



For Immediate Release  
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### **The Arc Wisconsin Excited for Partners with Business to Launch to Increase Hiring of People with Disabilities**

**Madison, WI** – [The Arc Wisconsin](#) and disability advocates from across the state are watching Governor Walker sign Partners with Business into law today – a unique piece of legislation which has the potential to increase hiring of people with disabilities throughout rural and urban areas of Wisconsin.

The law was written by Representative John Macco in partnership with Senator Dan Feyen with guidance from The Arc Wisconsin and Wisconsin BPDD after legislators learned about the great success of Partners with Business in Dane County. The County has seen savings of 25% when compared to traditional models of on-the-job supports for people with disabilities. The Partners with Business bill passed both houses of the legislature with unanimous support.

“Partners with Business can work in any community because it supports a private business to do the job coaching for the worker with a disability,” says Lisa Pugh, Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin. “In many areas there aren’t enough professional job coaches to hire or a business finds a human services professional to be intrusive in the workplace. Partners with Business is the perfect fit.”

The Partners with Business law creates a Partners with Business pilot with a small amount of time-limited funding (\$75,000/year for 2 years) to help businesses statewide learn how to implement PWB. The PWB model supports an employer to enhance the responsibility (and sometimes even the wage) of an existing employee who then becomes a job coach to a co-worker with a disability.

“No other state is doing something like Partners with Business and we are guaranteeing success,” says Pugh. “This law requires reporting on hours worked and wages in addition to the reduction in public spending on employment supports for workers participating in the project by a minimum of 25 percent.”

The law requires creation of a comprehensive Partners with Business technical assistance system and will provide targeted coaching to up to 10 grantees that can include schools, private employers, Family Care and IRIS agencies or employer providers.

Find more information on the law and related materials about Partners with Business on The [Arc Wisconsin's website](https://arcwi.org/2018/04/13/partners-with-business-employment-in-wisconsin/): <https://arcwi.org/2018/04/13/partners-with-business-employment-in-wisconsin/>

### **Employment Data in Wisconsin:**

The current community-based employment rates for people with disabilities in Wisconsin are critically low. According to [a survey](#) published in 2017, only 15% of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have a paid job in the community, while many individuals are either unemployed or work in sheltered or facility-based environments. 41% who are not working reported a strong desire to work in the community.

The most recent [Department of Health Services data](#) shows an overall increase in the last three years (2014-2016) in the number of working age individuals with intellectual disabilities in Family Care/Partnership and IRIS programs who are not working (53.0% to 56.7%) and no improvement for people with physical disabilities (95.6% to 95.5%). Overall the percentage of non-working persons in these programs has risen from 69.2% to 71.9% over the last three years.

*The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.*

Editor's Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.

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