



# the Vermont Leadership Series

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

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

The Vermont Leadership Series is an intense, 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 Disability Rights Movement:  
Self-determination, equal rights, and full community inclusion.
- Leadership is designed for Vermonters with diverse experiences of disability. Examples include: Parents who have a young child recently diagnosed with I/DD; adults living with a developmental disability who want to take their advocacy to a new level; brothers, sisters, or grandparents who are growing into their role supporting a loved one with I/DD.
- Leadership will help you to:
  - develop skills to be an effective advocate and leader
  - support others in finding their voice and being heard
  - build relationships with policymakers
  - work together to make Vermont a better place for all of its citizens
- The Vermont Leadership Series is sponsored by the Vermont Family Network and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, with support from Green Mountain Self-Advocates and the University of Vermont's Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.
- We expect a high level of participation from everyone.  
We will find ways for everyone to contribute. We will learn together.

## **When is the 2015 Leadership Series?**

This is the third time Vermont will host a Leadership Series. It will be held on three weekends, starting Saturday morning and ending Sunday afternoon.

- March 7 - 8
- April 18 - 19
- June 6 – 7

★ There will also be a graduation on the afternoon of June 19, 2015.

The three (3) weekend trainings will be held at a hotel and participants will be expected to stay overnight on Saturday. The cost of hotel accommodations will be covered by the sponsoring organizations.

## **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 or more activities of daily life such as self-care, communication, movement, learning, self-direction, independent living, and 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.

★**TIP:** Do not be afraid to contact GMSA or VFN to talk with them about Leadership and nomination. They are looking for interested and motivated people.

## 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 2015 Series. If you are not selected it does *not* mean that you are not a good candidate for the Leadership Series. 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 \$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 staff person, we will cover meals and lodging for him or her. However, we cannot pay for staff.

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

There are two steps that you will need to take.

- You must let one of the nominating organizations know that you are interested in leadership. 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

- There is also an application form. It can be downloaded and filled-in or printed at:  
<http://ddc.vermont.gov/vtleadershipseries>

★**TIP:** Help is available to fill out the application. If you would like help you should contact GMSA or VFN at the numbers above.  
Need an alternative format for the application? Call VTDDC at (802) 828-1311.

### Mail the completed and signed application to:

Vermont Leadership Series  
Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council  
103 S. Main St. 1 North Rm 117  
Waterbury, VT 05671-0206

To speed things up - you may *also* send an electronic copy to [vtddc@state.vt.us](mailto:vtddc@state.vt.us) BUT we will still need a signed copy mailed to us.

★**TIP:** Mail your application a few days before the deadline of January 26 so that it arrives on time.



*The Vermont Leadership Series is made possible through the collaboration of the Vermont Family Network and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, with support from Green Mountain Self-Advocates, 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!