

Partners in Policymaking

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a specific philosophical point of view that speakers and presentations will share?

The basic philosophy is self-determination. Best practices, current philosophy, and policy will depend on the speaker's perspective and the movement or policy being presented.

Who is eligible to apply for the program?

Eligible applicants include Self-Advocates with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and family members of persons with I/DD, including siblings of persons with IDD. To be considered for the program, you must be a resident of the state of Maryland.



What are the criteria you look for in self-advocates?

We look for people that are invested in making a change. Not only in their own life but all lives for people with I/DD. So in the past, we have had people of various disabilities that have been involved in the program. Not to identify them by their disability but we have been able to accommodate people of various abilities. You must have an interest and passion for advocacy and for making positive change with and for people who have disabilities.

When I click the link to apply- It takes me to a website that says Apricot?

The link to the application is here when you click. Please do notify us if you try again and you are still having difficulty as we do not want this to be a barrier to you being able to make your application. You can contact Luc Chausse at lchausse@thearecmd.org or Ande Kolp at akolp@thearecmd.org if you would like assistance completing your application. We want to ensure equitable access to the application process for everyone, so please let us know as soon as possible if you need assistance.

I have already filled out the application. When will I hear something?

We will be in touch with everyone individually via email after applications close on September 29th at Noon. Once the selection committee finalizes their decisions, we will promptly reach out to all of the applicants on October 2nd.

How many people are you looking to enroll in the class?

We are looking to enroll at least 30 new Partners. Of course, if we have the resources, we may be able to take one or two more than 30, but around 30 individuals including self-advocates and family members are what we are looking for to ensure active engagement in the class and the development of life-long connections.

How important is it to be able to attend every session of the Partners program?

Attending every session of the program is incredibly important. We are looking for class members with a dedication to taking full advantage of the investment in them. We have designed the sessions to incorporate frequent breaks, and have added accommodations people may request to enhance their fullest experience with Partners. Of course, life happens and this

may impact your ability to take a class but what matters is that you come into the process fully intending on attending 100% of the courses.

How much does it cost to be a part of the Partners in Policymaking program?

The Partners program is free for participants. The Arc Maryland and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council have, however, estimated that each spot in the program is valued at over \$5,000. Being a part of the Partners in Policymaking program is like a scholarship opportunity. Class members are chosen because of the potential seen in them to be lifelong advocates for people with disabilities.

How can I stand out from other applicants to be selected?

The more information you share about yourself, the better. Be thorough and complete in answering questions on the application. Tell us fully about yourself, your interests, and what you plan on doing with what you learn from the class.

Upon completion of the Partners in Policymaking program, how do I utilize my newfound skills?

What you do with your Partners experience is completely up to you! Partners is about creating long-term agents of change. This can be accomplished through many channels of advocacy on local, state, and national levels. This can mean taking on leadership roles in volunteer organizations, participation in public policy and legislative sessions, and much more. Opportunities will present themselves during and after the class. It is up to you to seize them!

If I do not get accepted, or cannot be a part of the program this year, will there be another opportunity for me in the future?

Thanks to funding from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, Partners in Policymaking in the state of Maryland will be available this year for the 2021-22 class. While we hope the program may be extended beyond this year, at this point, that is not certain. That said, we strongly encourage those who are interested to apply for this class. Further, we encourage those who are not accepted to remain in contact with us, in case additional opportunities are offered.

Who can I contact for more information about Partners in Policymaking?

For additional questions about Partners in Policymaking, you can reach to Luc Chausse at lchausse@thearcmd.org or Ande Kolp at akolp@thearcmd.org.

What are some accommodations that might be available to me?

We expect that many of our applicants will have what they need to participate in the Partners' in Policymaking program, but there may be participants who need assistance or accommodations such as technology for participation, respite, transportation to in-person classes and other supports to fully participate in the program.

Will I have the opportunity to meet with policymakers through the class?

Partners in Policymaking has multiple opportunities to hear from and speak with policymakers as we cover state laws and policy as well as during Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature.

How long does a typical session for Partners in Policymaking last?

Most of the Partners in Policymaking class sessions throughout the year are around 4 hours, though full details are available on the application.

Where will in-person sessions take place?

In-person sessions during the program year will typically be held at the Meeting House in Columbia. There are also single sessions that will take place in Ellicott City, Annapolis, as well as a session in Washington, DC on federal advocacy. There will be an optional opportunity for group transportation for the session in the nation's capital.

How do Partners Graduates stay connected after the class year ends?

Program alumni stay connected through a Facebook group for them to share resources and opportunities in the community. Additionally, The Arc Maryland is currently planning a Partners Graduate Reunion during the next class year.

What happens if the pandemic gets worse? Will you adjust the schedule for in-person classes?

We will be constantly reassessing the needs and safety of the program participants throughout the year and may switch some in-person sessions to virtual sessions if needed.



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