

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Budget cuts and loss of navigation resources

When a state cuts funding to the organization that helps you find every other service, the cut doesn't show up on a services list. It shows up as silence the next time you call for help and nobody answers.

BY JIM PALASTY · 10 MIN READ · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN LOST ITS FUNDING

75

PERCENT OF AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN'S CAPACITY LOST TO STATE CUTS

A state funding elimination cut Autism Alliance of Michigan's navigation capacity by roughly three-quarters. Families who relied on it are still finding out, one unanswered call at a time.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

A trusted resource loses funding

State budget cuts eliminated funding that supported Autism Alliance of Michigan's navigation and advocacy capacity.



STEP 2

Capacity drops by roughly 75 percent

Fewer staff, longer waits, and reduced reach mean far fewer families get through than before.



STEP 3

Alternative infrastructure has to fill the gap

Arc Michigan chapters, CMH family support coordinators, and other organizations absorb what capacity they can.

Alternative navigation resources

Arc Michigan chapters	Regional advocacy and navigation support
CMH family support coordinators	Built into every CMH board's structure
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service	For rights violations specifically
Centers for Independent Living	Peer-based, independent of CMH
Disability law clinics	Some Michigan law schools offer free legal support

THE PHONE NUMBER THAT STOPPED BEING ANSWERED



Felicia had called Autism Alliance of Michigan for three years whenever she hit a wall with her son's services, and the calls always got answered within a day or two. This time, nobody called back for two weeks. She eventually learned about the capacity cuts from another parent at a support group, not from any official notice. She switched to her local Arc Michigan chapter and found help again, just slower and with a different name attached.

NOBODY SENT A LETTER EXPLAINING THE SILENCE. ANOTHER EXHAUSTED PARENT DID.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

What got lost

Statewide capacity for helping families navigate CMH, waivers, and school-to-adult transitions shrank dramatically overnight.

Why organizational capacity matters

A single knowledgeable navigator can save a family months of trial and error. Losing that capacity doesn't just delay help, it compounds confusion.

It happened with little public notice

Families who depended on this organization often learned about the cut only when their usual contact stopped responding.

Arc Michigan chapters

Local Arc chapters across the state continue providing navigation and advocacy support, though capacity varies by region.

CMH family support coordinators

Every CMH board has family support coordinators whose role includes exactly this kind of navigation help.

Centers for Independent Living

CILs offer peer-based navigation and advocacy support, independent of the CMH system entirely.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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|--|---|
| ☐ Contact information for your regional Arc Michigan chapter | ☐ Your CMH board's family support coordinator contact |
| ☐ Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service's contact information | ☐ Your nearest Center for Independent Living's contact information |
| ☐ A note of your original question, so you don't have to start over each time | |

YOUR MOVE

When your usual navigation resource has less capacity, here is what to do

- 1 Confirm whether your usual contact's capacity has actually changed.
- 2 Contact your regional Arc Michigan chapter as a backup.
- 3 Ask your CMH board for its family support coordinator by name.
- 4 Contact Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service for rights-specific issues.
- 5 Check whether a Center for Independent Living serves your region.
- 6 Document response times if you're building a case for advocacy.

A cut to navigation capacity doesn't announce itself. It just makes the phone ring longer before someone finally answers.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

arcmi.org · <https://arcmi.org>

mpas.org · <https://www.mpas.org>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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