



Supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities and their families through Education, Outreach, Networking, and Future Planning Services.



DECEMBER 2017



**Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year from
ACHIEVA Family Trust**

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Closing a Chapter - Marsha Blanco



ACHIEVA President and CEO Marsha Blanco will retire from ACHIEVA at the end of the year. Marsha has been president and CEO of ACHIEVA for 38 years.

"Serving as ACHIEVA's CEO has been a highlight of my life. ACHIEVA is like my third child," she said in a statement. "It has been such a privilege for me to have had the opportunity to provide leadership to such an extraordinary organization."

"Under Marsha's leadership, ACHIEVA has grown to become a \$50 million organization that currently serves thousands of children and adults with disabilities and their families annually. In addition, the ACHIEVA Family Trust has \$110 million under management for over 2,000 beneficiaries. ACHIEVA is highly respected for its leadership role in creating innovative services, public policy and advocacy to protect the rights of people with disabilities. We are confident that Steve is the right person to lead ACHIEVA and build on all that has been accomplished" said Mike Dever, Chair of the ACHIEVA Board of Trustees.

Welcome Steve Suroviec - ACHIEVA's New CEO

ACHIEVA is pleased to announce the selection of Steve Suroviec to assume the role of CEO in January, 2018. Steve is a highly respected advocate and leader in the nonprofit and government sectors.

Steve most recently served as the Chief Operations Officer and Director of Intellectual/Developmental Disability Services at the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association. He has also served as the Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Developmental Programs; the Executive Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry; the Executive Director of The Arc of Pennsylvania; and the Director of the Erie County Department of Human Services.



Prior to that, Steve served in the United States Air Force. He holds a Master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh in Public and International Affairs. He was appointed to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities by President George H.W. Bush. He also worked for Congressman Tom Ridge and later Chaired Governor Ridge's Disability Policy Team.

2018 Marketplace Health Insurance

Enrollment Ends December 15, 2017

You can enroll in or change your 2018 Marketplace health insurance right now. The 2018 Open Enrollment Period runs from November 1, 2017 to December 15, 2017. The 2018 Open Enrollment is shorter than in previous years. If you don't act by December 15, you can't get 2018 coverage unless you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.



Plans sold during Open Enrollment start January 1, 2018.

December 15, 2017: Last day to enroll in or change plans for 2018 coverage. After this date, you can enroll or change plans only if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.

[Read more here](#)

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is Open



The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, helps low-income families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP is a grant that offers assistance in the form of a cash grant, sent directly to the utility company, or a crisis grant for households in immediate danger of being without heat.

There are three different ways to apply for LIHEAP:

1. You can apply for the LIHEAP benefits online by using **COMPASS**. COMPASS is the name of the website where you can apply for LIHEAP and many other services that can help you make ends meet.
2. Download an application for LIHEAP benefits by clicking on the links below and return it to your local county assistance office: 2017-18 LIHEAP Applications: **[English- Energy Assistance](#)** | **[Spanish-Energy Assistance](#)** Application.
3. File an application at your **[local county assistance office](#)**.

For more information, please contact your local county assistance office or contact the LIHEAP hotline at **1-866-857-7095**, Monday through Friday (individuals with hearing impairments may call 711).



The Arc Responds to Senate Passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act - Services and Supports for People with Disabilities at Risk

The Arc released the following statement in response to Senate passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act:

The Senate took a big and dangerous step closer to cutting the services and supports that people with disabilities rely on to be a part of their community.

The Arc's longstanding position on tax policy is that it should raise sufficient revenues to finance essential programs that help people with disabilities to live and work in the community. The Arc also supports tax policy that is fair and reduces income inequality; people with disabilities are twice as likely to experience poverty.

Both the House and Senate versions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act fail to meet either standard. By reducing federal revenue by at least \$1.5 trillion, the Senate bill turns up the pressure on Congress to cut Medicaid and other programs that are critical to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Attorney Spotlight - Jennifer Modell

Jennifer Modell has worked in the area of disability law for over nine years and has experience in social security and long-term disability matters as well as future and estate planning for individuals with disabilities; and their families.

Currently, she works at Ruder Law where, in addition to the above issues, she assists parents of children with special needs address educational problems and litigates disability discrimination and retaliation claims. Prior to working in the area of disability law, Ms. Modell was a civil rights and criminal defense attorney. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago and Northwestern University School of



Law. Ms. Modell is the Chair of the Allegheny County Bar Association's Committee on Law and Disability and serves on the Boards of the Autism Connection of Pennsylvania and Neighborhood Legal Services.



Pennsylvania's 2017- 2018 Budget Breakdown

The Arc of PA applauds Governor Wolf and the General Assembly for their commitment to intellectual disability and autism (ID/A) funding. This budget was the type of investment needed in Pennsylvania's disability service system and was the best budget for people with intellectual disabilities and autism in 10 years.

ID/A Budget Line Items	2016-17 Budget	Proposed Governor's 2017-18 Budget	2017-18 Budget
ID State Center	\$137,770,000	\$132,864,000	\$132,864,000
ICD/ID	\$127,621,000	\$128,429,000	\$128,426,000
Intellectual Disability (ID) Base	\$149,950,000	\$150,734,000	\$150,734,000
ID Community Waiver	\$1,331,661,000	\$1,527,602,000	\$1,527,602,000
Autism	\$24,833,000	\$26,908,000	\$26,908,000
Early Intervention (Birth-3)	\$129,211,000	\$136,545,000	\$136,545,000
Early Intervention (3-5)	\$252,159,000	\$263,878,000	\$263,878,000
Special Education	\$1,096,815,000	\$1,121,815,000	\$1,121,815,000

[Click here](#) for a one-page graphic reflecting the final 2017-18 budget with highlights of budget priorities for 2018-19.



2018 SPEAKER SERIES - REGISTRATION OPEN
Future Planning Series
Presented by ACHIEVA Family Trust and ACHIEVA Advocacy

FRIDAY JANUARY 12, 2018

Everything You Need to Know About Community Health Choices
 9 - 11 AM
 Speaker - David Gates, Senior Attorney and Director of Policy,

[Attend in Person](#)
[Attend Via Live Webinar](#)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2018

Housing Options for Individuals with Disabilities

9 - 11 AM

Speaker - Michelle Stockunas, Program Manager, ACHIEVA - "A Home of My Own"

[Attend in Person](#)

[Attend Via Live](#)

[Webinar](#)

FRIDAY MARCH 9, 2018

Understanding Guardianship and Power of Attorney - What's Best For My Loved One?

9 - 11 AM

Speaker - Nora Gieg Chatha, Esq.

[Attend in Person](#)

[Attend Via](#)

[Live Webinar](#)

FRIDAY APRIL 13, 2018

Update on Medicaid Services in Pennsylvania

9 - 11 AM

Speakers - Janice Meinert, Paralegal, Pennsylvania Health Law Project and Erin Ninehouser, Pennsylvania Health Access Network

[Attend in Person](#)

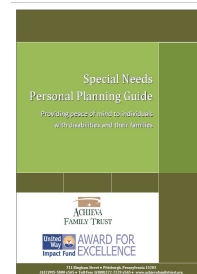
[Attend Via Live](#)

[Webinar](#)

SPECIAL NEEDS FUTURE PLANNING RESOURCES

Special Needs Personal Planning Guide ([DOWNLOAD](#))

The Future Planning Guide is a resource and profile of your family member containing all of the information that makes them unique. The details of this picture include your family member's health history as well as their experiences with life and learning, family and friends and likes and dislikes. The Future Planning Guide assists in developing a plan to help ensure that your family member's needs are met day to day, on special occasions and in times of emergency.



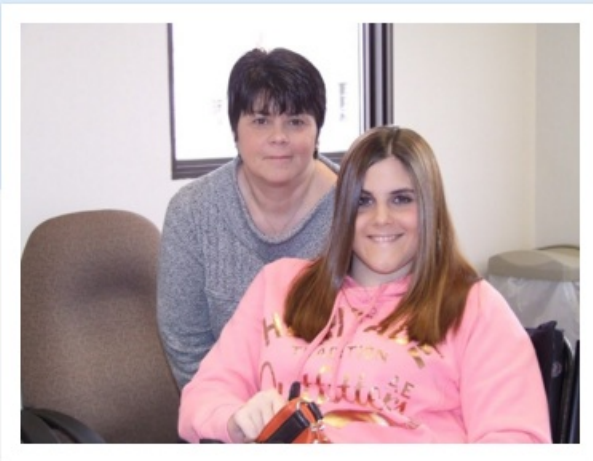
Future Planning Attorney List (Greater Pittsburgh Area) ([DOWNLOAD](#))



See our list of attorneys located in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area who have expressed an interest and are willing to assist families and individuals with disabilities regarding their future planning needs.

These attorneys can assist families in determining the types of future planning that will best meet their needs. In addition, these attorneys are able to draft future planning documents that may include a Last Will and Testament, Special Needs Trust, Power of Attorney and Living Will. If you are interested in future planning, please feel free to contact one or more of the attorneys listed in order to discuss your needs.

ACHIEVA Family Trust for Special Needs Trusts ([WEBSITE](#))



“ACHIEVA protects her money from her going out and blowing it, or anyone else getting their hands on it. It helps her use that money and feel normal to do the things she likes. With the trust, Kara can do the same things that other kids do.”

ACHIEVA Family Trust has been providing services to help families and individuals with disabilities plan for their future for more than 17 years. Individuals with disabilities and their families face significant challenges in planning for their financial stability. ACHIEVA Family Trust provides information to individuals and can serve as trustee for several kinds of trusts benefiting individuals with disabilities.

ACHIEVA Family Trust:

- Serves as Corporate Trustee for Common Law Trusts, Pooled Trusts and Payback Trusts to benefit individuals with disabilities.
- Distributes trust funds to increase individuals' quality of life while preserving eligibility for essential government services.
- Adds case management and social work expertise to the traditional role of corporate trustee.
- Utilizes the expertise of PNC Bank and Capital Group for Investment Management.

VIEW ARCHIVED WEBINARS

I WANT TO WORK BUT I AM AFRAID OF LOSING MY GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

Presenters: Bill Frase, Assistant Director of Community Employment, ACHIEVA, Joy Smith, Area Manager AHEDD, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Marci Katona, and Josie Badger, #IWantToWork Campaign Manager

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION

Presenter: Jeff Ruder, Esq., Ruder Law

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

WHAT'S NEW WITH THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS (ODP) - WAIVER RENEWALS FOR THE CONSOLIDATED AND PFDS WAIVERS, INCLUDING THE NEW SERVICES

Presenter: Kristin Ahrens, Director, Bureau of policy and Quality Management, ODP

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

MANAGED LONG TERM CARE AND WAIVERS

Presenter: Janice Meinert, Paralegal, Pennsylvania Health Law Project

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

**HIPAA LAWS AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF MENTAL HEALTH
INFORMATION/MENTAL HEALTH ADVANCED DIRECTIVES**

*Presenters: Mark Zacharia, Esq., Associate Counsel, UPMC Corporate Legal Department
Julianne Washington, Esq.*

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

**TURNING 26? HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND HAPPY NEW WORLD OF
HEALTH INSURANCE**

*Presenters: Sally Jo Snyder and Leslie Bachurski, Consumer Health Coalition
Libby Powers and Susan Saule, CHANGE Children's Hospital*

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AGES 14 - 22

*Presenters: Dr. Erin Grimm, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Eric Jankoski, Baldwin Whitehall
School District Transition Coordinator, Mary Hartley, 21 & ABLE, United Way of
Southwestern PA, Sarah Vogel, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)*

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

GUARDIANSHIP & POWERS OF ATTORNEY

Presenters: Heidi Rai Stewart, Esq. and Matthew Lautman, Esq., Houston Harbaugh

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

SSI, SSDI & REPRESENTATIVE PAYEES

Presenter: Elaine Cole, Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

MEDICAID, MAWD, & WAIVERS

Presenter: Erin Guay, Paralegal, Pennsylvania Health Law Project

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

MEDICARE

Presenter: Bill McKendree, Team Leader, APPRISE State Health Insurance Program

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

ACHIEVA Family Trust

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[Visit Our Website](#)

[Email Us](#)

ACHIEVA is an agency that is dedicated to providing the best quality services for people with disabilities in "celebrating abilities and exceeding expectations."

