

Katy Neas, CEO, The Arc of the United States

Katherine (Katy) Neas is the CEO of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. She leads The Arc's Washington, DC-based national office and network of nearly 600 state and local chapters, which provide direct support and advocacy to more than a million people with IDD across the United States.

Katy has a deep commitment to advancing the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities, exemplified by her 35-year career spanning government, nonprofit, and association sectors. She is well known as an ally and thought leader by government officials and legislators, nonprofit providers, self-advocates, parents, and executive staff across the country. She began her career as Legislative Assistant to Senator Tom Harkin and the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy, where she worked on the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). She then served as the Associate Director of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, where she promoted research, education, and service initiatives to improve the lives of people with IDD and their families.

Katy spent 23 years at Easterseals, a national nonprofit that provides direct services to children and adults with disabilities and their families. She held various leadership roles, including Senior Vice President of Government Relations, where she advocated for federal and state policies and programs that benefit people with disabilities and managed the Easterseals Office of Public Affairs. She has extensive policy experience in early education, special education, employment and systems transformation for children and youth with disabilities and their families.

Prior to joining The Arc, Katy was appointed by President Joe Biden to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education. She advised U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona on matters related to the education of children and adults with disabilities and led efforts to support community living, improve education and employment outcomes, and break barriers and stigmas for all people with disabilities. She also managed the Department's extensive work in addressing the mental health crisis affecting all our nation's youth.

Katy also has extensive experience in the association sector, having served as the Senior Vice President of Public Affairs at the 100,000 member American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). She oversaw APTA's federal and state government public policy activities, federal regulatory affairs, grassroots and political action efforts, and public relations.

Katy, a graduate of Georgetown University and native of Des Moines, Iowa, is widely regarded for her bipartisan and collaborative work, earning her roles including Past Chair of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD). She is honored to lead The Arc into the future, working with its dedicated staff, board, chapters, self-advocates, families, and partners to build a world where people with IDD are valued members of society who have the power to choose how they live, learn, work, and play.