



2025-2026

KENTUCKY PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

For people with developmental disabilities
and their family members



The Partners in Policymaking
program is about achieving greater:

INDEPENDENCE
PRODUCTIVITY
SELF-DETERMINATION
INTEGRATION
INCLUSION

September 2025 to May 2026



COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
dis(abilities)



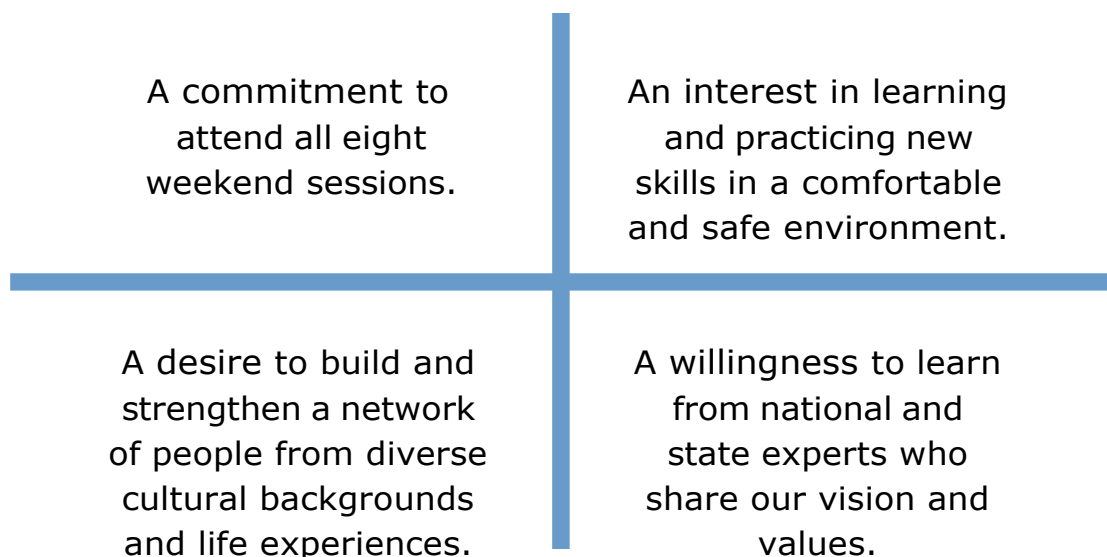
PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING is a leadership training program designed for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

The Partners program was created by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities more than 35 years ago and has been offered nationally and internationally. 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 the first Partners class in Minnesota in 1987, a total of over 1,000 self-advocates and parents have graduated.

Partners is about systems change- creating working towards and achieving a vision of shared values about people with disabilities. It is based on the belief that the most effective and enduring public policy decisions are made by the people who need and use services in partnership with elected officials and other policymakers. It is about becoming confident in oneself, competent in the knowledge and information received, and comfortable in sharing the life experiences and expertise one brings to the program.

Participation in PARTNERS requires:





Topics to be addressed through a variety of informative and interactive sessions include:

September 12-13, 2025, Friday & Saturday

- History of Disabilities and Services
- History of the Parent, Self-Advocacy, and Independent Living Movements
- How to be Effective in Meetings

October 10-11, 2025, Friday & Saturday

- Inclusive Education
- Civil Discourse
- Person Centered Thinking and Person-Centered Planning

November 14-15, Friday & Saturday

- Customized Employment
- ADA Protections
- Income and Benefits

January 9-10, 2026 Friday & Saturday

- Independent Living
- Services in Kentucky

February 20-21, 2026, Friday & Saturday

- Kentucky's Legislative Process
- Introduction to & the Role of the State Government
- Meeting with Legislators

March 11-12, 2026, Tuesday & Wednesday

- Introduction to & the Role of the Federal Government
- Meetings with Congressional Delegation Staff
- Visit to the Capitol

April 10-11, 2026, Friday & Saturday

- Community Organizing
- Building Community
- Kentucky Projects of Note

May 15-16, 2026 Friday & Saturday

- Beyond Partners – Moving Forward
- Graduation
- Reunion, Growing the Advocacy Movement in Kentucky



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

Who is eligible to participate in this program?

This program is designed for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

What is the time commitment required for those who are chosen to participate in this program?

Participants are required to attend all eight weekend sessions (September through May with no session in December). The in-person sessions run from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Day One and from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Day Two. (NOTE: Sessions are held on Friday and Saturday except in March. These dates coordinate with the legislative session and are held during the week.)

Where are the weekend sessions held? The Kentucky class is currently held at the CCDD office in Frankfort.

Is there a fee to attend this eight-month training?

No, there is no fee to attend. Program costs are covered in part by a Congressional appropriation from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD). These funds are used to carry out the Partners program for those chosen for the class.

Do I have to pay for my overnight accommodations and travel expenses? No, overnight accommodations are provided. All participants are required to stay in the hotel with the class. Mileage reimbursement is also available for class members. Lunch and dinner will be provided on day one and breakfast and lunch on day two.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

What other expenses does the Partners program cover?

- Speaker handouts, resource materials, and publications
- Interpreter or language translation services
- Personal Care Attendants
- Other accommodations as requested and deemed necessary for participation
- **CCDD is always payer of last resort**

PLEASE NOTE: The Partners program does not provide onsite childcare 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.

Is there work to be done between monthly sessions?

After some sessions, 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.

Who does the training?

Speakers are national and state subject matter experts or practitioners. CCDD staff facilitates the class.

How are class participants selected?

A Review Committee comprised of CCDD members and staff will select participants based on several criteria. Class size is limited to 20 participants.

When will I know if I have been selected to participate in Kentucky's Partners in Policymaking Leadership Institute?

Participants will be notified by July 8, 2024.



We invite you to invest your time and energy over an eight-month period to become a community leader and an agent of long-term change.

Definition of “Developmental Disability”

According to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the term “developmental disability” means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

- is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- is likely to continue indefinitely;
- results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - o Self-care.
 - o Receptive and expressive language.
 - o Learning.
 - o Mobility.
 - o Self-direction.
 - o Capacity for independent living.
 - o Economic self-sufficiency; and
- reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.
- Infants and Young Children - An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.



"I was already an advocate, but Partners increased my knowledge about the legislative process, the ADA, and other issues. My credibility has improved among government and business leaders. I'm consulted on disability issues."



Kentucky Partners in Policymaking Graduates 2025



Governor signing proclamation for DD Month 2025

"I had no idea of the opportunities available to people with disabilities. Now I sit on several boards and am an active advocate for the issues that are important to me."

"I cannot say enough good things about Partners. I have learned more in eight weekends than I have in eight years of in-service workshops."



Members of KPIP Class of 2022-2023

For more information about applying for KPIP's next class visit:
www.ccdd.ky.gov or email nicole.maher@ky.gov



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