

10TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



#BARRIERFREESC

Brought to you by the South Carolina Access & Independence Network, representing over 50 community-based organizations dedicated to disability rights and justice

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1.3 million people in South Carolina have a disability.

That is roughly 1 in 3 citizens of our state!

A recent South Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council needs assessment of people with disabilities who live in our state found that barriers to community living were their #1 priority. These barriers keep people with disabilities from fully participating in the communities in which we live. There are keys to unlocking each of these barriers.

South Carolina's lawmakers hold the keys to unlocking these barriers to independence and true inclusion of people with disabilities in community living.

www.unlockingbarriers-sc.org

“I do not feel as though I have equal access. I feel like I am forced to rely on others to meet needs that I know I could meet if our state’s infrastructure were better and people were not so uninformed about disability.”
-A Disabled South Carolinian

Disabled people want to work!



BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT: People with disabilities are 2 times more likely to lack a job than nondisabled people. South Carolina is #9 in the nation for the highest unemployment for people with disabilities.

Without access to employment, we lack the chance to experience community living. The state has created laws to make efforts and now must put in the work.



UNLOCKING THE BARRIER: Lawmakers can improve employment and create jobs for people with disabilities by

- **Reminding the Governor to pick members of the Employment First Oversight Commission.**
 - By signing the Employment First Initiative Act in 2022, the Governor promised to build this commission. It's time he kept his promise.
- **Passing bill S. 862 to create more jobs for people with disabilities!**
 - Right now, to work in childcare in our state, you must have a High School Diploma or GED.
 - The bill, s.862, would make it so that people with disabilities who have the SC High School Employability Credential or HS Certificate of Attendance could be hired to work in childcare.

Transportation is key to Community Living!



BARRIERS TO TRANSPORTATION: Transportation is key to independence. Transportation allows us to be in the community. People with disabilities are twice as likely not to have good transportation.

There are only 27 public transit authorities. They don't serve all parts of South Carolina.

Without transportation, it is hard to:

- Find and keep jobs for independence
- Take care of health needs early
- Build friendships, relationships, and family connections
- Take part in community activities and the local economy



UNLOCKING THE BARRIER: Lawmakers can unlock the barriers to transportation by

Creating a statewide transportation plan that helps bring public transportation to rural places.

Housing is critical to Community Living!



BARRIERS TO HOUSING: Not having enough affordable, accessible housing leaves people with disabilities at risk of losing our independence, being forced into facilities, or becoming homeless.

Housing is key to independence. People with disabilities want to live in the community alongside non-disabled peers in housing that is affordable and built with disabilities in mind.

Accessible means something is usable by everyone.



UNLOCKING THE BARRIER: Lawmakers can unlock the barriers to housing by

- **Making it easier for builders to create affordable housing that uses Universal Design.** Universal Design is a way to build that's useable by everyone. Universal Design is accessible. Lawmakers can make it easier for builders by creating tax credits.
- **Moving funding to home and community based services (HCBS).** HCBS allow people with disabilities to live in the community instead of in institutions like nursing homes or facilities.

Protecting the rights of people with disabilities is critical to ensure our access to Community Living!



BARRIERS TO OUR RIGHTS: State agencies are not following the law. State agencies don't have good ADA Coordinators or an Olmstead Plan.

South Carolina continues to ignore national laws:

- **People with disabilities in SC are at risk because the state doesn't completely follow the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** The ADA has been law for 34 years.
- **Our state didn't follow a Supreme Court ruling about our rights to live in the community.** The ruling, called the Olmstead Decision, was made 25 years ago.
- Currently, 56,753 people are living in institutional settings in SC instead of in the community.

SC is allowing harm to people with disabilities and ignoring the rights of over 1.3 million of people.



UNLOCKING THE BARRIER: Lawmakers can protect our rights by

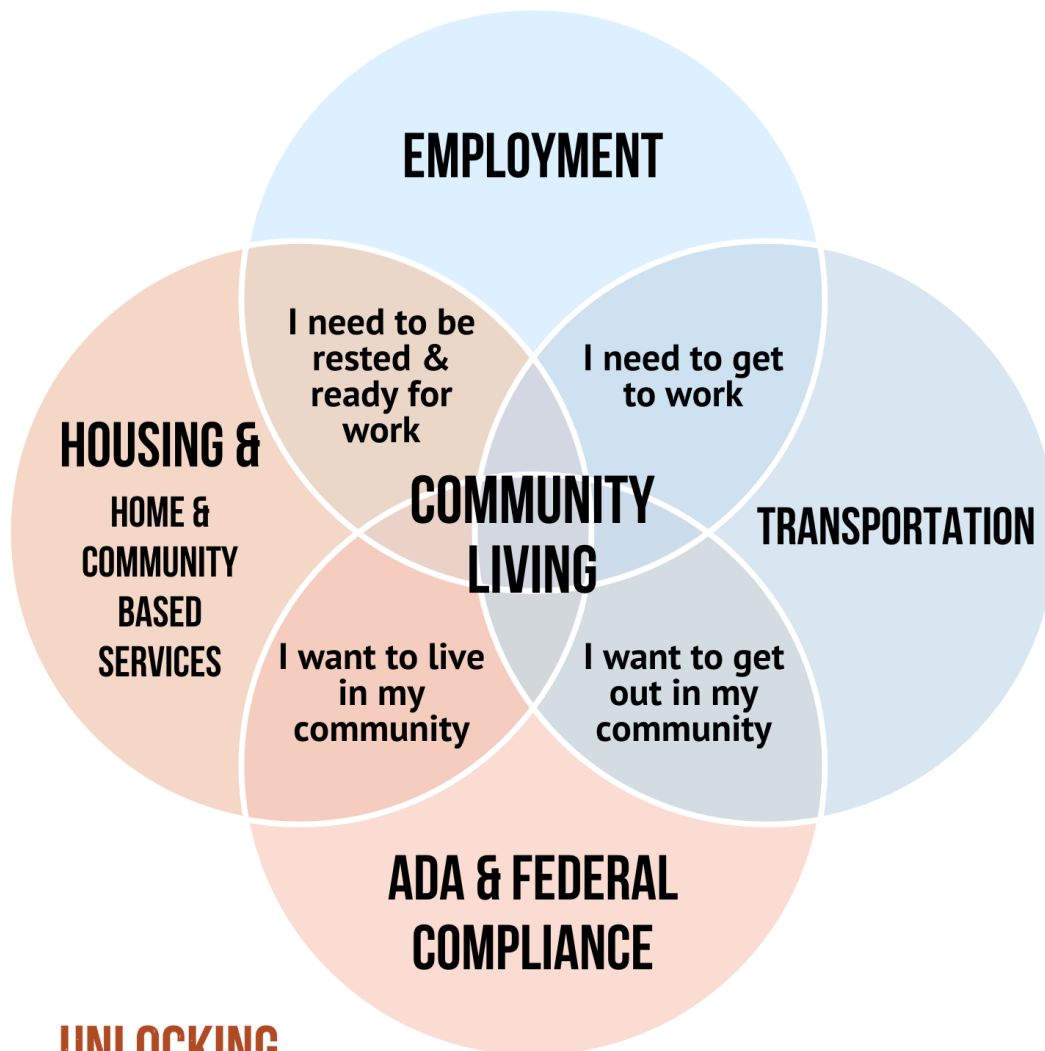
Supporting the bill S.915. The bill would make a disability-focused department. S.915, called the "Public Health/Agency Restructuring Bill," would:

- Make community living goals
- Make sure state agencies are following the law
- Create a committee that includes people with disabilities to offer advice to the department
- Pick a state ADA Coordinator

S.915 would make sure our state is following the ADA and 1999 Olmstead Decision.

“Until perceptions and expectations of people with disabilities change, SC will continue to remain significantly behind in terms of disability awareness and quality of life for people with disabilities.”

-A Disabled South Carolinian
2022 SC Statewide Independent Living Needs Assessment



Venn diagram represents the interconnectedness of employment, transportation, housing, and ADA coordinators to create inclusive community living for people with disabilities.