



Partners in Policymaking®

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Program Purpose:

The Partners in Policymaking Program is a leadership training Program designed for adults with disabilities and for parents of children with disabilities. The Program teaches leadership skills, and the process of developing positive partnerships with elected officials and other individuals who make the policy decisions about services which individuals with disabilities and their families use. The overall Program works to build skills and capacity of individuals with developmental disabilities to promote self-advocacy and systems change.

General Goals:

- Individuals with disabilities, families and stakeholders receive training on advocacy skills, public speaking, diversity and leadership. This enables Program participants to access services and supports to achieve independence and realize full inclusion in the community, while improving quality of life for people of all abilities.
- Individuals with disabilities, families and stakeholders are taught how to advocate for changes in regulations that don't limit the availability of employment. By providing resources and training in inclusive practices, the Americans with Disabilities Act and disability specific regulations, individuals are able to reach their full employment potential.
- Policymakers, leaders and the general public receive information and training that encourages them to support individuals with disabilities in their decisions, their actions and ultimately their rights.
- Individuals with disabilities, families and stakeholders receive training on legislative policy and procedures, which enables them to have a voice in the making of public policies that affect their lives.
- The general public is made aware of disability related issues through community education, information and referral services and advocacy campaigns. This ultimately results in overcoming negative attitudes and stigma held against people with disabilities.

Personal Impacts:

“Through Partners in Policymaking, I discovered many resources that were available to add to my set of tools to help our family just when we needed it most. I built relationships with other Partners that will last for all of our lifetimes with the thought that we are all more alike than different. I felt a boost of confidence in speaking in our small groups as well as in giving presentations. The coordination of each session made me feel valued and welcome and free to explore the ideas and teachings offered to us. I felt overwhelmed and I felt truly listened to. The resources and tools presented at the sessions reach much further than policy making and can be ingrained into our daily lives. Attending Partners in Policymaking has been one of the best choices I have made. It allowed me to realize the value of leadership and to see whose responsibility it is to take the lead, become informed and pay it forward.”

- Parent, Mandan

“I enjoyed coming to Partners and doing a lot of learning. I learned new ways to speak up for my rights. I think everybody should go to Partners in Policymaking because they will learn important information about legislation, human rights, People First Language and acceptance and inclusion. My experience was very great!” – Self-Advocate, Grand Forks

“Partners in Policymaking helped me learn to advocate for myself. I am now very confident!”

– Self-Advocate, Mandan

Numbers:

The following table provides numerical outcomes for The Partners in Policymaking Program from October 1, 2010 to June 17, 2011. The population measured includes individuals with disabilities, families and stakeholders.

Provided training and information on the history of the disability movement and People First Language.	36
Provided training and information on supported employment, supported independent living and personal futures planning.	33
Provided training and information on inclusion and leadership building skills.	31
Provided training and information on the state legislative process and capacity building in the areas of communication, advocacy and vision building.	32
Provided training and information on the federal legislative process and capacity building in the areas of communication, advocacy and vision building.	32
Provided training and information on assistive technology.	27
Provided training and information on communication skills, team building and advocacy skills. Demonstrated activities which enhance mental health in relation to stress management.	28
Provided training and information on leadership skills including relationship building, community organizing and alliance building.	27
Provided training in systems advocacy about quality assurance in community placements.	46
Provided training in leadership, self-advocacy and self-determination.	57
Provided individualized information & referral supports.	19
Provided education in relation to NDSCDD initiatives to public policymakers .	141
Distributed products/information to legislators and other policymakers about issues related to NDSCDD initiatives.	423
Number of people in the general public estimated to have been reached by NDSCDD supported education, awareness and media initiatives. <i>Twelve community education workshops were offered in Bismarck, Mandan and Minot including sessions with university students, direct support professionals, advocates, parents, Kiwanis and the general public. The topics covered were Legislative Process, People First Language and Laughter Yoga.</i>	456