

## **Quality Principles: Process, Approach and Outcomes**

Partners in Policymaking is based on a core set of principles about process, approach, and outcomes:

- **Experiential Learning:** Partners participants learn by doing. They prepare and deliver testimony. They practice speaking to public officials. A variety of different learning methods ensure participants acquire the competencies.
- **Diversity:** Partners groups are diverse in experiences, disability types, geographic location, gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds, income levels and education levels. Partners participants learn as much from the experiences of their peers as from the curriculum and presenters.
- **National Speakers:** Partners participants obtain training from speakers who provide a national perspective that is up-to-date on best practices and state-of-the-art.
- **Best Practices:** Partners participants learn about what's possible, not about what already is! They break out of the status quo and ask, "What if..."
- **Leadership:** Partners participants acquire knowledge for change, not just for knowledge's sake. They use the things they learn to take action for social change. They provide leadership in their communities. Partners is not about getting the most services for participants and their families.
- **Length of Time:** Funders make a commitment to Partners programs for a full 8 sessions of training. Partners participants receive 128 hours of instruction over the course of a program year.
- **Sufficient Funding:** The funding agency commits to provide a level of funding that will ensure a quality program, based on the standards and recommendations in this handbook. Funders commit to quality replications that pay for all the program related expenses. This money supports the other quality principles
- **Evaluation:** The compilation of initial, six-month, and long-term surveys reveal the effectiveness of the program, and may be a critical factor in a funder's decision to continue funding future Partners programs. Partners participants and speakers evaluate their experiences with the program. Partners participants are surveyed before they begin the program, and at six months following graduation. Long-term surveys are done for several years. These results are tracked and monitored for long-term trends.

- **Not an Organization:** Partners is a leadership training program, not an organization. The real work of graduates is in community, state and national organizations. The program links them with networks and helps them acquire the competencies needed to succeed.
- **Outcomes:** The program's ultimate outcomes are increased independence, productivity, integration, inclusion and self-determination for all Partners participants and their family members.