

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) is a nonprofit organization that encourages and advocates for opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities and their families to enhance their quality of life in their communities. The Council is comprised of twenty-eight members appointed by the Governor. Over 60 percent of the Council's members are people with developmental disabilities or their family members and guardians.

The Council strives to enhance the independence, productivity, and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities into the community. In accomplishing that goal, our members work to support and implement public policy at the national and state levels, increase awareness, and improve the availability of quality health care, access to community supports, and opportunities for employment and education for all persons with developmental disabilities. The FDDC offers many publications, videotapes, and other resources on topics such as supported employment, service coordination, and inclusive education. All resources produced by the FDDC are available free of charge. Many are available for download on our web site (www.fddc.org). Visit our web site or call us at (800) 580-7801 for a complete list of available materials.



**Florida Developmental
Disabilities Council, Inc.**
124 Marriott Drive
Suite 203
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-2981

Phone: (850) 488-4180 or
(800) 580-7801
Fax: (850) 922-6702
TDD: (888) 488-8633

Web page: www.fddc.org

This publication was produced through funding by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.



Partners in Policymaking



Interested in being a leader in your community?

Partners in Policymaking
may be for YOU!

What is Partners in Policymaking?

Partners in Policymaking is a leadership and advocacy program designed to inform and train people with developmental disabilities and their family members. The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities created the program to train participants in the best practices over a wide range of issues affecting persons with developmental disabilities. The main objective was to help participants gain the skills necessary to change the system. Since its conception in 1987, over 45 states have implemented a Partners in Policymaking program.

Through education and practical skill-building, Partners are empowered to tackle issues facing themselves and their communities. The intended goal is to achieve both a positive and functional relationship between people who need and use services and the people who make policy regarding those services. Ideally, each Partners class should include a diverse group of people representing different ages, experiences, ethnic groups, and geographical regions of Florida. Self-advocates and parents of young children with developmental disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply to the program.

Nationally, there are over 8,000 Partners in Policymaking graduates serving on committees and boards at local, state, and national levels.

Topics

Each of the six sessions focuses on a specific topic. Topics generally include the History of the Disability Movement, Inclusive Education, Assistive Technology, Emerging Federal Legislation, State Legislative Process, and Community Advocacy. Participants learn from nationally-recognized experts as well as local policymakers.

Classes

Participants attend weekend training sessions once a month for six months. Training sessions are held in Central Florida, most often Tampa or Orlando, and typically begin Friday afternoon and end Saturday afternoon. Attendance at each session is mandatory. Lodging, meals, and travel expenses are provided by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. Additional reimbursement for respite care and assistant services is also available.

Commitment

Applicants are expected to attend each session and complete basic homework assignments (usually reading or practical exercises). Partners must also commit to implementing the skills learned during their training and continue their advocacy work with a project. Past Partners have organized letter-writing campaigns, planned special town meetings, and held internships with advocacy organizations as their assignments. Graduates of the program join a network of leaders making real changes in the lives of Floridians with disabilities.

Application Process

Individuals interested in participating in the Partners in Policymaking program must submit an application to the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. Applications are available on the Internet at www.fddc.org or by calling our Education and Training Coordinator at (800) 580-7801 or (850) 488-4180. Classes generally begin in late Spring. Applications are due the preceding January. Class schedules and due dates may be subject to change. Please contact us or check the web site for specific dates for the upcoming classes. We are happy to provide alternative forms of the application or other assistance with the application process.

The Challenge

Partners graduates are encouraged to take the information, enthusiasm, and leadership skills gained during the training back to each of their communities. Participants can use their experiences with Partners to inspire others in their communities. They are challenged to continue to educate and support those around them and advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities.

"I can say with great pride that without the Partners program and the training, I would not be the advocate I am today ...As I often say - Alone I can do so little, but together we can do so much. That is what Partners is all about."

-1998 Partners in Policymaking Graduate