



Partners in Policymaking[®]

Class 44 | 2026-2027

Designed for parents and legal guardians of young children with developmental disabilities and adults with disabilities

Leadership Training Program

The Partners program was created by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities 39 years ago, and has been offered nationally and internationally. Through informative and interactive sessions, Partners teaches leadership skills and the process of developing positive partnerships with elected officials and other policymakers who make decisions about the services that you and/or your family use.

Partners is accessible, informative and empowering. Since 1987, almost 1,200 self-advocates and parents have graduated in Minnesota.

Requirements

To participate, the Partners program requires:

- a commitment to attend all eight sessions
- an interest in learning and practicing new skills in a comfortable and safe environment
- a desire to build and strengthen a network of people with a variety of life experiences
- a willingness to learn from national and state experts who share our vision and values

Session Dates and Topics

September 18-19, 2026

Friday & Saturday

- History of Disabilities and Services
- History of the Parent, Self Advocacy, and Independent Living Movements
- How Partners Has Changed My Life!
- Person Centered Thinking & Person Centered Planning

October 16-17, 2026

Friday & Saturday

- Inclusive Education
- Roundtables with Minnesota Department of Education Staff
- Civil Discourse

November 13-14, 2026

Friday & Saturday

- County Role in Developmental Disabilities
- Creating a Future Vision
- Meetings with County Commissioners

January 15-16, 2027

Friday & Saturday

- Supported Living and Customized Employment
- Leadership Styles

February 12-13, 2027

Friday & Saturday

- Community Organizing
- Data Practices and Parliamentary Procedure
- The Role of the Media

March 14-15, 2027

Sunday & Monday

- Minnesota's Legislative Process
- Mock Legislative Hearings
- Governor's Open Appointment Process
- Legislative Update
- State Capitol Visit and Meeting with Legislators

April 9-10, 2027

Friday & Saturday

- Introduction to—and the Role of—the Federal Government
- Federal Issues Update
- Meetings with Congressional Delegation Staff

May 14-15, 2027

Friday & Saturday

- Beyond Partners—Moving Forward
- Personal Growth
- Graduation

Time Commitment

Participants are required to attend all eight weekend sessions (September-May with no session in December). Sessions run from 11am-9pm on Day One and from 8:30am-3pm on Day Two. (Sessions are held on Friday and Saturday except in March which is on Sunday and Monday.)

Location

Crowne Plaza Aire, 3 Appletree Square, Bloomington, MN 55425.

Cost

There is no fee to attend. Program costs are covered in part by a federal appropriation from the Administration for Community Living to the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council). These funds are used to carry out the Partners program for those chosen for the class.

Overnight accommodations are provided at no cost for those who drive a distance to attend. Class members are matched and housed in double occupancy rooms. Mileage reimbursement is also available for class members.

Also covered are meals, speaker handouts, resource materials, publications, and interpreter or language translation services.

Respite/Child Care & PCAs

Reimbursement up to a maximum dollar amount per weekend session is available for participants needing these services when another funding source does not pick up these expenses. (NOTE: The Partners program does not provide onsite child care services. Family members are not permitted to stay at the hotel during the weekend training sessions unless a family member is serving as a personal assistant to a class member.)

Independence
Productivity
Self-Determination
Integration
Inclusion

Application
deadline:
July 10, 2026.

Homework

After each session, a homework assignment that builds on and supports the topics addressed must be completed by each class member and turned in at the following session.

Presenters

Speakers are national and state subject matter experts or practitioners.

Selection Process

A Review Committee, which includes Partners graduates and representatives from the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, selects participants based on several criteria. Class size is limited to 35 participants. Decisions will be made by August 7, 2026.

Apply online at
www.PartnersInPolicymaking.com

Coordinated through



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Learn More

www.PartnersInPolicymaking.com

Applications/Questions

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