Partners in Policymaking is a leadership training program for parents of young children with disabilities and adults with disabilities.

Created in 1987 by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Partners program was has been offered nationally and internationally.

Through informative and interactive sessions, the program 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.

Accessible, informative and empowering, Since it’s inception, more than 1,100 self-advocates and parents have graduated from Partners in Minnesota.
Session Dates & Topics

September 16–17 (Friday & Saturday)
- History of Disabilities and Services
- History of the Parent, Self Advocacy, and Independent Living Movements
- How Partners Has Changed My Life!
- Person Centered Thinking & Person Centered Planning

October 14–15 (Friday & Saturday)
- Inclusive Education
- Minnesota Department of Education Roundtable
- Civil Discourse

November 18–19 (Friday & Saturday)
- County Role in Developmental Disabilities
- Creating a Future Vision
- Meetings with County Commissioners

January 20–21 (Friday & Saturday)
- Supported Living & Customized Employment
- Leadership Styles

February 17–18 (Friday & Saturday)
- Community Organizing
- Data Practices & Parliamentary Procedure
- The Role of the Media

March 12–13 (Sunday & Monday)
- Minnesota's Legislative Process
- Mock Legislative Hearings
- Governor's Open Appointment Process
- Legislative Update
- State Capitol Visit & Meeting with Legislators

April 14–15 (Friday & Saturday)
- Federal Government Introduction & Role
- Federal Issues Update
- Meetings with Congressional Delegation Staff

May 19–20 (Friday & Saturday)
- Beyond Partners: Moving Forward
- Personal Growth
- Graduation

Time Commitment
Participants are required to attend all eight weekend sessions (September–May with no session in December). Sessions run 11am–9pm on Day One and 8:30am–3pm on Day Two. (Sessions are held on Friday and Saturday except in March which is on Sunday and Monday.)

Location
Crowne Plaza Aire, 3 Appletree Square, Bloomington, MN 55425.

Cost
There is no fee to attend. Program costs are covered in part by a federal appropriation from the Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council). These funds are used to carry out the Partners program for those chosen for the class. Overnight accommodations are provided at no cost for those who drive a distance to attend. Class members are matched and housed in double occupancy rooms. Mileage reimbursement is also available for class members. Also covered are meals, speaker handouts, resource materials, and publications, and interpreter or language translation services.

Respite/Child Care & PCAs
Reimbursement up to a maximum dollar amount per weekend session is available for participants needing these services when another funding source does not pick up these expenses. (NOTE: The Partners program does not provide onsite child care 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.)

Eligibility
Parents of young children with developmental disabilities and for adults with disabilities are eligible to participate in the Partners program.

Requirements
To participate, the Partners program requires:
- a commitment to attend all eight sessions
- an interest in learning and practicing new skills in a comfortable and safe environment
- a desire to build and strengthen a network of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and life experiences
- a willingness to learn from national and state experts who share our vision and values

Application deadline: July 15, 2022.