



Disability Advocacy Priorities in South Carolina

Take Action: Key Disability Advocacy Priorities in South Carolina

1. Expand Medicaid & Improve Waiver Services

- ✓ Urge lawmakers to increase funding for Medicaid and Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) to reduce waiting lists.
- ✓ Contact legislators to fix Medicaid reimbursement delays that disrupt services for people with disabilities.

2. Strengthen Special Education & Secure Funding

- ✓ Push for increased funding for special education programs and IEP resources in public schools.
- ✓ Advocate for policies that support hiring and training more special education teachers and staff.
- ✓ Monitor the state budget to ensure funding meets the needs of students with disabilities.

3. Improve Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities

- ✓ Advocate for policies that promote competitive, integrated employment and workplace accommodations under the ADA.
- ✓ Push for stronger enforcement of equal pay laws and prevent wage discrimination.
- ✓ Encourage funding for job training programs and employer incentives to hire people with disabilities.

4. Expand Affordable & Accessible Housing

- ✓ Call for tax incentives or grants to encourage developers to build inclusive housing.
- ✓ Speak out on the urgent need for more accessible and affordable housing options for people with disabilities.

5. Improve Mental Health Services

- ✓ Push for increased funding for mental health services, especially for individuals with dual diagnoses (IDD + mental health conditions).
- ✓ Advocate for first responder training to better recognize and respond to disability-related mental health crises.

6. Increase Transportation Accessibility

- ✓ Urge state leaders to expand accessible public transportation in rural and urban areas.
- ✓ Push for policies that ensure people with disabilities can reach employment, healthcare, and community resources.

7. Promote Supported Decision-Making Over Guardianship

- ✓ Support legislative efforts to make supported decision-making an alternative to restrictive guardianship.
- ✓ Raise awareness about self-determination rights for people with disabilities.

8. Ensure Disability-Inclusive Emergency Preparedness

- ✓ Push for inclusive disaster planning, ensuring shelters and evacuation plans meet accessibility standards.
- ✓ Advocate for funding to improve emergency communication systems for people with disabilities.

9. Hold State Agencies Accountable

- ✓ Demand better oversight of state agencies that provide disability services.
- ✓ Push for policies requiring transparency and service benchmarks to ensure agencies meet their responsibilities.

10. Address the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Workforce Crisis

- ✓ Advocate for higher wages and benefits to retain and attract skilled DSPs.
- ✓ Push for funding to support DSP training and professional development.
- ✓ Support initiatives that recognize the critical role DSPs play in providing quality care.

11. Expand Access to Assistive Technology

- ✓ Support legislation that expands funding for assistive technology programs like SC Assistive Technology Program (SCATP).
- ✓ Push for policies that improve funding and accessibility for critical assistive technologies.

12. Support the South Carolina Compassionate Care Act (Senate Bill S.53)

- ✓ Monitor the bill's progression to ensure it includes provisions protecting the rights and access of individuals with disabilities who may benefit from medical cannabis.
- ✓ Advocate for clear guidelines on prescription and usage to prevent discrimination and misuse.

13. Expand Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) & Develop an Olmstead Plan

- ✓ Support legislative efforts to create and fund a comprehensive Olmstead Plan to improve community living options.
- ✓ Advocate for reducing or eliminating waiting lists for Medicaid HCBS waivers to ensure timely access to services.
- ✓ Push for the appointment of an Olmstead compliance coordinator and implementation council to oversee and enforce progress.

14. Promote Disability Advocacy & Awareness

- ✓ Encourage resolutions recognizing Disability Awareness Month and similar initiatives.
- ✓ Engage with your community to increase public understanding of disability rights and inclusion.