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# ASSEMBLING A COALITION



***“ADVOCATING HAS GIVEN ME A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS. I GET TO SHARE WHAT I LEARN WITH MY LOCAL CHAPTER TO DEVELOP A STRONGER VOICE.”***

**RICK HAYDEN (CA)  
UNITED SPINAL ADVOCATE AND BOARD MEMBER**

# UTILIZING COALITIONS

## Teaming up to drive change together

A coalition is an alliance of individuals and/or organizations working together to achieve a common purpose. Together coalition members address the needs and concerns of their particular community. Often, coalitions are organized around a single initiative or event. By collaborating with other advocates and organizations who have similar goals, it's easier to reap the benefits of partnership and maximize effectiveness in your efforts.



# ORGANIZING A COALITION

**There is power in numbers when it comes to like-minded individuals. This can simply mean working with other people with disabilities on an advocacy issue. For a larger coalition, it's good to have groups of allies with different roles who see eye to eye on the same issue. For example:**

**On any health issue**, you'll want to include: consumers, nurses, physicians and case managers

**On a transportation issue**, you'll want to include: fixed route operators (trains and buses), ridesharing entities, automobile manufacturers and related partners in order to better show them the importance of the necessity for people with disabilities as customers

Who holds authority in your local area? Choosing people who have built-in credibility and community respect is important. Think about inviting members of the media, elected officials, and other advocacy groups

Consider whether you want this to be a fully fledged formal correlation or loose alliance of allies? Make sure interests align and you can work together.



# ADVOCATES IN ACTION: COMMUNITY ROLLERS

## **RAFFERTY LAREDO (TX) UNITED SPINAL ADVOCATE AND CHAPTER LEADER**

**As a standout Houston spinal cord injury ally, Rafferty has supported his local chapter's advocacy in a myriad of ways. Notably, by fighting alongside and connecting individuals with opportunities to be heard.** Laredo encourages,

*"Many voices can shout down the walls, because together we are one."*



## **KIM HARRISON, NORTHERN FLORIDA UNITED SPINAL STATE ADVOCACY COORDINATOR**

**Active participant in city town hall advisory and planning meetings and GA statehouse advocate**



*"It's about speaking for others that can't, both locally and nationally. We get to make important legislative relationships at major events like ROCH, but we have to build on those relationships with representatives on a local level to show them more of our lives and stories. When I visit legislators on a national level, it's nice to mention that person's counterparts name at the local level. When I visit local offices, I can mention their counterpart at a national level."*