



Nebraska Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program, Lancaster County

Sponsored by Disability Rights Nebraska, The Woods Charitable Foundation,
and The Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities

July 8, 2019

Dear Applicant:

We invite you to apply for the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project training course beginning on August 23, 2019. The deadline for applications is July 24, 2019. This project was developed by Disability Rights Nebraska, the protection and advocacy system that protects the rights of Nebraskans with disabilities. As part of its commitment to helping all children in Nebraska to have the benefit of knowledgeable and effective advocates, Disability Rights Nebraska is proud to invite you to apply for the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project.

This is the initial training for the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy project. We are excited to introduce this project to the children and families in Nebraska who seek assistance in working with their school districts to secure the most effective education that will enable them to enter adulthood prepared to take their places in their communities. We have spent the last year listening to families and students talk about their educational needs and have developed a training curriculum that will arm advocates with the skills they need to assist.

You are receiving this letter because you have inquired about this project and/or you were referred to Disability Rights Nebraska by one of your peers. Information outlining the project and expectations follows. If you are interested please complete the application form at <http://bit.ly/layadvocacy>.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION LAY ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES

- To provide trainees with the best information on the complex issues surrounding Nebraska's educational system to raise competency levels of people advocating on behalf of students with disabilities
- To develop long-standing relationships between concerned Nebraskans and parents
- To understand how social roles lead to a full life
- To assist and enable concerned Nebraskans to master information and negotiate systems in order to help secure the educational opportunities that are a civil right and legal mandate for students with disabilities
- To present professional speakers who educate trainees and give the project a hands-on, in-depth view

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- People who live in Lancaster County
- Persons of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Nebraskans who receive no financial support from a school district or State Board of Education
- People who have a passion and time to lend for advocating for others
- People with disabilities or people with family members who have disabilities

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT Participants will attend 9 sessions; the first two sessions will occur on back to back full days with the following 7 sessions meeting for three hours in the evening. The first two sessions will take place on Friday, August 23, 2019 and Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The remaining sessions will be held on Thursday evenings August 29, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3, and 10, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. All sessions will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska.

WHAT WE EXPECT

- Each participant is expected to attend all sessions. Attendance is the single most important expectation of a participant.
- Each participant will participate in the Facebook Group dedicated to the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy project for at least one (1) calendar year starting from the first day of training.
- Each participant will complete all homework assignments designed to prepare participants for each session
- Upon completion of training, each participant will attend a minimum of six (6) Individual Education Plan meetings for a student other than their own and/or impact the educational system in a significant manner.

FREE TRAINING MATERIALS

- Each participant will receive the following materials:
 - Wrightslaw Special Education Law
 - From Emotions to Advocacy
 - Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards and Extensions
 - Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51: Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs
 - Other handouts
- Each participant will receive thirty-five (35) hours of direct instruction presented by top-notch professionals working in the advocacy field
- Priority Access for Technical Assistance from an attorney at Disability Rights Nebraska

SESSION TOPICS (additional topics will be determined)

- Social Role Valorization
- Advocacy Strategies
 - When working with families
 - When working with private professionals
 - When working with the School System
- Communication and the School
- Understanding School Thinking and Culture
- Transition Issues
- Inclusion
- Knowledge of the Law
- Venues for Resolution
 - How to write effective letters
 - Nebraska State Complaints
 - Mediation
 - Nebraska Due Process Hearings

DEADLINE Application received by **July 24, 2019**, will be most welcome. You can find the application at <http://bit.ly/layadvocacy> or mail your application to Disability Rights Nebraska, 134 South 13th, Ste 600, Lincoln, NE 68508. Alternate formats of this application are available per request or simply e-mail me at patriciac@drne.org or call Disability Rights Nebraska at (402) 474-3183.

SELECTION PROCESS Applications will be reviewed to ensure eligibility requirements are met and applications are submitted completely. All applicants will be notified of selection by July 31, 2019.

The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project is not just another training class. It creates an advocacy community between graduates and speakers that does not end with graduation from the training. Feel free to share this letter and the application with others who may be interested.

Disability Rights Nebraska is delighted to invite you to apply for this training and hope that you will join us. Please do not hesitate to call us with any questions about the project or the commitment expected of you. We look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Pat Cottingham

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
- Margaret Mead