the individual in achieving self-regulation and appropriate behaviors by implementing Behavioral Guidelines or an Individual Behavior Support Program. This intervention is done after meeting with the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) developing tracking sheets, analyzing the data and developing a plan or guidelines to best support the needs of the individual.

The Arc of Somerset County has its own Behavior Support Manual approved by the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, 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 Behavioral Support Techniques and Crisis Intervention. These trainings are done on a regular basis and IDT meetings are held when there are plans or guidelines in place. The Arc of Somerset County is guided by Circulars put forth by DDD.

We have a Behavior Support Committee, which meets quarterly. It is chaired by a behavior specialist of The Arc of Somerset County and is comprised of Arc of Somerset County staff and community volunteers consisting of psychologists, special educators, and mental health practitioners. This committee is approved by the State Division of Developmental Disabilities and complies with their regulations. It acts as an advisory body to the Executive Director in matters of behavior support. The approval of this Committee as well as the Human Rights Committee may be required before the implementation of an Individual Behavior Support Program.

All behavioral supports must emphasize positive interventions, empowerment, and support of individuals in achieving their maximum potential, full value in their lives and inclusion in the community.

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.

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.

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 quarterly 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.

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 statewide advocacy functions.

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.

Quality Management

Specific activities of the Quality Department is 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:

- Supporting the Self-Advocacy Committee that is run by it's members
- 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

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.

Quality Management Committee

Formerly known as the PPR (Program Planning and Review Committee), this committee works to influence the quality of services across the organization. The committee members consist of agency staff members, family members, persons who receive services, Board members and other stakeholders. The committee meets every other month. The focus of the committee is to:

- Analyze General Event Reports to establish trends and to develop strategies to improve services
- Creation and result review of agency surveys for various stakeholders
- Assist in the preparation/planning for agency inspections/reviews for Service Departments as well as analysis of results
- Review of new training ideas and or updates to trainings
- Focus Group development, deployment, result analysis and follow-up
- Review of Strategic Plan and process
- Create, critique, deploy and analyze all surveys

On-Going Internal & External Satisfaction Surveys

Customer satisfaction is priority at The Arc of Somerset County and we continually strive to assess and gather information regarding the services we provide to improve on quality and develop strategies to increase best practices.

This chart demonstrates the types of internal and external satisfaction surveys that are launched at The Arc of Somerset County.

	Name of Survey	Department	Frequency
1	Person Served Satisfaction Surveys	Residential Services and Employment Services	Annual
2	Family and Friends Satisfaction Survey	Residential Services	Twice a year
3	Family and Friends Satisfaction Survey	Employment Services	Annual
4	Customer Satisfaction Survey	Employment Services	Annual
5	Employer Satisfaction Survey	Employment Services	Annual
6	In-Home Respite Satisfaction Survey	Family Support	Annual
7	DDD Family Stipend Survey	Family Support	Annual
8	My Time Siblings Making Connections - Parent and Participant Survey	Family Support	Annual
9	Caring for Mothers and Others Survey	Family Support	Annual
10	Kids Night Out Survey	Family Support	Annual
11	Community Living Support Satisfaction Survey	Family Support	Annual
12	Camp Jotoni Camper Satisfaction Survey	Camp Jotoni	Annual
13	Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families Day Care and Preschool Satisfaction Survey	Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families	Annual
14	Early Intervention Program Satisfaction Survey	Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families	Annual
15	After School and Saturday Respite Program Parent Satisfaction Survey	Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families	Annual
16	Parent and Child Together Program Satisfaction Survey	Parent and Child Together (PACT)	Annual
17	Arc of Somerset County Employee Satisfaction Survey	Quality and Human Resources Department	Annual
18	Board of Directors Survey	Executive Staff	Annual
19	Arc of Somerset County Training Survey	Quality Department	Conclusion of every Arc of Somerset Training
20	Funder Survey	Residential, Employment and Jerry Davis Center for Children and Families	Annual

Focus Groups

In January 2010, two Focus Groups were held and the meetings were representative of each of the serviced departments. The group introduced themselves by first name only and their identity has been kept in the strictest of confidence. Two questions were posed to the group: What are we doing well and what needs improvement? The areas of concern were organized in thematic groupings. The Quality Management Committee then reviewed every issue that was identified by the Focus Groups. Our goal is to follow up with the participants while identifying strategies to address their concerns. Some of the major points of discussion included:

- Utilize the website as a point of information for the families/guardians. Autopilot cultural piece of our agency.
- Communicate often to give people a better feeling of being connected.
- Inform or update families on job positions and contact numbers

- Develop a Residential Handbook
- Ask at our IHP meetings if the families and guardians would like to receive monthly goal documentation

The Department Directors and Executive staff were very receptive and excited to have an opportunity to address the issues and feedback to the Focus Group by responding with departmental letters while providing sustainable outcomes that issues are being addressed. A point that was presented was the importance of each the Focus Group to read each Director’s individual response, in their own words, will allow them to feel connected and that it is critical to continue the dialogue.

Actions that were discussed within the letters written by the Program Directors included:

- Give a perspective on the staff vacancy rate from the Human Resource Department data collection
- Share IHP information that is available within Residential Services
- Define client work opportunities in Employment Services
- Introduce what the CARF process to families
- Outline the importance of utilizing the Special Circumstance Form
- Communicate that Arc of NJ website as the lion share of our advocacy and budgetary news/updates
- Share Success Stories

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.

Staff Training & Development

The Arc of Somerset County - Training Curriculum	
Advanced Mobility	HR Requirements
Agency Overview	Incident Reporting
Arc Medication	IHP Training
Arc Meds Recertification	Lifting and Transferring
Consumer Health	Non Violent Crisis Prevention
CPR Initial and Recertification	Orientation – Privacy
Critical Crossroads	Orientation – Sensitivity
Danielle’s Law	OSHA Initial and Recertification
DDD Medication	Overview of Developmental Disabilities
Defensive Driving	Personal Care
First Aid Initial and Recertification	Preventing Abuse and Neglect
Gentle Teaching	Support Guidelines
Heart Healthy Diet	Wheelchair Securement
	Therap Services

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, Gentle Teaching, 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. In the past fiscal year, we awarded over 1600 training certificates to our employees.

APPENDIX: SELECTED POLICIES & STATEMENTS

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.

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.

- a. If a consumer or a representative of the consumer believes that his/her rights have been violated, he/she has the opportunity to express this grievance.
- b. The consumer or representative of the consumer will notify the Program Manager of their grievance. If the grievance involves the Program Manager, the consumer or representative of the consumer will notify the Residential Assistant Director of Consumer Services and/or The Director of Residential Services.
- c. If the grievance cannot be resolved at this level, the consumer or representatives of the consumer has the option to call an IDT meeting to include some or all of the following individuals: the consumer, representative of the consumer, Case Manager, Guardian, Program Manager, Vocational Manager, Staff, Family, Associate Executive Director, and any other persons involved in the grievance, as determined by the consumer and/or representative of the consumer.
- d. If the grievance cannot be resolved at this level, the Executive Director will be notified and will take action.
- e. If the grievance cannot be resolved within the Agency, a consumer and/or her representative can contact the Office of Public Advocate or Community Law Project for legal advice and/or file a grievance with the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation fairly and promptly within the service delivery system.

Ways and Means to Maintain Consumer Awareness of Their Rights to Grieve Circumstances and Appeal Agency Decisions.

1. Include as topic in:
 - a) The consumer's annual IHP Meeting
 - b) House Meetings

- c) IDT Meetings
 - d) Staff Meetings
2. Consumer generated House Rules can be revised at anytime as outlined in the House Rules Policy.
 3. If at any time consumer issues or information comes to the staffs' attention indicating they could benefit from Advocacy involvement, the staff will notify the Program Manager or a Residential Administrator as indicated, who will be responsible to follow-up (i.e., with an IDT Meeting, etc)

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.

VISITS/CALLS TO THE HOME

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 can not 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.

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 can not 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.

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. Checks should be payable to The Arc of Somerset County and forwarded to the main office at: 141 S. Main Street, Manville, NJ 08835, Attn: Development Department. Should you have questions about making a monetary contribution to The Arc of Somerset County including participation in planned giving, please contact the Development Department at 908-725-8544.

Monetary donations made to The Arc of Somerset County are tax-deductible and may be designated for use in a specific program of your choice. If families are interested in partnering more closely with their service program, please see a program administrator for suggestions regarding needed items, parties, outings, etc.