



DISTINGUISHED  
PROFESSIONAL  
AWARDS

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## Important Information

**Entries open:** May 6, 2024

**Entries close:** June 14, 2024

To complete a nomination, visit the [NCE Awards Application](#).

**Winners notified:** July 31, 2024

**Winners announced at NCE Awards Luncheon:** November 1, 2024, Hilton Downtown Columbus, OH

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## NOTE TO NCE MEMBERS AND CHAPTER STAFF

Thank you for considering nominating someone for an NCE Distinguished Professional Award. The past year has seen a multitude of changes on the state and federal level that significantly impact the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and consequently have provided opportunity for leaders across The Arc nationwide to demonstrate the skills, dedication, and passion that exemplify an executive at The Arc.

These awards celebrate those who strive for excellence, put our clients first, and deliver great results. Since 1980, the awards have honored the professional excellence and achievement of NCE members as well as those persons outside the membership who make significant contributions on behalf of our constituency on a daily basis.

We want to keep our criteria simple to make submissions easier. Previous winners of these categories have come from across the chapter network, and no distinction is made between size and location of a chapter; rather we look to see the impact our nominees have made in their environments. Self-nominations are welcome.

We look to inspire our peers and colleagues both within The Arc and outside in the general IDD community.

The awards will be presented at the NCE Awards Luncheon on Friday, November 1 at 12:15 pm as part of The Arc's 2024 National Convention, November 1-3, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio.

### **Melanie Soto**

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# AWARD CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

## Executive Excellence

This award is granted each year to a chapter Executive Director/CEO whose career exemplifies to the highest degree fulfillment of the mission, core values, and position statements of The Arc. This is the highest honor bestowed by the NCE.

Nominees will be Executive Directors/CEOs who have made exceptional contributions to NCE and The Arc and have established an extraordinary example for others to follow.

**Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Nominee’s major achievements as an executive in the IDD field, including reasons for nomination and impact on NCE, their chapter, and The Arc as a whole
- Outcomes that demonstrate the impact of the executive’s actions or decisions
- Primary professional and personal attributes that have contributed to nominee’s success
- Recognition the nominee has received from the community
- Nominee’s commitment to professional development

**Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee’s Board Chair
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the nominee

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

**The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Leadership
- Outstanding achievements
- Measurable outcomes
- Impact on the IDD community
- Impact on the NCE community
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking
- Professional development

## Outstanding Lifetime Achievement

This award recognizes an individual inside or outside The Arc network who lives by the core values of The Arc by providing leadership resulting in a significant improvement in supports, services, opportunities, and community inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Nominees may be **current or past NCE members** or **non-NCE advocates** or **self-advocates**. Nominees will have demonstrated a high level of achievement in the IDD field as well as dedication to fulfilling the mission, core values, and position statements of The Arc throughout their career. These nominees have made significant contributions to people with IDD and their families in a variety of ways. Examples include but are not limited to: research, community outreach, program design and/or implementation, local or national advocacy, policy analysis, and policymaking. Nominees have been recognized and valued not only by their peers but also the communities in which they work.

### **Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Major career achievements, including reasons for nomination and nominee's impact on their chapter and/or their community
- Outcomes that demonstrate the impact of nominee's actions throughout their career
- Primary professional and personal attributes that have contributed to nominee's success
- Recognition the nominee has received from the community and within the IDD field
- Nominee's commitment to professional and personal development
- Nominee's dedication to fulfilling the mission, values, and position statements of The Arc

### **Also required:**

- **For nominees who are NCE members:** A letter of support from nominee's CEO/ Executive Director or Board Chair
- **For nominees who are not NCE members:** A letter of support from a professional who is part of The Arc (staff or board member)
- A copy of the nominee's resume or curriculum vitae (CV)
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the nominee



## Outstanding Lifetime Achievement (continued)

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

### **The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Demonstrated leadership
- Outstanding achievements
- Measurable outcomes
- Impact on the IDD community
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking
- Professional and personal development

## Exemplary Career Leadership

This award recognizes a retiring chapter Executive Director/CEO who has demonstrated a high level of commitment within The Arc's movement for at least 10 years.

Nominees will be Executive Directors/CEOs retiring during the period between November 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024 who have been employed by a chapter for a minimum of 10 years. Throughout their tenure as Executive Director/CEO, they have made significant contributions to their chapters and to people with IDD and their families.

### **Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Major achievements throughout nominee's career with The Arc, including impact on their chapter and their community
- Outcomes that demonstrate the impact of nominee's actions over the course of their career
- Nominee's commitment to their own professional development and that of their staff

### **Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee's Board Chair
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the nominee

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

### **The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Demonstrated leadership throughout career
- Outstanding achievements
- Measurable outcomes
- Impact on the IDD community
- Professional and personal development

## Rising Star

This award recognizes a professional from The Arc's chapter network in their first five years in senior chapter leadership who has made significant contributions to their chapter.

Nominees will be current NCE members holding senior chapter leadership or management positions who have been in this role for five years or less. These NCE members are making substantial contributions to their chapters and communities and demonstrate the potential to take on increasing levels of professional leadership responsibility in their continued service to people with IDD and their families.

### **Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Outcomes that demonstrate the impact of nominee's actions within their years of employment at The Arc
- Primary professional and personal attributes that have contributed to nominee's success
- Nominee's commitment to professional and personal development

### **Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee's CEO/Executive Director or Board Chair
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the candidate

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

### **The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Leadership
- Outstanding achievements
- Measurable outcomes
- Impact on the IDD community
- Professional development
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking



## Diversity & Cultural Competency Achievement

This award recognizes a senior chapter leader who has successfully leveraged the skills of their staff to provide innovative programming that meets the needs of a diverse IDD community.

Nominees will have recognized the need for a unique approach to addressing the concerns of a diverse population within their community and successfully supported staff to create innovative solutions to delivering needed services and supports. Examples of factors that make the targeted community diverse include, but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, refugee and/or immigrant status, geographic location, being members of the military, having low incomes, etc. A noteworthy program will be one that has been put in place specifically for the chosen population or an existing program that has been adapted effectively to meet the needs of the chosen population.

### **Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Outcomes that demonstrate how nominee has leveraged their staff's skills to provide the program(s)
- Outcomes that demonstrate how nominee's programming has meet the needs of a diverse community
- Primary professional and personal attributes that have contributed to nominee's success
- Nominee's commitment to diversity, and demonstrated cultural competency

### **Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee's CEO/Executive Director or Board Chair
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the candidate

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

### **The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Leadership
- Impact on diverse communities
- Cross-cultural competency
- Outstanding achievement
- Measurable outcomes
- Professional development
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking

## Program Innovation

This award recognizes senior chapter leaders whose chapters have successfully designed and implemented innovative programming to meet the needs of people with IDD in their community.

Nominees will be NCE members whose chapters have designed and implemented creative programming to address the unique needs of people with IDD in their community. A noteworthy program will have either been implemented within the past two years or will be a current program that has been transformed and is demonstrating measurable outcomes for the community and in the nominee's chapter. These programs should not duplicate other services already offered in the community; instead, they must demonstrate measurable outcomes for the community and their nominee's chapter.

### **Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography of nominee
- Outcomes that demonstrate how the program is successful at providing services to people with IDD
- If a current program that has been modified, cite the reasons for the change and outcomes of the change
- Cite outcomes that demonstrate how nominee's program(s) is/are replicable
- Primary professional and personal attributes that have contributed to nominee's success

### **Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee's CEO/Executive Director or Board Chair
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the candidate

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

### **The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Leadership
- Measurable outcomes of the program(s) being considered
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking
- Replicability

## Exemplary Mentor

This award recognizes a senior chapter leader whose mentorship of one or more NCE members, has resulted in the mentees' demonstrated professional growth.

Nominees will be senior chapter leaders who have contributed significantly to the professional growth of another NCE member—or members—in a manner that demonstrates the qualities of leadership and mentoring necessary for development of future leaders of The Arc.

**Written nomination should be no more than 750 words, addressing the following:**

- Brief biography
- Cite examples of how mentor's guidance led to the mentee's substantial professional growth
- Cultural competence

**Also required:**

- A letter of support from nominee's Board Chair or CEO/Executive Director AND the mentee(s) submitting nomination
- Photograph (preferably a headshot) of the candidate

Additional written testimonials from supervisors or peers in the IDD field are encouraged but not required. These testimonials will not be returned to the nominee. However, they will be favorably received by the Awards Task Group.

**The Awards Task Group will be asked to consider the following aspects of an entry:**

- Leadership
- Mentorship
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking
- Personal and professional development
- Cultural competence



## THREE TIPS FOR A WINNING ENTRY

### 1. Start early and respect the deadline.

Entries open on May 6, 2024. Please review all criteria and give yourself ample time to craft a compelling application. A common thread present in the strongest applicants and award winners is timely, well-prepared submissions. Please respect the deadline. Applications submitted after **5:00 pm ET on June 14, 2024**, will not be considered for entry.

### 2. Address the criteria and make sure your application is complete.

In order for the Awards Task Group to effectively judge your application, you will need to compile a submission that includes:

- i. A response of no more than 750 words that answers the questions being asked;
- ii. A letter of support (written by a board chair or president or an executive director, as appropriate) that provides insight into the nominee's abilities and achievements and is not a generic statement that fails to speak to the nominee's relevant strengths;
- iii. A photograph of the nominee.

The Awards Task Group may still consider incomplete applications, but you are placing your nominee at a distinct disadvantage if you fail to submit all requested materials. Failing to address all listed points in your 750-word response also weakens your nominee's eligibility, making them less likely to be recognized.

### 3. Provide examples that paint a well-rounded picture of your nominee.

An effective application is one that shows the nominee's qualifications by providing **specific examples** of how the nominee fulfills the listed criteria, rather than simply telling the Task Group that the candidate deserves to win. Use the criteria as guidelines to build evidence and support your case for why the nominee merits the award.

## HOW TO ENTER

Applications are accepted through the online submission portal from May 6 to June 14, 2024. All submissions require a written statement no longer than 750 words, a letter of support, and a photograph of the nominee. Specific requirements for the written statement and letter of support are found under the detailed description and criteria for each individual award.

[Click here for the NCE Awards Application](#) to begin the application process.