

The Disability Infrastructure

As we go through this module, we will be hitting the high points.

It is not possible in the short time we must cover all the issues related to disability.

If you have questions, please email me (Doug Towne) at chair-ceo@accessready.org

The complexity of the disability infrastructure in the united states is vast and ever changing.

It includes entities at the national, state, local and individual levels across the business, government and nonprofit sectors.

It is impossible to list the thousands of agencies, companies, consumer groups, organizations, programs, projects, and individuals that make up the disability infrastructure.

Even if it were possible to create a snapshot of the disability infrastructure it would be only that because the makeup is constantly changing.

There are various business, Government and nonprofit entities that could be of direct assistance to you in your work and those you are assisting.

However, we believe the best entry point in most if not all cases are the Centers for Independent Living (CIL's).

The following information is context.

You can count on the CIL's to know where to take an issue at the local, state and national levels.

There are some fixed Constants that can be relied on with in the disability infrastructure.

Many of the parts of the infrastructure are mandated by Federal and state government laws.

Still more have been built up around that system through the business and nonprofit sectors.

The Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates much of the infrastructure of use to you and those you are working to help.

Many of the Federally mandated programs operate under the The Federal Administration for Community Living (ACL)

The Mission

* Maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.

The Vision

For all people, regardless of age and disability, to live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society.

Therefore, we will:

For the people we serve. promote strategies that enable people to live in their communities.

For our networks, provide leadership and support for our partners.

Be a source of collaboration, innovation, and solutions for our employees.

Support contributions, professional growth, and work-life balance for the public.

Be effective stewards of public resources and a source for information.

The ACL is a new organization created to bring together the resources and programs necessary.

The ACL is an agency under the Department of Health and Human Services

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

Our mission to provide leadership and resources to assist state and other agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other services to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence and integration into the community and the competitive labor market.

RSA administers the funding for and how state level Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and blind services (BS) programs work with people with disabilities.

In many states VR and BS programs are separate, but in some they are combined.

RSA is an agency under the Department of Education.

Title 7 of the act creates the Centers for independent Living.

Federally and state funded nonprofit organizations that cover every county in the nation.

They are nonprofit 501(C)3 independent organizations run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.

What Is Independent Living?

It is important to understand that Independent Living is not a place it is a philosophy, or viewpoint that barriers to independence have more to do with the world around us than with diagnosis, label or condition.

Nothing About Us Without Us is the motto and battle cry when needed of independent living.

Independent Living is about changing policies and practices that under-estimate, segregate or oppress people with disabilities.

Independent Living promotes the idea that people with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities, the same control over life choices as those without disabilities.

Independent living advocates, therefore, work to change societal attitudes by moving away from segregation, paternalism and pity and toward empowerment, independence and fully contributing and valuable citizens.

The centers have Five Core Services mandated under Federal law.

Each center may approach the core services differently.

The five core services are:

* Information & Referral

CIL's maintain an Information and Referral database for their operational area and beyond to provide information to individuals and families. If they do not have the information you are looking for, their policy is generally to locate it for you.

* Individual & Systems Advocacy

CIL's work in their communities to make a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities by removing barriers and focusing efforts on accessibility to public services, education and benefits. As a Center for Independent Living, they are at the forefront of advocating for access, choice and self-determination for individuals with disabilities.

CIL's can help advocate for the rights of individuals who have all types of disabilities on both an individual and a systems level.

* Self-advocacy: Individual Advocacy

Their advocacy services help individuals learn to advocate for their own personal rights. These rights may include health care benefits, access to health care and housing, as well as many more essential services. Self-advocacy is one of the most important skills anyone can have in their tool kit.

CIL's are dedicated to helping individuals learn to advocate for themselves in order to best maximize their choices and live an independent life.

* Systems advocacy:

Systems Advocacy usually involves working to change policies and remove the barriers people with disabilities face in their everyday lives.

CIL staff and consumers partner together to make system changes, including those related to government policies, transportation, public accommodation and housing.

* Peer Support:

The purpose of Peer Support is to match up individuals with similar disabilities and empower each other through encouragement and support. This service assists individuals adapting to life with a disability or transitioning through different life stages. CIL's also encourage individuals to seek out new opportunities.

* Independent Living Skills Training

Independent Living Skills Training includes almost anything an individual may need to maintain or increase their level of personal independence.

CIL's often provide an Independent Living Specialist to assist each person in the development of an Independent Living Plan. Together the individual and specialist set goals and develop action steps in order for the individual to achieve their goals. This process provides the opportunity for individuals to learn the skills and develop the necessary resources to maximize personal independence. This service will primarily be provided on an individual basis; only in the unique situation where the consumer will receive greater benefit from other than a one-on-one situation will a group method of providing service be recommended.

Topics of skills training include, but are not limited to:

- * use of community resources,
- * budgeting,
- * transportation skills,
- * cooking skills,

- * self-advocacy,
- * household management,
- * nutrition,
- * organizational skills,
- * communication skills,
- * stress management and
- * Transition

CIL's support people who have disabilities and those who are aging to move from a nursing facility to a quality community setting that meets their needs and wants.

The objectives of CIL Transition services are:

- * to move people from a facility to the community of their choice.
- * identify and eliminate barriers that prevent people from being able to move to the community.
- * improve the ability of MO Health Net to provide in-home services and
- * to ensure that there is continuous quality improvement of in-home services provided.

Many CIL's have expanded transition to include assisting youth on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that are making the transition from secondary education to post-secondary education and/or their work life.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that every student with a disability must have an Individual Education Plan. Besides educators the parents and perhaps the student can be involved in drafting this plan.

Statewide Independent Living Councils

Also created under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 they function at the statewide level.

The members of the council are appointed by the governor of each state.

They are funded by the state utilizing pass through funds from the federal government in addition to state funds.

The Statewide Independent Living Council's (or, "The SILC's") are private nonprofit corporations governed by people with all types of disabilities from all across their individual states.

In general, the role of the SILC's is to identify societal barriers to independent living and to collaborate with Centers for Independent Living, Rehabilitation Services and other related entities to remove those barriers and to increase the supports and services needed to create independent living opportunities.

SILC activities include:

- * Sponsoring public hearings, quarterly public meetings and other educational and outreach efforts providing information to public officials, state agencies and local organizations and individuals.
- * Conducting studies, and research.

Why the Independent Living Structure?

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 began by mandating rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in every state.

Even though it was joined with Federal funding advocates new that the implementation would be more or less difficult across the various states.

The Federal Rehabilitation services Administration would:

- * Set the standards.
- * Provide funding to the states and Directly to the Centers for Independent Living.

The CIL's and SILC's would advocate to protect the interests of people with disabilities.

Something more was needed

The Protection and Advocacy network (P&A)

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) is the hub around which the state organizations revolve. NDRN works in Washington DC on behalf of the Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) and Client Assistance Programs (CAPs) the nation's largest providers of legal advocacy services for people with disabilities. NDRN promotes the network's capacity, ensures that P&As/CAPs remain strong and effective by providing training and technical assistance, and advocates for laws protecting the civil and human rights of all people with disabilities.

The Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)

P&As in general can be found using the term

- * Disability Rights before their states name
- * Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA)

- * Disability Rights Maryland, (DRM)
- * Disability Rights Rhode Island (DRRI)

The general mission of P&AS is to

- * Vigorously advocate for and enforce the legal rights of people with disabilities.

The P&AS envision a world where people with disabilities are:

- * fully included in the workplace, neighborhoods and all aspects of community life.

The P&AS promote the civil rights of individuals with disabilities by

- * providing individual representation
- * advocating for systems change
- * reviewing abuse and neglect investigations.
- * When issues arise that should involve the P&AS in a given state, the effected person should take the lead, or the local Center for Independent Living can be consulted on the subject.

Top-Down verses Bottom-Up services

As Congress is often wanting to do in their attempt to help has created competing resources.

Traditionally the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) have worked under the Older Americans Act to serve the senior community.

Then the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) were created under the Administration for Community Living (ACL)

Intended to operate under the AAA's they were immediately viewed as competitors to the Centers for Independent Living (CIL's).

Competing for staff, resources and position in their community.

They are different, however.

The CIL's are very much a bottom-up grass roots community von by and for people with disabilities.

The ADRC's are very much a top-down program run through the existing AAA system.

While the CIL's are fully cross disability. The ADRC's in most cases have chosen to support specific types of disability like Developmental or intellectual.

This has created a competitive, but collegial referral system between the CIL's and ADRC's.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)

The Area Agencies on Aging are a group of non-profit organizations that have been serving seniors and individuals with disabilities in their communities since authorized in the mid-1970s under the Older Americans Act.

Many also now serve as the Aging and Disability Resource Center for their entire operational area, providing an initial entry point for all aging and disability social services and coordinating a network of partners and providers to better meet the needs of their aging population.

In general, their Mission reflect that:

The Area Agencies on Aging are a trusted resource to advocate, educate and empower seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers which promotes independence, in partnership with the community.

Their Vision is:

Their community will provide seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers with the resources and services needed to maintain independence, promote healthy aging and live an optimal quality of life.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) across the country seek to address the frustrations many older adults, people with disabilities, and family members experience when trying to learn about and access long-term services and supports.

ADRCs raise visibility about the full range of available options; provide objective information, advice, counseling and assistance; empower people to make informed decisions about their long-term services and supports; and help people access public and private programs. ADRCs provide unbiased, reliable information and counseling to people with all levels of income.

ADRCs are an important part of the No Wrong Door (NWD) system model. A collaboration between ACL, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Veterans Health Administration, the NWD initiative supports states working to streamline access to long-term services and supports for older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.

Contact information for many ADRCs can be found through the Eldercare Locator.

The Veterans Administration (VA)

- * The VA system is vast and complex.
- * At the local level when an issue comes up related to a veteran it is best to:
- * Call on the local center for independent living for assistance.

Many communities have a:

- * Veteran Liaison
- * Veteran run service center
- * Veteran community group
- * The local Center for independent living will have access to these resources saving you time in assisting the person in need.

Nonprofit Consumer Groups

- * Around the disability infrastructure a network of Nonprofit consumer groups have grown up at the national, state and local levels.
- * These are generally, but not necessarily related to one type of disability Several are nationwide and cross disability in general.

They are active in:

- * Individual and systemic advocacy
- * Legislative and public policy
- * Social and community welfare
- * Socialization and membership activities

A few organizations are:

- * membership entities at the national level only.

For example: The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities.

As a national cross-disability rights organization, AAPD advocates for full civil rights for the over 60 million Americans with disabilities by promoting:

- * equal opportunity

- * economic power
- * independent living and
- * political participation.

Convener

Justin Dart, father of the ADA and one of the founders of AAPD, often called for solidarity among all who love justice and equality. The disability community is massive and incredibly diverse. As a convener, AAPD is a cross disability organization that builds trust and unity through open, honest conversations. When we stand in solidarity on any issue, we have the power to create lasting change.

Connector

Disability is a natural part of the human experience that influences all of us. As a connector, AAPD is a bridge that joins the disability community with our friends, adversaries, family, businesses, schools, and the community at large, amplifying a powerful voice for change.

Catalyst

Like champions of justice before us have proven, seemingly underestimated actions lead to significant transformation. As a catalyst, AAPD is action-oriented, building chain reactions that increase the rate and speed of change. A small spark can ignite extraordinary results. AAPD is a membership organization and can be joined and supported through their website. www.aapd.com

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

In support of the independent living movement NCIL was formed.

* Not mandated in law NCIL has become the hub around which the movement revolves. While the eight hundred plus centers are independent many work together through NCIL.

Mission:

NCIL advances independent living and the rights of people with disabilities.

Vision:

NCIL envisions a world in which people with disabilities are valued equally and participate fully.

The National Council on Independent Living is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities.

Founded in 1982, NCIL represents thousands of organizations and individuals including:

- * individuals with disabilities,
- * Centers for Independent Living (CILs),
- * Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and
- * other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States.

An outcome of the national disability rights and Independent Living Movements, NCIL was founded to embody the values of disability culture and Independent Living philosophy, which creates a new social paradigm and emphasizes that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, that they have crucial and valuable perspectives to contribute to society and are deserving of equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities.

Since its inception, NCIL has carried out its mission by

- * assisting member CILs and SILCs in building their capacity to promote social change.
- * eliminate disability-based discrimination, and
- * create opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the legislative process to affect change.

NCIL promotes a national advocacy agenda set by its membership and provides input and testimony on national disability policy. www.ncil.org

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON DISABILITY(NOD)

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) increases employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities. Our programs and services enable companies to realize the competitive advantages of hiring people with disabilities.

America still has a long way to go to close the gaps in levels of participation between people with and without disabilities. But the landscape has changed dramatically, and much has been accomplished since our founding in 1982. More than ever before, people with disabilities are present throughout American society and are contributing greatly to our national and community life. The National Organization on Disability is proud to have been at the center of this progress and is committed to even greater advancements in the decades ahead.

OUR MISSION

When the National Organization on Disability was founded in 1982, it was the first organization in the United States to represent every person with a disability, regardless of particular needs or circumstances. To have a disability is to belong to a large extended community — one out of every four Americans fits the description that includes immense diversity, but also common threads of shared experience. Our mission has always been to break down the barriers that fence people off from the wider community. Today, we focus the whole of our energy on eliminating the most wasteful and isolating of all those barriers: the artificial gulf that keeps tens of millions of people out of the productive workforce.

We envision a world where all people with disabilities enjoy full opportunity for employment, enterprise and earnings, and employers know how to make the most of our talents.

OUR STRATEGY: WE HELP EMPLOYERS PUT ABILITY TO WORK

NOD is the national leader in helping businesses tap the disability labor force. We do not just analyze, advise, and assess; we make the journey with companies. Our strength derives from our mission and history, from the extent and quality of the services we offer employers, from our personal experiences of disability and how it plays out in the community and the workforce, and from the leadership we mobilize to ensure that people with disabilities can achieve the dignity, fulfillment, and financial independence that comes from productive employment.

We are a partner to business, education, service providers, government, philanthropy, and, most of all, to the tens of millions of Americans with disabilities eager to work and ready to take a full and equal role in our national progress.

For us, and for the donors and foundations who generously support us, the labor market is not just an exchange place for employers and employees. It is the gateway to individual accomplishment and independence. We have focused our entire mission on achieving equity in the workforce, because that is where ability contributes to national prosperity, to business success, and, most importantly, to personal satisfaction and growth.

For NOD, every unused talent is a promise unkept, a hope defeated—because in the labor market, as in every aspect of life...it is ability that counts!

LEARN MORE ABOUT NOD - www.nod.org

Getting involved

* Membership in these organization often begins with getting involved in a local chapter or affiliate.

* Going to the national website will lead you to the state affiliate which will lead you to the local Chapter.

* These organizations are important to people with disabilities and especially to those who are newly disabled.

* Camaraderie with those managing the same kind of disability can be helpful, comforting, enlightening and inspirational.

The following organizations are presented in alphabetical order.

* Many have different approaches to their mission from other organizations.

* Most are membership organizations, while others are not.

* Many operate nationally, across several states while others are restricted to a particular state or number of counties.

* The politics in the disability community is complex and goes beyond the scope of this presentation.

Access Ready Inc (ARI)

* What is an Access Ready Environment?

An access Ready Environment is where access for people with disabilities at the physical and technological levels is a matter of forethought, design, inclusion and planning instead of a condition of afterthought, delay and discrimination resulting in risk to all concerned.

Access Ready Inc. is a nonprofit cross disability advocacy organization promoting a policy of inclusion and accessibility across information technology through education and best practices.

Access Ready Inc. shall make the results of its technical findings, policy discussions and advocacy efforts available to the public through accessready.org, its social media stream and other public relations efforts.

The Board of Directors of Access Ready has deemed inaccessible information technology to be a clear, growing, and present danger to the civic, economic, and social welfare of people with disabilities.

Mission

The mission of Access Ready is

* to promote a policy of accessibility benefiting all people regardless of ability across information technology utilized for two-way communications.

Vision

The vision of the Access Ready organization is a society where information technology is accessible to all people regardless of ability as a matter of course and not an afterthought.

Purpose

The purpose of Access Ready is to educate the public and private sectors of the importance of accessible information technology to the future of all people regardless of ability. To support this education by developing initiatives that promote policies that ensure the creation and maintenance of accessible technologies utilized for two-way communications at all levels which allow for easy use by people with the widest range of abilities possible.

To develop employment and business opportunities for people with disabilities that support its educational activities in the field of information technology and related areas.

To provide consulting and educational services to buyers, developers, and users of information technology that promotes its highest and best use in society.

To promote the concept of a technologically accessible society which fosters:

- * Freedom of expression, speech, and worship
- * Freedom from fear, ignorance, and want,
- * Freedom from dishonesty, exclusion, and immorality
- * Freedom of aspiration, invention, and inclusion

www.accessready.org

The American Council of the Blind (ACB)

* The American Council of the Blind strives to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people.

www.acb.org

Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)

BVA serves as ambassadors and mentors for all veterans and their families coping with sight loss.

Vision

BVA continually strives to better the lives of all who served in the Armed Forces living with sight loss through:

expert advocacy, engaged membership, clear communication and peer inspired self-reliance.

Our BVA family epitomizes respect, honor, dedication and commitment to sustain a thriving, informed, patriotic and connected community.

Purpose

BVA is the ONLY congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization created for, consisting of and led by Visually Impaired Veterans focused on the issues, advocacy and mentorship vital to all veterans and families coping with sight loss regardless of service connection. Specifically tasked by Congress to:

*Operate as a not-for-profit corporation exclusively for charitable, educational, patriotic and civic improvement purposes.

*Promote the welfare of blinded veterans so that, notwithstanding their disabilities, they may take their rightful place in the community and work with their fellow citizens toward the creation of a peaceful world.

*Preserve and strengthen a spirit of fellowship among blinded veterans so that they may give mutual aid and assistance to one another.

*Maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to encourage loyalty to the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the States in which they reside.

Motto

Blinded Veterans Helping Blinded Veterans

Blinded Veterans Association BVA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

www.bva.org

Family Network on Disabilities (FND)

Family Network on Disabilities (FND) was founded in 1985 by a group of parents of persons with disabilities who came together for mutual support and information-sharing. FND is a family-centered and family-driven grassroots organization for persons with disabilities and their families that is family-centered and family-driven. The mission of Family Network on Disabilities is striving for complete integration and equality of people with disabilities in a society without barriers. FND serves all persons with all disabilities and believes that everyone has intrinsic value and the inherent right to respect, independence, knowledge, freedom of choice, inclusion, quality of life, success, and equality.

Family Network on Disabilities operates the following programs across Florida:

Parent Education Network (PEN), Parent Support Network (PSN), Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN), Family Star, and United Families. They are all programs designed to ensure that parents of children with the full range of disabilities and mental health challenges have the training and information they need to prepare their children for not only school but to be able to lead productive, independent lives to the fullest extent possible. These programs offer free help and information to families of students with disabilities and the professionals that serve them.

PEN provides these services to the following counties: Broward, Indian River, Lake, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, and St. Lucie.

PSN provides these services to the following counties: Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, De Soto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Sarasota, and Sumter.

POPIN provides these services to the following counties: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Nassau, Okaloosa, Putnam, Santa Rosa, St. Johns, Seminole, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington.

Family STAR (Support, Training, Assistance, Resources) is Florida's Family to Family Health Information Center. This program provides information and support to families of children and youth with special health care needs.

UNITED FAMILIES is a state grant designed to ensure that families are the catalysts for transforming the mental health and related systems in Florida by strengthening coalitions among family organizations and between family members, policymakers, and service providers while recognizing that family members can be effective change agents.

The Jan La Belle Scholarship Program was established in 2009 to provide a financial resource to individuals with disabilities who desire to pursue their personal and career goals through attendance at a postsecondary institution. Awards are made annually, up to \$15,000. Awards are targeted at individuals between the ages of 16-24 who have a disability and who are pursuing higher education. Their school of choice may be academic or vocational.

FND provides assistance and support to parents, educators, community organizations, and faith-based groups to increase the kinds and types of parental

involvement and engagement to increase student academic achievement across Florida. FND provides these free services to form and foster partnerships between home and school to build sustainable relationships for student success.

All services provided by Family Network on Disabilities are delivered to families in a format that is suitable to their needs and culture by professionals who have a personal understanding of what it is like to have a disability or a loved one with a disability. www.fndusa.org

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

NAD is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America. Established in 1880, the NAD was shaped by deaf leaders who believed in the right of the American deaf community to use sign language, to congregate on issues important to them, and to have its interests represented at the national level. These beliefs remain true to this day, with American Sign Language as a core value. The advocacy scope of the NAD is broad, covering a lifetime and impacting future generations in the areas of early intervention, education, employment, health care, technology, telecommunications, youth leadership, and more - improving the lives of millions of deaf and hard of hearing Americans. The NAD also carries out its federal advocacy work through coalition efforts with specialized national deaf and hard of hearing organizations, as well as coalitions representing national cross-disability organizations. On the international front, the NAD represents the United States of America to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), an international human rights organization. Individual and organizational membership makes it possible for the NAD to ensure that the collective interests of the American deaf and hard of hearing community are seen and represented among our nation's policy makers and opinion leaders at the federal level. The NAD is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by the generosity of individual and organizational donors, including corporations and foundations.

* NAD state affiliates are named using the geographic location followed by "Association of the Deaf."

Texas Association of the Deaf (TAD)

Florida Association of the Deaf (FAD)

for example

www.nad.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

What started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979 has blossomed into the nation's leading voice on mental health. Today, we are an alliance of more than 600 local affiliates who work in your community to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need.

NAMI local affiliates and programs can be located through their home website.

www.nami.org

National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

The National Federation of the Blind is a membership organization of blind Americans experiencing all degrees and types of blindness, as well as their families, educators, and other interested parties. Since its founding in 1940, the National Federation of the Blind has grown to become the largest and most influential organization of the blind in the United States, now boasting a membership in the tens of thousands, organized into chapters and affiliates in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

To achieve its goals, the NFB conducts programs to educate the public about the true ability of the blind, in every situation, to function at the same level as their sighted peers. The programs also serve to provide the education and training necessary for the blind to participate in society actively and equally, and to build confidence in themselves as blind people. This work includes Braille education programs for blind children and adults; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs for blind youth; nonvisual access technology consultation, development, education, and demonstration; broad-based communications to the general public; legal advocacy; and services such as a free talking newspaper service (NFB-NEWSLINE®), a free slate and stylus distribution program, and a peer-to-peer Braille material exchange service (www.nfbsharebraille.org). The organization is particularly focused on the persistent inequalities highlighted by a 70 percent unemployment rate for blind adults, a 10 percent Braille literacy rate among blind children, inaccessible technology adopted by educational institutions, an archaic and abusive subminimum wage allowance for employers of people with disabilities, and persistent yet avoidable barriers to private and independent voting for blind people in US elections.

The National Federation of the Blind has consistently worked with voters, advocates, technology developers, and government officials to secure the rights of blind voters to an independent, private ballot. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) emphasizes the importance of research, testing, and technical support that specifically addresses the unique needs of blind and low-vision voters, and the fundamental role that blind people must have in the facilitation of training and technical assistance activities. The National Federation of the Blind has been conducting training and technical assistance projects and working with states on issues related to nonvisual election technology, since September 30, 2003, under the HAVA training and technical assistance projects. The organization remains committed to innovative collaborations to protect the rights of blind voters in the future.

* NFB state affiliates are named using NFB followed by the geographic location.

NFB of Texas

NFB of Florida

for example

www.nfb.org

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

OUR MISSIONS & HISTORY

Together, we are the voices of
generations of men and women who

* served and need support.

Our History

PVA was originally founded by a band of service members who came home from World War II with spinal cord injuries. They returned to a grateful nation, but also to a world with few solutions to the major challenges they faced.

These wounded heroes made a decision not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society. They created Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization dedicated to serving veterans and to medical research, advocacy and civil rights for all people with disabilities.

Since 1946, Paralyzed Veterans of America has been on a mission to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes. We have had a single-minded mission to empower our brave men and women to regain what they fought for: their freedom and independence.

Mission Statement

Paralyzed Veterans of America, a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, has developed a unique expertise on a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of our members - veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

PVA will use that expertise to be the leading advocate for:

Quality health care for our members

Research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction.

Benefits available as a result of our members' military service.

Civil rights and opportunities that maximize the independence of our members.

To enable Paralyzed Veterans to continue to honor this commitment, we must recruit and retain members who have the experience, energy, dedication, and passion necessary to manage the organization and ensure adequate resources to sustain the programs essential for Paralyzed Veterans of America to achieve its mission.

Our Core Focus

Vets Serving Vets

Spinal Cord Research

Disability Rights

PVA does have local and state affiliates that can be located through its national website. www.pva.org

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)

The mission of UCP is to be the indispensable resource for individuals with cerebral palsy and other disabilities, their families, and their communities.

Vision Statement

Life of inclusion for individuals with disabilities

It is a commitment to a life without limits for people with disabilities.

We are committed to change and progress for adults and children with disabilities, whether it is a disability evidenced from birth, the result of an accident, or as a consequence of aging.

UCP local service providers, known as affiliates, provide services and support on a community-by-community basis, serving the unique needs of people with disabilities in their region.

There is a significant percentage of people served by UCP affiliates that have disabilities other than cerebral palsy, including Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

It is about today and tomorrow.

By harnessing innovation from adaptive technologies to the ingenuity and pioneering spirit of our affiliates we are advancing independence and productivity for people with disabilities.

We strive to build a better world for tomorrow, today.

The backbone of UCP is the services provided by our affiliates, including housing, therapy, assistive technology training, early intervention programs, individual and family support, social and recreation programs, community living, state and local referrals, employment assistance and advocacy. www.ucp.org

Snapshot

This is only a snapshot of the entities that serve people with disabilities.

There are thousands of businesses, government agencies and nonprofits across the nation all of which can be of support.

There are businesses which provide goods and services.

There are government agencies that provide services, set standards and impose safeguards.

There are nonprofit's that provide services, camaraderie and direction at the cross-disability level and in the specific disability community.

With more than three hundred recognized disability types it is impossible to provide a full database of all the resources in this presentation.

Google the disability to find resources or reach out to your local Center for Independent Living for assistance.

You can always contact:

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