



## **Partners in Policymaking**

### **What is Partners in Policymaking?**

- Partners in Policymaking is a leadership and advocacy training program that teaches self-advocates and family members to be community leaders and how to obtain the best available services for themselves and others.
- Based on a national model, the overall goal of Partners is to develop productive partnerships between people who need and use services and those in a position to make policy and law.
- Partners' participants are able to accomplish this by meeting and talking to national leaders in the field of developmental disabilities.
- Partners will hear presentations about current issues and state-of-the art practices, as well as policymaking and legislative processes at local, state, and national levels.

### **Who should Apply?**

- Adults who have a developmental disability
- Parents of young children with developmental disabilities
- Men and women representing different ages, experiences, ethnic groups, and geographical regions of Florida
- Highly motivated and enthusiastic people who want to work for systems change and improve the lives for Floridians with developmental disabilities

### **What is my role as a Partner?**

- Make a commitment to attend six monthly sessions. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory. Training sessions begin at 12:30 p.m. on the first day and conclude at 4:00 p.m. on the last day. Only individuals selected to participate in the Partners' program may attend and stay at the hotel during the training sessions.
- Tentative schedule for the 2009 program is:
  - Friday and Saturday, June 26 and 27 in Orlando
  - Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 24, 25, and 26 in Orlando
  - Friday and Saturday, August 21 and 22 in Orlando
  - Friday and Saturday, September 25 and 26 in Orlando
  - Wednesday and Thursday, October 21 and 22 in Tallahassee
  - Friday and Saturday, November 13 and 14 in Orlando

- Complete all homework assignments (approximately 2 to 4 hours) between training sessions, usually consisting of reading, evaluating resources on the internet, and practical exercises.
- Implement skills learned during your training and continue advocacy work on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.
- Complete a major project benefiting people with developmental disabilities in your community.

### **What does Partners Cost?**

- There is NO financial cost to participate in Partners
- Shared lodging and meals will be provided
- Travel expenses are reimbursed
- Attendant care and respite services are available and will be reimbursed if needed, at a pre-arranged rate
- Other needed accommodations will be provided at no cost such as an interpreter, a translator, or alternative materials
- Partners WILL cost you time and effort but Partners' graduates agree that the commitment you make as a participant is well worth the life changes you experience, the knowledge you will gain, and the relationships you will build while participating in the program.

### **What you will get in return!**

- Information, skills, and confidence to bring about change for those with developmental disabilities across a life-span
- The opportunity to meet and unite with others who have similar concerns and create a powerful voice on important issues
- Hands-on experiences in state law-making process
- Instruction and access to national experts in their field

Topics will include:

- History of the Disability Movement
- Inclusive Education and Transition
- Assistive Technology
- Supported/Competitive Employment
- Supported/Independent Living
- Person Centered Planning
- Community Support
- State and Federal Legislative Process
- Leadership Development
- Organizing for Systems Change

## Top 10 Values of Partners in Policymaking

**Value #1:** People with disabilities are people first. They are not “the handicapped” or “the disabled.” Using People First Language is a must – no labels!

**Value #2:** People with disabilities need real friendships, not just relationships with paid staff.

**Value #3:** People with disabilities are entitled to the full meaning of the First Amendment right to free speech. The ability to communicate, in whatever form, must be available to every person with a disability.

**Value #4:** People with disabilities must be able to enjoy full mobility and accessibility that allows active participation in community life.

**Value #5:** People with disabilities must be assured continuity in their lives through families and neighborhood connections.

**Value #6:** People with disabilities must be treated with respect and dignity.

**Value #7:** People with disabilities need to be in positions to negotiate and have their wants and needs met.

**Value #8:** People with disabilities must be able to exercise choice in all areas of their lives.

**Value #9:** People with disabilities must be able to live in the homes of their choice with the supports they need.

**Value #10:** People with disabilities must be able to enjoy the benefits of true productivity through employment and/or contributions as members of their communities.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council is currently accepting applications from interested people for the 2009 Class. The program is open to a limited number of people so **apply today!** Application deadline is March 1, 2009.

Before you take the time to complete the application attached, please consider carefully the time commitment involved in participating in this program. Our financial obligation to train participants for this program is substantial; therefore your total time commitment is extremely important to us.

Submit your Partners in Policymaking application in one of the following ways:

1. Complete and e-mail to program coordinator Debbie Hannifan at Dhannifan@tampabay.rr.com
2. Complete and mail to Debbie Hannifan Post Office Box 2864 Lakeland, FL 33806
3. Complete and fax to Debbie Hannifan (863) 688-2551

**Application deadline is March 1, 2009**

If you need assistance completing the application or would like it in an alternative format, please e-mail Debbie Hannifan at Dhannifan@tampabay.rr.com

Applications will go before a statewide selection committee who will consider national criteria when selecting participants.

Every effort is made to include a balanced representation of:

Males and females  
Ethnic and racial minorities  
Individuals and families of various socio-economic status  
Single-parent and non-traditional families  
Individuals from rural, urban, and suburban communities  
Individuals with varying disabilities

Prior advocacy experience is not necessary and any person with a developmental disability is strongly encouraged to apply. Any necessary supports will be provided in order to fully participate in the program.

Accepted applicants will be contacted approximately two months prior to the start of the program. At that time, accepted applicants will be asked to sign a commitment contract requiring full participation. If the accepted applicant cannot commit to full participation for any reason, the applicant will be refused attendance and must re-apply to the program for future consideration.