

Nebraska Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project

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

June 4, 2020

Dear Applicant:

We invite you to apply for the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project training course beginning on July 7. 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 first training for the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy project in the Kearney area. We have been excited to offer 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 developed a training curriculum that will arm advocates with the skills they need to assist families and IEP teams to develop strategies that will help all children be successful with the general education curriculum. Advocates have been trained in the Lincoln area and are assisting families.

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 apply at <https://bit.ly/layadvocacy>.

*"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*

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 with disabilities or people with family members who have disabilities
- 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
- Persons of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT Participants will attend 12 three hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00-9:00 pm beginning July 7 and ending August 13. All sessions will be held online through a GoTo Meeting link that you will be provided with upon acceptance of your application.

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-six (36) 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
- Understanding the Individual Education Plan and Communication with the team
- 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 Applications received by July 1, 2020 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. 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 Friday, July 3, 2020. All hard copy training materials will be mailed to you, and links to online materials will be sent by email.

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, Ed.D.
Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project Coordinator
Disability Rights Nebraska
patriciac@drne.org

134 South 13th Street, Suite 600, Lincoln, NE 68508 | 1425 First Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
Phone: 402-474-3183 | Toll-Free in Nebraska: 1-800-422-6691 | Fax: 402-474-3274