

advocacy day *for Access & Independence*

Advocacy Guidebook

Joining together to make South Carolina a better place for people with disabilities to live, work, and play!



Share your SC Disability Advocacy experiences on social media by using **#AccessInSC**

“Independent living is not doing this by yourself. It is being in control of how things are done.”

-Judy Heumann



This is OUR movement!

You have the opportunity to play a key role in South Carolina's disability rights movement. It is time for us to show disability pride and use our collective voice to raise awareness of the barriers to access, independence, and equality. Together, we are a powerful force— WE, the disability community, can bring about positive change to increase the independence of South Carolinians with disabilities. We are tired of our lives being planned out for us, policies being created about us without our input, and programs and policies that deny equal opportunities. Every day we continue our efforts to unlock the barriers to independence for South Carolinians with disabilities!

Our shared work for disability rights can't be a one day effort. We need to continue delivering our message in the weeks, months and years to come - **that people with disabilities deserve the same rights as people without disabilities.** Let's not stop until all barriers are unlocked and we have the access and opportunities to lead the lives we choose!

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Representation

In every level of government, there are elected officials that represent us. The smaller the jurisdiction, the greater access to decision-makers. While talked about less often, city and county government is where most of the decisions that impact our daily lives are made.

Know your representatives; make sure they know you!



When your elected official has a question about how a bill or policy would impact people with disabilities, they should know that a

friendly advocate is just a phone call away. **They should call you for your expertise.** Identify your representatives and find more about their voting history at votesmart.org



Tips for Advocacy

Ten Tips for Effective Communication in Your Advocacy Work

- 1. Be polite.** Our message can get lost when poorly shared. Being respectful earns trust and respect
- 2. Find common ground.** There is always something we can all agree on. Start there!
- 3. Build a relationship.** Your representatives probably live close to you and have similar interests. Get to know them; Let them get to know you.
- 4. Make your case.** You are meeting for a reason; you may have to refocus the conversation.
- 5. Be firm and fair.** You are not meeting for a photo opportunity. You are here to advocate for disability rights.

6. Be personal. Share your personal experience with barriers to access and independence.

7. Be prepared. Knowing what you want to say before you say it keeps the message focused and makes you believable.

8. Stick to what you know. It is easier to talk about what we are passionate about. Do not be afraid to get back to them with an answer.

9. Be open. Often lawmakers do not have all the information and sometimes we do not either. We must provide education.

10. Be gracious. Time is valuable for you and for lawmakers. Thank them in person and in writing after the meeting.



Methods of Communication

There are several methods of communication to reach lawmakers. It is very important to know your representatives and how they best communicate. Therefore, you may want to try several different methods. Below is a list of different methods of communications, all methods have pros and cons.

Social Media	Pros	Very Quick	Social Power	Public	Creates discussion
	Cons	Easy to become SPAM	Conversation hard to control	Easy to ignore	
Email	Pros	Quick	Easy from start to finish		
	Cons	Easily deleted	Legislative offices often flooded with email	Impersonal	
Written Letter	Pros	Physical	Shows that the idea was worth your time to write	Shows idea is worth the postage	Personal
	Cons	Easily recycled	More time-consuming than email		
In-person Meeting	Pros	Direct	You can see the impact on the lawmaker	Puts a face on the issue	Personal
	Cons	Time consuming	Scheduling		



Steps to Advocacy

The **South Carolina Access and Independent Network (SCAIN)** hopes that you use this guidebook year round. SCAIN hosts **Advocacy Day for Access and Independence** at the SC State House each year to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and we hope that you will join us. Advocacy is a process where people use information, personal experience, passion, and insight to make changes in their community.

Effective Advocacy Often Flows in the Following Steps:





SCAIN Supporters

Able South Carolina

Columbia Office:

Phone: (800) 681-6805, TTY (803) 779-0949

Greenville Office: Phone: (800) 681-7715,

TTY (864) 235-8798

www.able-sc.org

AccessAbility

Phone: (843) 225-5080; TTY: (843) 225- 0231;

toll free: (866) 874-7730

www.abilitysc.org

Email: info@abilitysc.org

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living

Phone: (501) 753-3400

www.april-rural.org

Email: lew3022@yahoo.com

Beginnings South Carolina

Phone: (803) 216-1171 Video Phone: (803) 929-7785

<http://scbegin.org/> Email: info@scbegin.org

Brain Injury Association of South Carolina

Phone: (877) 824-3228

www.biausa.org/sc

Email: scbraininjury@bellsouth.net

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Phone: (803) 734-0285 Toll Free: 1-800-868-0040

<http://cap.sc.gov/>

Email: cap@admin.sc.gov

Columbia Mayors Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities

Email: CPopenhagen@oepp.sc.gov

mcepa@columbiasc.net

The COMET

Phone: (803) 255-7085

www.catchthecomet.org

Email: customerservice@catchthecomet.org

Family Connection of South Carolina

Phone: (800) 578-8750; Espanola: (888) 808-7462

www.familyconnectionsc.org

Email: info@FamilyConnectionSC.org

Greater Carolinas Chapter of the National MS Society

Phone: (919) 834-0678 Toll Free: 1-800-344-4867

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NCT>

Email: NCT@NMSS.org

Greenville CAN

Phone: (864) 420-1366

www.greenvilleCAN.org

**International Sacral Agenesis/Caudal Regression Association
(iSACRA)**

Phone: (631) 629-5277

www.isacra.org

Email: mail@isacra.org

National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina

Phone: (803) 254-3777

www.nfbsc.net

Email: nfbsc@sc.rr.com

Our Voices Count Too

Phone: (843) 667-5007x.331

Email: ghsingletary@fcdsn.org

Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services

Phone: (803) 788-7063

www.paals.org

Email: info@paals.org

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc.

Phone: (866) 275-7273; TTY: (866) 232-4525

www.pandasc.org

Email: info@pandasc.org

South Carolina Assistive Technology Program

Phone: (800) 915-4522

www.sc.edu/scatp

South Carolina Association of the Deaf

VP: (803) 403-9270; TTY: (803) 794-7059; Voice: (803) 794-3175

www.scadservices.org

South Carolina Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Phone: (800) 868-0040; TTD: (803) 734-1147

www.govoepp.state.sc.us

Email: cap@oepp.sc.gov

South Carolina Commission for the Blind

Phone: (888) 335.5951

www.sccb.state.sc.us

Email: publicinfo@sccb.sc.gov

South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council

Phone: (803) 734-0465; TTY: (803) 734-1147

www.scddc.state.sc.us

South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Association

Phone: (803) 252-2198 Toll Free: (866) 445-5509

<http://scspinalcord.org>

Email: info@scspinalcord.org

South Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council

Phone: (800) 994-4322

www.scsilc.org

Email: scsilc@scsilc.org

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

Phone: (800) 832-7526; TTY: (803) 896-6553

www.scvrd.net

**University of South Carolina School of Medicine: Office of
Public Health**

Phone: (803) 216-3300

www.med.sc.edu

Walton Options for Independent Living

North Augusta Office Phone: (803) 279-9611

Walterboro Office Phone: (843) 538-1600

www.waltonoptions.org



Closing Statement

We hope to see you at Advocacy Day for Access and Independence and hear how you are furthering disability rights in South Carolina. Share your stories on social media with hashtag #AccessInSC and visit us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/SCAccessIndependence/.

Check out our website to keep up with the latest news www.unlockingbarriers-sc.org. Please consider sharing your success stories from the steps of the South Carolina State House at the next Advocacy Day for Access and Independence!

Contact advocacy@able-sc.org for more information.

unlockingbarriers-sc.org

hashtag #AccessInSC

Facebook.com/SCAccessIndependence