



KAY IVEY  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**  
**RSA UNION BUILDING**  
100 NORTH UNION STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 301410  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1410  
WWW.MH.ALABAMA.GOV



LYNN T. BESHEAR  
COMMISSIONER

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CONTACT: Public Information  
334-242-3417  
[publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov)

**THE ARC OF MADISON COUNTY WINS NATIONAL AWARD**  
*Advancing Local Commitment with Resources to Assist Integrated Employment*



**Madison, Ala.** – The Arc of Madison County, an advocacy program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, was chosen as one of ten programs in the nation to participate in a National Provider Transformation Network Project. The Provider Transformation Network is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts in Boston in conjunction with the Arc of the United States. As part of their participation, the Arc of Madison County will be offered technical support to advance their commitment to providing integrated employment.

Executive Director Susan Klingel said, “[The Arc of Madison County](#) is extremely excited to participate in the National Provider Transformation Network Project. Our Arc is eager to start the process as we anticipate that the knowledge gained will significantly help in meeting the needs and desires of the individuals with disabilities that we serve. We will also use knowledge gained from this program to help other organizations as they transition to meet Federal community-based service guidelines.”

Lynn Beshear, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health said, “It is truly an honor for this program to be chosen. The Arc of Madison County is to be commended for their leadership and commitment to excellence to the people they serve. The Arc of Madison County is a model, not only for Alabama, for the United States.”

The Arc of Madison County has been in existence since 1952 and serves over 400 individuals with disabilities each year. Services have been added and amended to serve more individuals, including over 80 infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities in the [Early Intervention Program](#). The Arc provides school transition services for over 140 students in the Huntsville City, Madison City, and Madison County schools.

A Project Search Internship Program (in coordination with the Huntsville City Schools and Huntsville Hospital) teaches job skills, offers [job coaching](#) and community job placement for students with disabilities. The Arc of Madison County operates a career center that provides job development, job coaching, benefit counseling, and career assessment for individuals with disabilities.

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[Several small businesses](#) are operated (on-site shredding, recycling, and scanning) that employ people with disabilities all at or above minimum wage. These businesses provide services to over 300 customers that include companies like PPG, Dynetics, and Torch Technologies in the Madison County area.

The Arc of Madison County has received many awards and acknowledgements including: the 2017 AL-APSE (Association for Persons Supporting Employment First) Agency of the Year; the 2015 Alabama Developmental Disability Agency of Distinction Award (the first of its kind); the 2015 Regions National "What a Difference" Campaign Award; and the 2004 Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce Small Business Non-Profit of the Year Award.

The Arc of Madison County was selected by the Department of Mental Health to be one of the first pilot programs for their Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) grant due to their accomplishments in employing individuals with disabilities. Klingel added, "We are extremely appreciative of the support given to our program from employment staff from the Alabama Department of Mental Health as well as those from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Without their knowledge and support, we would not have been in a position to be a candidate for this program."

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