

ANNUAL REPORT 20



Piecing Together the COVID Puzzle

ARRM at-a-Glance

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A Message From OUR CEO

2020 was supposed to be the year of celebration. At ARRM, we prepared to celebrate our 50th anniversary. As a country, we were ready to laud the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As these milestones came and went and celebratory plans shifted as a result of COVID-19, we turned our focus, attention, and admiration towards those that make our organization, the ADA legislation, and these milestones what they are. We also recognize the valuable role we all play together, like individual pieces of a puzzle coming together to create one single image.

During the past year we have all weathered a tremendous storm that is unprecedented in my lifetime. ARRM members were resilient during this time in our history and were proactive and creative as they worked toward solutions in how they support the people they serve. I am so proud to lead an organization whose members, when faced with huge challenges, step up and dig deep to keep the people you support and the staff who support them safe. What you have done and continue to do is remarkable.



“Every hurdle is an opportunity to jump higher and the disability services industry jumps together.”

Early in the pandemic, ARRM launched a “Heroes Work Here” recognition effort, producing and shipping our member organizations yard signs that they could proudly display outside of their corporate offices and HCBS facilities across the state. As an organization, we refused to allow the contributions and sacrifices made by your Direct Support Professionals and all provider staff go unrecognized and our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the dedicated working professionals who helped support and guide individuals with disabilities through some very scary moments.

The future ahead is bright - for our organization, our disability services family, and our world. At ARRM, we will continue to adjust the services and opportunities we provide to respond to the virtual world we now live in, and we will continue to advocate for your DSPs, our providers and for everyone that relies on their care and support.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Schettle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Schettle
Chief Executive Officer
ARRM

Communications

ARRM welcomed a new Communications Director to the team in January and was immediately tasked with driving a number of ARRM's existing communications endeavors forward, expanding ARRM's reach through new channels and opportunities, and adjusting it all quickly as a pandemic raged on and ARRM members frantically searched for the most important and up-to-date information on the industry.

PR Campaign

In January, ARRM and the Best Life Alliance kicked off a statewide public relations campaign to shed light on the low wages paid to Direct Support Professionals and the impact it has on industry workforce shortages. To assist in the campaign, ARRM engaged the services of Goff Public, a public relations firm located in St. Paul, to help lead the creation and execution of the campaign's strategy. Through a robust social media and local media outreach strategies, as well as the creation of a stationary exhibit housed in the State Capitol, the Best Life Alliance campaign ramped up pressure on state legislators to correct wage gaps between DSPs and other similarly skilled professions. During the campaign, the BLA's Facebook following grew 38%, while reaching more than 190,000 people.

The average hourly wage of a DSP is \$12.75, 17% less than jobs requiring similar skills and experience



The 'Raise the Wage' campaign used social media and local media to grow awareness around uncompetitive wages in disability services.

Outreach and Growth

As ARRM members became busier as a result of COVID-19, ARRM shifted to a data-driven communications approach. Email communication became more regular, with Monday, Wednesday and Friday email blasts pushing out the most up-to-date information from DHS and MDH to all ARRM members and staff. ARRM's social media channels also saw an enormous uptick in 2020, as staff re-envisioned the tool's role in ARRM communication strategy, pushing desirable content more regularly.

ARRM Facebook Page

	2019	2020	% Change
Page Likes	2026	2993	48%
Page Reach*	15,002	32,939	120%
Engagement*	521	1,190	128%
Posts*	13	46	254%

*Monthly Averages

New Resources for Members

In March, ARRM launched a new member resource website, www.ARRMCovid19.com. As information from government agencies, private partners, and members became available, ARRM's top priority was to create an easy-to-use website where this information could be organized. As ARRM kicked off its new webinar series 'Q&A with DHS (and MDH)', the website would also house past calls, as well as the most recent calls Q&A transcripts.



Launched in April, ARRM Covid19.com has 9,871 visits from 7,112 unique visitors, accessing 16,793 pages in 2020.

Events & Education

It is no surprise that ARRM in-person events and educational workshops did not go as originally planned. Coming off an exciting year of new programming and reimagined pillar events, we had high hopes of growing even bigger in 2020. Almost immediately following Disability Services Day at the Capitol, COVID-19 quickly halted in-person events, including forcing the cancellation of the ARRM Annual Conference and Leadership Conference.

Disability Services Day at the Capitol

Before the true breadth and impact of COVID-19 was known, dedicated disability advocates descended upon the State Capitol for our annual advocacy rally – Disability Services Day at the Capitol. In 2020, this event saw one of its largest attendances ever, with more than 1,100 self-advocates, family members, and staff coming to hear from rally speakers, such as Governor Tim Walz, Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, and House Speaker Melissa Hortman. Attendees also met with state legislators one-on-one to discuss the issues facing individuals with disabilities and the dedicated staff that support them. In total, more than 170 legislators heard from advocates about the importance of supporting Direct Support Professionals and disability services.

'Q&A with DHS & MDH' Calls

To respond to the growing pandemic, ARRM teamed with staff at DHS (and eventually MDH) to offer a new member benefit - a weekly call with state agencies to ask the questions impacting their daily routines and get answers in real-time. The inaugural call on March 18, 2020 saw more than 700 ARRM and MOHR members tune in to get vital information on the raging pandemic, the impact of the then-recently-announced business closures, and hear suggestions on how to adjust their business operations to respond to the "new normal."

As more information became available regarding health best practices and PPE, ARRM invited MDH to join the weekly calls and provide additional information applicable to their agency. By the end of 2020, 37 calls took place, each offering critical information from a dozen panelists, maintaining an average of 265 attendees each week.

Online Offerings

With the second cohort of ALI attendees having only a single opportunity to connect in-person this year, the remaining workshops were held via Zoom, all with a focus of remote engagement and participation.

Throughout the year, ARRM also hosted several professional development opportunities, including virtual webinars on crisis communication, adapting to online fundraising and events, and "Developing Grit: Pursuing Purpose and Passion. ARRM's fall Business and Finance Forum also succumb to in-person cancellation, but the scheduled sessions moved forward as planned, spreading out more than a dozen speakers over two days, in a virtual format. Hundreds of members tuned into sessions about critical COVID-19-related provisions from government agencies, the upcoming legislative session, recruiting and retention tactics, financial impacts and crisis, and more.

Legislative

As news headlines changed with current events around the globe, so did the legislative process in 2020. Often breaking with its traditional “deliberate pace”, important pieces of state and federal law moved through their respective legislatures to respond to the year’s top stories - the pandemic, racial tension, and natural disasters, just to name a few. For disability services, we witnessed these issues play a deciding role in our legislative priorities eventual success or defeat.

State Policy

With public access to the Capitol halting in mid-March and both the House and Senate turning to remote hearings and floor sessions, advocates were forced to find new ways to ensure that their priorities made it to the finish line. Going into the 2020 session, ARRM’s priorities included:

- Building upon the success of 2019 and the Competitive Workforce Factor by making additional adjustments that would positively impact the wages of Direct Support Professionals
- Pass a much needed rate increase for ICF/DD facilities and adjust the Services During the Day rate for individuals accessing ICF support services
- Pass a robust policy bill focused on making sensible regulatory reforms to help providers manage the workforce crisis

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no additional spending that was not directly related to COVID-19 relief or management of the pandemic was appropriated by the legislature, however, we were able to get all of the priorities in our policy bill passed during the first special session. Those included:

- Extension of the 5th bed waiver through December 31, 2020
- Adjusting the timeline for the initial 45-day planning meeting for services that are not provided daily
- Allow for the determination of competency for items in an individual’s CSSP addendum to someone beside the Designated Coordinator

In addition to our work with the state legislature, much of our focus in 2020 was directed to work with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health. On March 20th, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 20-12, Preserving Access to Human Services Programs During the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency. This Executive Order provided the Commissioner of Human Services the ability to provide flexibility to providers for certain rules and regulations. Waivers or modifications that had the most direct impact on members included:

- Relaxing of initial and annual training hourly requirements
- Halt on fingerprinting requirements for background studies for new employees
- Allowance of remote supports for certain services

Federal Policy

ARRM also had a heightened focus on federal policy in 2020, engaging through our membership with ANCOR on supporting their national efforts in providing relief for Home and Community-Based Service providers. Some of the biggest accomplishments include:

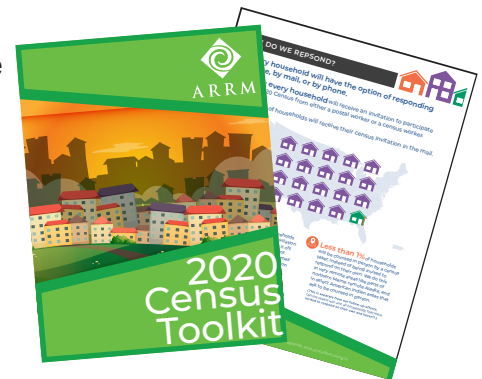
- Direct payments of up to two percent of 2019 revenue to Medicaid providers through the Provider Relief Fund
- Inclusion of language that allows states to authorize a new service that would allow Direct Support Professionals to be reimbursed when supporting individuals during short-term hospital visits in the CARES Act.

Grassroots Advocacy

A fast-paced virtual legislative environment and possible budget constraints certainly presented 2020 with numerous challenges. Despite the presence of COVID-19, ARRM and members made it their mission to maintain a high level of advocacy and grassroots engagement.

After Minnesota went into lockdown, we focused our efforts on creating advocacy kits and other online opportunities to engage.

- **Census Toolkit:** This toolkit was created to promote the importance of participating in the Census. Enumeration takes place every ten years and everyone deserves to be counted. Individuals with disabilities mark a highly undercounted population. The creation of this toolkit was to encourage all to participate in the Census and provide the necessary tools to do so.
- **Door Hangers:** For the 2020 Election, we designed updated door hangers outlining ARRM's overall goals and priorities going into 2021. The hangers were designed to be hung outside on front doors so when candidates would go door knocking, they would see an outline of ARRM's mission. We also created a section on the back for individuals and organizations to list their own priorities. ARRM also mailed over 500 door hangers directly to candidates in Minnesota.
- **Legislator Biography Guide:** After the final 2020 Election results were in, we compiled information on all new elected officials and produced a biography guide. The goal of this project was to educate all on the background of incoming legislators and assist members in establishing new connections.
- **Virtual Candidate Forums:** ARRM was pleased to host six virtual candidate forums, giving association members and members of the public an opportunity to ask disability service-related questions to candidates running for state house and state senate in districts 7, 14, 23, 25, 44, and 56.



ARRM Census Toolkit



Election Candidate Door Hangers

Membership & Financials

Growth

New member benefits and events started in 2019 and offered again in 2020 allowed ARRM to remain attractive as a trade association. In 2020, ARRM's membership grew by 2.5%, adding four new members. The IRS tax status of ARRM's membership remained similar to previous years, with 44% of members self-identifying as non-profits, while 56% identifying as for-profit.

Member Engagement

With the world rapidly changing around them, ARRM members sought out new opportunities to engage with the association, but with time commitments that fit with their more hectic schedules. In March, ARRM's leadership made the decision to transition all committee business to Zoom. Despite the lack of in-person engagement, most ARRM committees experienced an uptick in interest when the 2020-21 committee application period opened in early Summer 2020.

Financials

As most non-profits struggled due to decreased fundraising opportunities and changes in existing funding streams, ARRM weathered the COVID storm by making strategic cuts to the 2020 operating budget and acquiring a PPP forgivable loan.

With events being cancelled and the revenue associated with sponsorships and registration evaporating, ARRM's finance committee worked quickly to draft a revised 2020 budget forecast that accounted for these unforeseen changes. In total, budgeted expenses were decreased 22.5% to help offset lost event revenue.

Membership Dues Revenue

	2018	2019	2020
Membership Revenue	\$1,193,644	\$1,195,840	\$1,242,000
Operating Revenue	\$1,548,938	\$1,610,790	\$1,380,000

ARRM Profit/Loss Summary

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenue	\$1,444,199	\$1,423,475	\$1,521,185	\$1,548,938	\$1,517,882	\$1,343,411
Expenses	\$1,352,900	\$1,425,828	\$1,514,795	\$1,703,303	\$1,473,696	\$1,245,028

Research, Analysis and Policy

While events were cancelled and legislation was derailed due to COVID, the need for data and analysis kept ARRM's Research, Analysis and Policy (RAP) Division quite busy in 2020. The year began by analyzing the results of the Case for Inclusion survey, announcing the kick-off of the National Core Indicators survey in Minnesota, and releasing information to help our members know what to expect during the rest of the year, as rate-banding came to an end and the new Competitive Workforce Factor went into effect.

Data-Driven Guidance

As COVID-19 ramped up, understanding the impact on disability services in real-time became a top priority for ARRM. In response, we conducted numerous surveys to assess the impacts on the industry's finances and workforce, which have been extremely difficult.

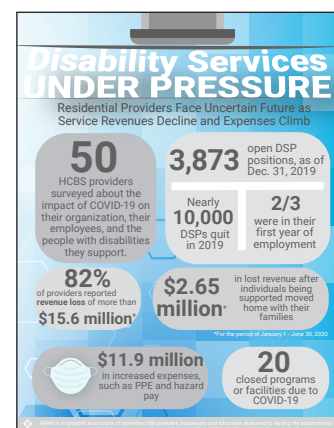
Consistent with national surveys, ARRM found that the existing pressure felt by direct support workforce before the pandemic was only amplified as the virus cast a cloud of uncertainty over the industry as PPE remained in short supply, day service providers were forced to close, and DSPs feared for their own safety, as well as that of their families. Provider organizations have had to navigate significant increases in expenses to support their clients and staff, and in many cases endure catastrophic drops in revenue.

But despite the pandemic, RAP also carried on with other important work. Data from the Department of Human Services (DHS) on the use of assistive technology was updated. The Alternative Payment Model Workgroup, which is co-sponsored by the Financial Resources and Service Innovations Committees, continued its important work of studying value-based payment models from other states and compiling lists of dos and don'ts for what we hope to see in Minnesota at some point.

The pandemic has made this work more relevant as we formulate a legislative agenda that aims to deflect deficit-cutting solutions away from disability services. The workgroup also made great progress in its charge to educate ARRM's members on this subject, largely through a presentation during the virtual Business and Finance Forum in November.



*2019 Industry Report,
published in May 2020*



*Infographic created with member
survey data, used to illustrate
financial constraints due to COVID
to DHS*