



Community Partner & SSB Staff Forum

July 8, 2025

HOUSEKEEPING

- Welcome to the SSB Community Partners + SSB Staff Forum.
- **ASL Interpreters** are designated as “co-hosts”, so they appear at the top of your participant list. If you need ability to “multi-pin” please message Susan.Kusz@state.mn.us .
- **Closed Captioning** is available. A livestream is linked in the chat.
- **Microphones:** Please keep your microphone muted unless you are talking and identify yourself when speaking.
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact Jennifer.Beilke@state.mn.us.
- **Recording:** The session will be recorded and distributed by Gov.delivery along with the agenda, and presentation.

AGENDA

- **Welcome:** *Susan Kusz, Community Partner Relations and Contracts Specialist Assistant, Jennifer Beilke, Community Partner Relations and Contract Specialist and Natasha Jerde, SSB Director*
- **SSB Community Partners Team Updates and Announcements:** *Natasha Jerde, Susan Kusz, and Jennifer Beilke*
 - Director's Note
 - Progress Updates – Accessibility, Website, Monitoring Updates, Elevator Pitches
- **HKNC – What is Self-Advocacy – Kacie Weldy, Laurie McBride**
- **Wrap up/Adjourn:** *Susan Kusz, Jennifer Beilke, and Natasha Jerde*



SSB Updates and Announcements

Susan Kusz, Jennifer Beilke, and Natasha Jerde

Director's Note – Jon Benson on behalf of *Natasha Jerde*

Jon Benson presents

Director's Notes

On behalf of Natasha Jerde

Updates and Announcements

- **Director's Note – *Natasha Jerde***
- **Progress Updates – *Susan Kusz, Jennifer Beilke***
 - **Accessibility - fillable forms**
 - **Website and CP Manual – What's New?**
 - **Monitoring Updates**
 - **Elevator Pitches – *Lisa Rogers***



HKNC – What is Self-Advocacy Kacie Weldy & Laurie McBride



Main Points for our conversation

- **Defining Advocacy and Self-Advocacy**
- **Advocacy Strategies**
- **How do you help your participants to self-advocate?**
- **Questions?**

Feel free to contact us:

Kacie Weldy (MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI)

kweldy@helenkeller.org

516-269-1233 (Voice/Text)

Laurie McBride (Iowa & Minnesota)

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516-418-0101 (Voice/Text)

QUESTIONS

Thank You!

Jennifer Beilke 651-539-2273 Jennifer.Beilke@state.mn.us

Susan Kusz 651-539-2271 Susan.Kusz@state.mn.us

2025 Drop In Café – May 13th, 8:30 a.m.

June 10th, 8:30 a.m.

2025 Quarterly Forums: July 8, October 14, 2025

Funding Notice

The Minnesota State Services for the Blind VR program receives 78.69 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2023, the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$10,410,449. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs (\$2,817,568) were funded by Minnesota state appropriations.