

Access Starts With Partnership

Partnership with the Disability Community is Key!



Build Your Partnership Portfolio



Prepare your program for people with disabilities by completing an accessibility audit or checklist. An example is included in this resource: <https://inclusivehealth.specialolympics.org/tools-resources/guidelines-for-including-people-with-disabilities-in-health-promotion-programs>.

- You do not need to be a disability expert.
- Involve people with disabilities directly (e.g. as staff, advisory board members, peer support, or co-trainers).
- You are not alone. Many community partners can help.
- A list of helpful partners is included on pages 2 and 3 of this resource.



Recruiting People with Disabilities

- Use language that is respectful, positive, and affirming.
 - › Avoid jargon and stereotypes.
- Represent people with disabilities through diverse imagery.
- Include a clear statement with your contact information, and ask if any accommodations are needed for the meeting/event.
- Ensure that all recruitment materials are accessible with high-contrast colors, large print font, sans-serif font, plain language, and icons to aid in understanding.
- Share your accessible recruitment materials with disability organizations and at events/conferences.



Addressing Accessibility Is An Ongoing Process

- Access is a continual process. Regularly review policies, practices, and procedures.
- Use participatory approaches to involve people with disabilities (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys).
- Collect feedback to keep programs effective and relevant.
- Measure success to ensure long-term impact.

Common Disability Organizations

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and State Independent Living Councils (SILCs)

CILs are advocacy organizations run by and for people with disabilities in local communities. CILs provide peer support, independent living skills training, information, and referral, individual and systems advocacy, and transition from institutions and secondary education. CILs are not residential facilities, do not provide housing, and do not support segregation.

SILCs are statewide, governor-appointed councils that create and incorporate public feedback into the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). CILs and SILCs are supported at the national level by the [National Council on Independent Living](#) and/ or the [Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living](#).

[Association of University Centers on Disability \(AUCD\)](#) is a national association that supports a network of university-based researchers, educators, emerging leaders, people with disabilities, community advocates, and professionals that provide a variety of services and research aimed at promoting the quality of life, health, and well-being of people with disabilities.

[Special Olympics](#) is a global nonprofit organization that provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Its mission is to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive, and respected members of society through sports.

State Government Disability Service Agencies are mandated to provide services to people with disabilities. Each State structure varies, but could include a State department/division/bureau of mental health, developmental disabilities, or services for the blind or deaf.

Cross Disability Service Organizations serve people with a variety of disabilities and provide a range of services from information and referral, financial assistance, advocacy, housing, or other services. These can include:

- **Easter Seals** | www.easterseals.com
- **The Arc of the United States** | www.thearc.org
- **Paralyzed Veterans of America** | www.pva.org

Disability Specific Organizations are usually non-profit organizations that provide varying services and supports to people who are experiencing a specific condition. Examples include:

- **National Multiple Sclerosis Society** | www.nationalmssociety.org
- **Spina Bifida Association of America** | www.sbaa.org
- **National Down Syndrome Society** | www.ndss.org
- **Autism Society** | www.autismsociety.org

