

The Arc of Texas advocates for policy that moves Texas forward in its treatment and community-inclusion of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

## WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy empowers people with IDD, their families, and allies to share their stories with local, state, and federal governments. By raising awareness of challenges and needs, advocates influence policies that improve the lives of Texans with IDD.

## WHAT IS THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE?

- The Texas Legislature is the state's lawmaking body, responsible for creating, amending, and repealing laws.
- The legislature has two chambers:
  - The House of Representatives
  - The Senate

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: 150 MEMBERS



- Members serve 2-Year terms
- Led by Speaker of the House
- 86 Republicans | 64 Democrats

### SENATE: 31 MEMBERS



- Senators serve 4-Year terms
- Led by Lieutenant Governor
- 19 Republicans | 12 Democrats

## WHAT DO TEXAS LEGISLATORS DO?

- Texas legislators write, debate, and vote on laws that affect Texans with IDD.
- Approve the state budget, deciding how money is spent.
- Listen to their constituents (the people they represent) to understand their needs and concerns.
- Serve on committees to study specific topics and recommend new laws.

## WHEN DO TEXAS LEGISLATORS MEET?

- Every two years in odd-numbered years for a 140-day regular session.
- Special sessions, lasting up to 30 days, may be called by the Governor to address specific issues.

## HOW DO LEGISLATORS PASS LAWS?

1. **Bill Filing:** A legislator writes and files a bill.
2. **Committee Review:** Committees study and vote on the bill.
3. **Debate and Voting:** Both the House and Senate debate, amend, and vote.
4. **Governor's Action:** The Governor signs the bill to become law or vetoes it.

# HOW TO ADVOCATE

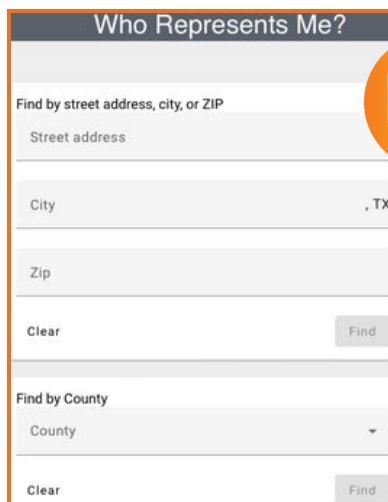
## HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Getting involved with The Arc of Texas is simple, impactful, and empowering! Here's how you can make a difference for Texans with IDD and their families:

### STEP 1: FIND WHO REPRESENTS YOU

#### Find your representatives.

Knowing who represents you is key to effective advocacy. These are your elected officials, also called legislators. Your legislators make decisions that shape the lives of people with IDD, their families, and communities. Reaching out to them is your right and ensures your voice is included when they decide on policies that matter to you.



Who Represents Me?

Find by street address, city, or ZIP

Street address

City, TX

Zip

Clear Find

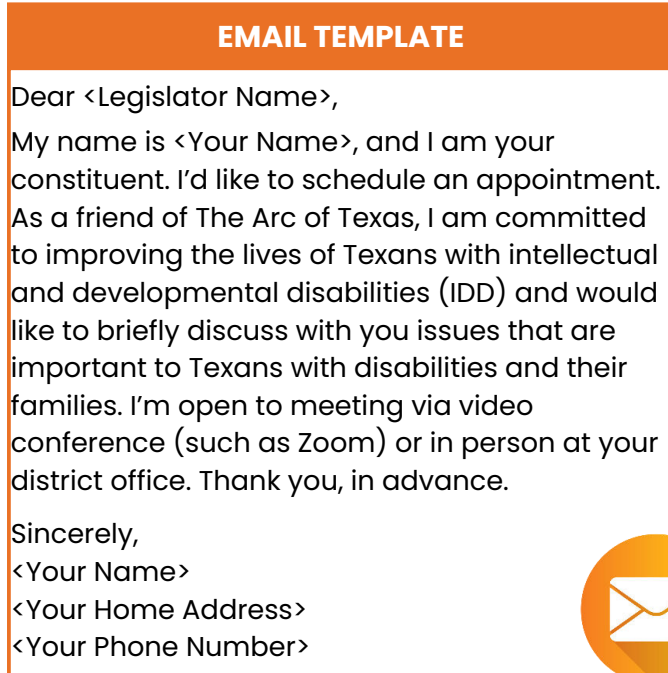
Find by County

County

Clear Find

### STEP 2: CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

As a constituent, you have an open invitation to contact your legislators' offices to request a meeting to discuss legislative priorities that matter to you. Use this template to request a meeting.



EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear <Legislator Name>,  
My name is <Your Name>, and I am your constituent. I'd like to schedule an appointment. As a friend of The Arc of Texas, I am committed to improving the lives of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and would like to briefly discuss with you issues that are important to Texans with disabilities and their families. I'm open to meeting via video conference (such as Zoom) or in person at your district office. Thank you, in advance.

Sincerely,  
<Your Name>  
<Your Home Address>  
<Your Phone Number>

### STEP 3: STAY INFORMED & TAKE ACTION

Subscribe to our emails for advocacy opportunity alerts, legislative updates and more.

Follow us on social media for the latest updates.

We're @TheArcOfTexas on [Instagram](#),

[Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#)!

### PRO-TIP: USE THE HOUSE PUBLIC COMMENT PORTAL

The Texas House of Representatives offers a public comment portal, allowing you to advocate from anywhere in the state via your computer or phone. Share your story and weigh in on key issues discussed in committees without traveling to the Capitol. Stay tuned for updates on committee schedules and opportunities to advocate using the portal. **Access the portal here** or scan the QR code.



Get involved at [thearcsoftexas.org](https://thearcsoftexas.org). Learn about our policy pillars and advocacy opportunities, find resources, share your story, shop merch, donate, and more.