



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**
EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Announces a New Partnership and Funding Opportunity (\$100,000)

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

Letters of Interest – Due April 24, 2018 at 12:00 noon

Summary

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is inviting organizations interested in administering Partners in Policymaking leadership training program in Maryland to submit a Letter of Interest (LOI). The LOI will include specific information detailing interest, experience, and fiscal and/or in-kind contributions.

The Council has made \$100,000 available to sponsor Partners in Policymaking (Partners), with planning and recruitment expected in 2018 and implementation in 2019. The Council will partner with the selected organization by participating in decision making regarding all key aspects of Partners, such as recruitment and participant selection, curriculum, and speakers. The selected organization will be responsible for managing and administering the program. We will mutually agree on any adaptations needed to the Partners model to ensure it is relevant to the needs of Maryland.

Partners is intended to support the promises of the ADA by helping people with disabilities and their family members to understand their civil rights and use them to continue the fight for full inclusion.ⁱ

Purpose

The Council will sponsor a Maryland Partners in Policymaking (Partners) program for people with developmental disabilities and their families to teach best practices and the competencies needed to influence public policy. Our goal is to identify and support people who are inexperienced but motivated to gain the knowledge and skills needed to impact issues that affect their lives and the lives of others in meaningful ways.

Partners is a proven way to help train the next generation of leaders in Maryland, in addition to other [leadership development and advocacy initiatives we support](#). Participants in the Partners program will acquire knowledge and skills to create change.

Background

DD Council

The federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, which established DD Councils, is clear about the expectation that people with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of services, supports, and other assistance that promote independence, productivity,

integration, and inclusion in the community. In other words, they should play a central and meaningful role in influencing policy, programs, and services that impact them and others. This is a deeply held belief of the Maryland DD Council. The DD Council believes that in order for people with developmental disabilities and family members to be effective leaders, they need information, training, and opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Partners in Policymaking

The most prominent leadership development program for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families is Partners in Policymaking, which was created by the Minnesota DD Council in 1987. Partners is a leadership program created to teach people with disabilities and the parents of young children with disabilities to become agents of long-term change, and become active partners with the policymakers whose decisions will shape their future.

It focuses on eleven broad concepts that affect the way people with disabilities are taught, employed, live, and included in their communities. Partners is an extensive program that typically includes eight (2-day) sessions. Partners training is sponsored in many states and in other countries. Over the past 30 years, there have been over 27,000 Partners graduates nationally and internationally.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council sponsored and funded Partners in Policymaking for 10 years; the last class was in 2004. Results from a 2004 survey of Maryland Partners graduates from seven graduating classes included:

- 5% rated their advocacy skills “excellent” prior to PIP compared to 39% after graduating; 37% rated their skills “good” before and 61% after
- 76% had participated in an IEP for someone else
- 85% mentored someone concerning disability issues and 86% reported empowering others
- 93% said they had influenced attitudes or actions of other parents on disability issues; 71% influenced a school administrator; 63% a service provider; 44% a politician
- 90% served on committees, boards or task forces
- 56% assumed leadership responsibilities within groups concerning disabilities
- 90% had contacted or visited their legislators

For more information on Partners in Policymaking

[Partners in Policymaking booklet](#): provides history, an overview, stories, and outcomes achieved.

[Partners Coordinator’s Handbook](#): detailing the Partners training model, including all aspects of the program from recruitment to graduation; essentially a “how to” manual that will be used by the selected organization as a guide.

If unable to access the links, go to mn.gov/mnddc/

Scope of Workⁱⁱ

The Partners in Policymaking[®] model will be replicated. The Council and the organization selected to administer and manage the training program will work together to identify any necessary adaptations based on Maryland’s needs, priorities, and the available funding and other resources. These considerations could affect the number of training sessions, the speakers used, the location and number of overnight stays, and other details that will be mutually determined. Regardless of adaptations, the intention is to adhere to the principles of the Partners program as designed, tested, and refined over 30 years. The Partners Handbook referenced above has all of the details needed to understand the program.

The Council will partner with the selected organization by participating in planning decisions regarding all key aspects of Partners, such as participant selection, curriculum, and speakers. This could take the form of a planning committee. The selected organization will be responsible for managing and administering all aspects of the program. The Council will participate along with the selected organization in maintaining contact with graduates in order to connect them to advocacy and leadership opportunities.

Partners is not about teaching participants how to access services. Most Partners participants will likely already know this. Partners is focused on developing competent advocates, leaders, and systems change agents interested in creating change that not only benefits themselves, but others as well. This happens by teaching about a wide range of issues with the recognition that the disability movement is broader than one group, one type of disability, or one issue. The intent is that Best Practices & State-of-the-Art Training leads to Competent Activists & Great Outcomes.

People with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities learn together. They are educated about best practices and trends on a range of topics that include things like: History of the Disability Movement, Self-Advocacy, Inclusive Education, Assistive Technology, Legislative Processes, and Advocacy.

The selected organization will manage the recruitment of a diverse class, including diversity in disability, gender, racial and ethnic background, geographic location and other criteria to be mutually determined. Participants will be recruited statewide.

Expected Outcomes

1. An increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members from diverse backgrounds, prepared and confident to assume advocacy and leadership roles at the state and local levels.
2. An increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members serving on boards, committees, councils, and commissions.
3. A network of Partners graduates connected for mutual support that maximizes their impact.
4. An increase in the number of leaders with developmental disabilities and family members actively advocating for positive change at local and/or state levels – influencing policy, programs, and services that impact themselves and others.

What Letters of Interest Must Include

I. General Information

1. Organization's name and address.
2. Organization's mission statement.
3. Contact person's name, title, email and phone number.

II. Qualifications

1. Briefly describe your organization's experience with people with developmental disabilities and their families.
2. Briefly describe your organization's commitment to full community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities.
3. Provide specific information about the experience your organization has conducting trainings, including each of the following that apply:
 - a. Participant recruitment
 - b. Types of audiences trained

- c. Topics
- d. Length of trainings
- e. Ability to train individuals with different learning styles
- f. Logistical planning (e.g., arranging outside trainers, transportation, disability accommodations, room and food arrangements, hotel accommodations)
- g. Any other information pertinent to managing a Partners program.

Please provide information that clearly reflects the amount of experience you have, as well as the type of experience.

4. Describe your organization’s basic knowledge of the key topics covered in a Partners training series. These are described beginning on page 1 of the Coordinator’s Handbook. While subject matter experts will be identified to present each topic, the organization selected to administer the Partners program should have a general familiarity with the topics and why they are important.

III. Plan

1. Describe your proposed staffing plan, including responsibilities for each position. If individuals are identified to fill these positions, provide information on their related experience and qualifications.
2. How will you recruit a diverse group of participants?
3. How would you screen applicants to select individuals that are committed to attend the entire training series and are likely to remain engaged in advocacy and leadership after graduation?
4. Describe how you will support participants during and after the training is completed to become and remain actively engaged in meaningful advocacy and leadership roles. Why your organization is well positioned to do this? Ongoing involvement of participants is a crucial outcome sought by the Council as detailed in the “Expected Outcomes” section above.
5. Describe the organizations you will partner with to a) assist with recruitment of diverse candidates, b) help connect graduates with advocacy and leadership opportunities so they put into practice what they learn, and c) assist in other ways, if any. What will their roles be? What is your experience with them?

IV. Budget

Complete a draft budget using the [Council’s Proposed Budget Forms](#). This will illustrate: 1) how you project allocating the \$100,000 in Council funds, 2) what funds, if any, you will contribute and how those funds would be allocated, and 3) how in-kind contributions will be applied to support the program.

A final line item budget will be negotiated between the selected organization and the Council once decisions affecting the budget are made, as noted in the Scope of Work section.

Council Funds Available: \$100,000.

Matching Funds: A 25% non-federal match is required. Twenty-five percent of the total cost of the project (not 25% of the grant funds requested) is required. Matching funds may

include in-kind supports or other non-federal sources of funds. Any in-kind support used as match must have a value directly related to the grant.

V. Supporting Documentation

1. Résumé of the lead person responsible for managing and facilitating the Partners training program, if known. If not known, a list of qualifications and experience to be used to recruit this person.
2. Letters of support from state and local partners, including how they will provide support as noted in III.5. above.

Proposal Details

1. Letters may not exceed 10 pages, not including supporting documentation in Section V or budget form.
2. Number pages, double space and only use one side of the page.
3. Use font point size 11 or larger.
4. Do not submit cover letters or any other attachments, except as listed above. They will not be reviewed.

Who May Submit Proposals

Any non-profit or for-profit organization.

Applicants from rural areas are encouraged to apply. For this initiative, rural areas include: Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties in Western Maryland; Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's in Southern Maryland; and Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Information Sessions

An information session will be held to review this Request for Letters of Interest and to ask questions. Attendance is not mandatory.

Conference call Information Session: March 27, 2018 at 10:00am

Email or call Faye Bell-Boulware to register for the call and to receive call-in information:
Fayeb@md-council.org 410-767-6249 or 1-800-305-6441 ext. 1

Letter of Interest Deadline

TO BE CONSIDERED, ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 24, 2018, NO LATER THAN 12 NOON.

Email your proposal and attachments to info@md-council.org.

Important Note: Receipt of all proposals will be acknowledged by email or phone. If you do not receive confirmation by April 24, 2018 at 4:00pm, contact Faye Bell-Boulware at 410-767-6249 or 1-800-305-6441 ext. 1.

Process and Timelines

Information session: **March 27, 2018 at 10:00am**

Letters of Interest due: **April 24, 2018 AT 12:00 NOON**

LD Work Team (selection committee) meets: **Week of May 7**

Council reviews and votes on LD Work Team recommendation: **June 28, 2018**

Organization selected (grantee) is notified: **June 29, 2018**

Award letter sent: **July 2018**

Grantee and Council finalize budget: **July – August**

Planning begins: **estimate late summer- early fall**

Partners training series begins: **estimate first quarter of 2019**

ⁱ Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Council, the creator of Partners of Policymaking

ⁱⁱ Guide for the development of the scope of work: Partners Coordinators Handbook, MN DD Council