



# the Vermont Leadership Series

**Find your voice! Learn how to advocate for change!**

## **Questions and Answers about Leadership**

### **What is the Vermont Leadership Series?**

The Vermont Leadership Series is an intensive, three-part training for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and family members. Here are some important things to know about the series:

- Leadership reflects the core values of the Disability Rights Movement: Equal Rights, Self-Determination, and Full Community Inclusion.
- Leadership is designed for Vermonters with diverse experiences of disability. Examples include: Parents of any age who support a son or daughter with a developmental disability; adults living with I/DD who want to take their advocacy to a new level; sisters, brothers, and grandparents who are growing into their role supporting a family member with I/DD.
- We expect a high level of participation from everyone. We will find ways for everyone to contribute. We will learn together.
- Leadership will help you to:
  - Develop skills to be an effective advocate and leader for systems change
  - Include people of all abilities and support others in finding their voice
  - Build relationships with policymakers
- The Leadership Series is organized by Vermont Family Network, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, with support from the Department of Health and UVM's Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

## When is the 2017 Leadership Series?

This is the fourth time Vermont will host a Leadership Series. Each weekend session begins on Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. and ends Sunday afternoon by 2 p.m. *Participants must commit to attending all three weekends.*

- December 3-4, 2016
- January 7-8, 2017
- February 11-12, 2017

There will also be an afternoon graduation ceremony at the State House on Disability Awareness Day, March 2, 2017.

The three (3) weekend trainings will be held at a hotel and **participants will be expected to stay overnight on Saturday**, unless there are special circumstances. The cost of hotel accommodations and meals will be covered by the program budget.

## Who should apply?

Leadership is for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

We are looking for people who:

- Feel comfortable speaking up and listen well to others
- Are open to new ideas and “thinking outside of the box”
- Are eager to make a difference in their community

You do *not* need to know how to read or write to participate. You do *not* need previous experience working with legislators or other policy makers to apply.

## What is a developmental disability?

It's a disability that begins before age 22 that affects three (3) or more activities of daily life such as self-care, communication, movement, learning, self-direction, independent living, or employment. This definition is broader than the one used by

the State of Vermont to determine eligibility for services. You -- or your family member -- do *not* have to be a recipient of Vermont Developmental Services to participate in Leadership.

## **How are Leadership participants selected?**

Leadership participants must be nominated by one of two organizations:

- As Vermont's statewide self-advocacy organization, Green Mountain Self Advocates [GMSA] will nominate Leadership participants who have a developmental disability.
- As Vermont's statewide family support organization, Vermont Family Network will nominate family members who support someone with a developmental disability.

In some cases, an individual may be both a person with a disability and a family member of someone with a disability. Contact the organization you feel most comfortable talking with about your nomination.

**★TIP:** Do not be afraid to contact GMSA or VFN to talk with them about Leadership and nomination, even if these organizations are new to you. They are looking for interested and motivated people. They want to help get you involved!

## **What if I am not selected as a nominee?**

We anticipate that there will be more people interested in Leadership than we can accept in the 2017 Series. If you are not selected it does *not* mean that you are not a good candidate for Leadership. It just means that we selected others to create a diverse and balanced Leadership class. We strongly encourage you to apply again next time!

## **What does Leadership cost?**

The real cost for each participant is about \$1,500 (which includes lodging, meals, speakers, and materials). **We are asking each participant to pay \$100**, but no one will be turned away. If you do not have money for this fee we can figure out an alternative arrangement.

Participants are also responsible for covering the cost of their transportation to and from the trainings. If you are bringing a support provider, we will cover meals and lodging for him or her. However, we cannot pay for your support provider.

## **Can I bring my children, partner, friend, or parent?**

No. While we know that many of our participants have tremendous responsibilities, we ask that you arrange coverage at home for these duties. We expect participants to be able to give their full attention to the weekend training and to those who are training with you. In some cases, a family member may attend as the support provider for someone with a disability. These arrangements will be discussed on an individual basis.

## **I live too far away to get to the hotel by 8:30 a.m. Can I come the day before?**

Maybe. Arrangements will be made on an individual basis to accommodate a participant's travel needs. Let the organization that is nominating you know about your specific situation and concern so that we can plan accordingly.

## **Sound's great! How can I apply for Leadership?**

- First Step: You must let one of the nominating organizations know that you are interested in the 2017 Leadership Series. You can expect to have a short conversation with a staff member who will review the program requirements and ask you a few questions about why you are interested

in Leadership. Please contact:

Green Mountain Self Advocates [GMSA] (802) 229-2600

Vermont Family Network [VFN], Joanne Wechsler (800) 800-4005

- **Second Step:** There is also an application form with questions that you will need to answer. It can be downloaded in a couple of formats at:

[www.ddc.vermont.gov/vtleadershipseries](http://www.ddc.vermont.gov/vtleadershipseries)

**★TIP: Help is available to fill out the application.** If you would like help or need an accommodation you should contact GMSA or VFN at the numbers above. We are open to applications in a wide range of formats, including audio or video answers to the questions.

**Mail the completed and signed application to the organization that you would like to have nominate you for Leadership:**

**Vermont Family Network**  
c/o Joanne Wechsler  
600 Blair Park Road, Ste 240  
Williston, VT 05495

**Green Mountain Self-Advocates**  
c/o Karen Topper  
#2 Prospect Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**VTDDC**  
c/o Kirsten Murphy  
322 Industrial Lane  
Berlin, VT 05633-0206

**★TIP:** Mail your application a few days before the deadline of November 1, 2016 so that it arrives on time. Or just call VTDDC to let us know that it is on the way!

Thank you for your interest in Leadership!



*The Vermont Leadership Series is made possible through the collaboration of the Vermont Family Network, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, with support from the Vermont Department of Health and the UVM Center for Disability & Community Inclusion.*





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## **Participants can expect to:**

- Learn more about yourself and how to focus your energies.
- Receive high quality training from experts in the field of disability rights and advocacy.
- Connect with other leaders fighting for self-determination, equal rights, and full inclusion in schools and communities.
- Discover ways to make positive change happen – in your life, in your family, and even in our State.
- Learn and practice leadership skills that get good results.
- Be challenged and fired up!

## **What we expect from you:**

- Attend all three weekend sessions and stay overnight.
- Be a full and active participant in all learning experiences.
- Be open to new ideas and ways of thinking.
- Work together with others to complete activities.
- Create a leadership team project outside of the training.
- Complete evaluation forms.
- Make a small contribution to the cost of the Series.
- Work hard and have fun!