



Expanding Opportunities for People with Spinal Cord Disabilities for Over 60 Years

About Our Mission & Services

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About Our Mission & Services

- United Spinal Association is a 501(c)(3) national disability rights and veterans service organization founded in 1946, providing service to thousands of members across the United States.
- Approximately 700,000 Americans have spinal cord disabilities as a result of traumatic injury, multiple sclerosis, polio, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, spina bifida or other diseases. Membership in United Spinal is free and open to any individual with these disabilities, regardless of age.
- Our mission is to enhance the lives of people with spinal cord disabilities by ensuring quality health care, promoting research, advocating for civil rights and independent living, educating the public about these issues and enlisting its help to achieve these fundamental goals.

United Spinal Association's comprehensive services include:

Navigating Benefit Programs—We share over 60 years of experience securing health care and sorting through the often confusing array of benefits available through state and federal agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, Medicare, and Medicaid. We may also represent our members before the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Social Security Administration in the event of claim disputes or appeals.

Funding Research—Since our founding in 1946, we have provided over \$52 million for spinal cord research and the education of health care professionals. Our financial support helped to launch two of the most respected spinal cord research facilities in the country at Yale University and the James J. Peters Dept. of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the Bronx, NY.

Professional Conferences—We organize and present the largest annual spinal cord disabilities conference in the US, providing state-of-the-art advances in treatments, technology, and best practices for physicians, nurses, psychologists and social workers.

Advocating for Civil Rights—We drafted significant portions of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Amendments Act and the Air Carrier Access Act. We pioneered accessible transit in NYC, which became a nationwide model for implementing the public bus and rail system provisions of the ADA and we continue to press for the rights of people with disabilities through state and federal legislation, the courts, grass-roots advocacy, and education.

Information—Our lively monthly magazine, *Action*, keeps members informed of legislative and advocacy issues, upcoming adaptive sports events, personal profiles, technology information, women's issues and activities for kids with spinal cord disabilities. We also distribute over 100,000 specialized publications, such as *Disability Etiquette*, every year to the general public, the media and disability organizations throughout the country explaining disability issues, veterans affairs, advocacy strategies, and safety concerns. Further, we offer a peer-reviewed medical journal available free to members of our professional associations and by subscription to the general public, *The Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*. In addition, we publish *Multiple Sclerosis Quarterly Report*, and two open access, on-line journals, *SCI Psychosocial Process*, and *SCI Nursing*.

Grants and Technical Assistance—We offer much-needed grants for improving the accessibility of the homes and apartments of our members with limited incomes and we also provide financial assistance for installing adaptive controls in vehicles, which can make a substantial improvement in the quality of life for our members. We also host a popular and informative web site offering candid evaluations of wheelchairs, both manual and power models, as well as reviews and specifications for a wide variety of adaptive equipment and useful advice for finding the right assistive technology. www.usatechguide.org.

Training and consultation—We are the leading organization in the country for training design professionals, architects, engineers, and building inspectors on state and federal accessible building codes; last year we trained more than 4,000 professionals nationwide. We also offer a full-service consulting service for project developers that ensures any new or renovated facility—from a sports arena to a skyscraper—is fully accessible to people with disabilities. www.accessibility-services.com

Keeping physically fit—Guided by the belief that the physical and psychological benefits of athletic competition are no different for people with disabilities than they are for the able-bodied, we provide a comprehensive menu of adaptive sports for all age groups. We also co-sponsor wheelchair sports teams with professional franchises such as the New York Yankees, the New Jersey Nets, the Jets and others. These teams compete nationwide in wheelchair basketball, baseball, sled hockey and quad rugby; we also develop and run numerous adaptive sports clinics for children and adults.

Staying mobile—Our “Wheelchair Medic” program repairs nearly 2,300 wheelchairs annually and we offer the only program in NYC capable of doing repairs directly at an individual’s home. We also offer wide selection of power and manual wheelchairs, scooters, adaptive sports equipment, and a full line of accessories; we also ship wheelchair parts to our members nationwide. And we regularly distribute refurbished wheelchairs and other durable medical equipment to disabled adults and children in disaster areas and/or third-world countries. www.wheelchairmedic.com

Making travel more accessible—With over half a century of experience helping people with spinal cord disabilities get the most out of life, United Spinal has introduced a valuable new service for our members: Able to Travel, a joint venture with Rich Worldwide Travel. We believe that people with disabilities have the same rights to a hassle-free vacation or business trip as everyone else and our trained, professional agents can locate accessible accommodations and transportation alternatives worldwide. www.abletotravel.org

United Spinal Association is a 501 (c) (3) organization.
For more information, please visit www.unitedspinal.org.

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