



THE VERMONT LEADERSHIP SERIES

Information Packet about Participation

Find your voice! Learn how to advocate for change.
<https://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/leadership-series>

What is the Vermont Leadership Series?

The Vermont Leadership Series is an intensive, three-part training for people with a developmental disability, or similar condition, and family members.

Here are some important things to know about the series:

- Leadership reflects the core values of the Disability Rights Movement: Equal Rights, Self-Determination, and Full Community Inclusion.
- Leadership has been designed for Vermonters with diverse experiences of disability.

Examples include: Parents of any age who support a son or daughter with a developmental disability; adults living with a disability who want to take their advocacy to a new level; sisters, brothers, and grandparents who are growing into their role supporting a family member with a disability.



- We expect a high level of participation from everyone. We will find ways for everyone to contribute. We will learn together.
- Leadership teaches participants how to:
 - Develop skills to be an effective advocate and leader for systems change.
 - Include people of all abilities and support others in finding their voice.
 - Build relationships with policymakers.
- The Leadership Series is organized by the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and Vermont Family Network, with support from the Department of Health and UVM's Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

When is the Leadership Series?

Every year the Leadership Series starts in the Autumn and ends in the Winter. Participants must commit to attending all three (3) weekend trainings which begin Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. and end Sunday afternoon by 3:00 p.m. The trainings will be held at a hotel and **participants will be expected to stay overnight on Saturday**, unless there are special circumstances. The cost of hotel accommodations and meals will be covered by the program budget.

There is also an afternoon graduation ceremony at the Vermont State House on Disability Awareness Day, which takes place in February.

[Dates and deadlines for this years series may be found within a separate handout and on the website.](#)

Who should apply?

Leadership is for people with developmental disabilities and their family members. We are looking for people who:

- Feel comfortable speaking up and listen well to others.
- Are eager to make a difference in their community.
- Are open to new ideas and “thinking outside of the box.”
- You do *not* need to know how to read or write to participate. You do *not* need previous experience working with legislators or other policy makers to apply.



What is a developmental disability?

It's a disability that begins before age 22 that affects three (3) or more activities of daily life such as self-care, communication, movement, learning, self-direction, independent living, or employment. This definition is broader than the one used by the State of Vermont to determine eligibility for services. You -- or your family member -- do *not* have to be a recipient of Vermont Developmental Services to

participate in Leadership.

How are Leadership participants selected?

Leadership participants must be nominated by one of two organizations:

- As Vermont's statewide self-advocacy organization, Green Mountain Self-Advocates [GMSA] will nominate Leadership participants who have a developmental disability.
- As Vermont's statewide family support organization, Vermont Family Network [VFN] will nominate family members who support someone with a developmental disability. In some cases, an individual may be both a person with a disability and a family member of someone with a disability. Contact the organization you feel most comfortable talking with about your nomination.

We encourage you to contact GMSA or VFN to talk with them about Leadership and nomination, even if these organizations are new to you. They are looking for interested and motivated people. They want to help get you involved!

What if I am not selected as a nominee?

We anticipate that there will be more people interested in Leadership than we can accept in any given year. If you are not selected it does *not* mean that you are not a good candidate for Leadership. It just means that we selected others to create a diverse and balanced Leadership class. We strongly encourage you to apply again next time!

What does Leadership cost?

The real cost for each participant is about \$1,500 (which includes lodging, meals, speakers, and materials). **We are asking each participant to pay \$100**, but no one will be turned away. If you do not have money for this fee, we can figure out an alternative arrangement.

Participants are also responsible for covering the cost of their transportation to and from the trainings. If you are bringing a staff person, we will cover meals and lodging for him or her. However, we cannot pay for your support person's wages.

Can I bring my children, partner, friend, or parent?

No. While we know that many of our participants have tremendous responsibilities, we ask that you arrange coverage at home for these duties. We expect participants to be able to give their full attention to the weekend training and to those who are training with you. In some cases, a family member may attend as the support provider for someone with a disability. These arrangements will be discussed on an individual basis.

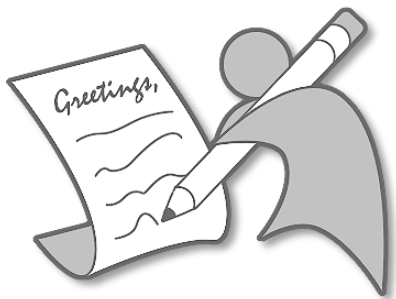
I live too far away to get to the hotel by 10:00 a.m. Can I come the day before?

Maybe. Arrangements will be made on an individual basis to accommodate a participant's travel needs. Let the organization that is nominating you know about your specific situation and concern so that we can plan accordingly.



Sounds great! How can I apply for Leadership?

- First Step: You must let one of the nominating organizations know that you are interested in being a nominee for the next Leadership Class. You may have a short conversation with a staff member who will review the program requirements and ask you a few questions about why you are interested in Leadership. Please contact:



Green Mountain Self-Advocates

ATTN: Max Barrows
2 Prospect Street, Suite #6
Montpelier, VT 05602
Max@gmsavt.org
[1 \(802\) 229-2600](tel:18022292600)

Vermont Family Network

ATTN: Joanne Wechsler
600 Blair Park Road, Ste 240
Williston, VT 05495
Joanne.Wechsler@vtfn.org
[1 \(800\) 800-4005, x217](tel:18008004005)

- **Second Step:** There is also an application form with questions that you will need to answer. It can be downloaded in a couple of formats at:
<http://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/leadership-series>
- **Third Step:** Post-mail the completed and signed application to the organization that you would like to have nominate you for Leadership.

You may also email them a digital copy of your application to make sure you meet the deadline, but a copy with the original signature will still be required by post-mail.

Thank you for your interest in Leadership!



Help is available to fill out the application.

If you would like help or need an accommodation, you should contact GMSA at [1 \(802\) 229-2600](tel:18022292600) or VFN at [1 \(800\) 800-4005, x217](tel:18008004005).

We are open to applications in a wide range of formats, including audio or video answers to the questions.

The Vermont Leadership Series is made possible through the collaboration of the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and the Vermont Family Network, with support from the UVM Center on Disability and Community Inclusion and the Vermont Department of Health.

