

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions Eligibility Requirements**

We created the Leadership Series to empower individuals who have an Intellectual/Developmental Disability, or "I/DD", with some of the skills people need to make informed decisions, take charge of their lives, speak up for themselves, and support others to do the same.

There's no cost to participate, but you must meet the following requirements to join the Leadership Series. If your answer indicates that you don't meet these requirements, you'll be redirected to a page where you can learn about some of the other activities we offer.

If you think you made a mistake, you're also welcome to restart the application from the beginning and correct your answers.

### **Eligibility Requirement 1: Do you have an Intellectual/Developmental Disability?**

**Option 1:** YES. I have an Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD).

**Option 2:** NO. I don't have an I/DD, but I'll be providing support to a fellow class member who does.

**Option 3:** NO. Neither of the options above apply.

### **Eligibility Requirement 2: Are you a Rhode Island Resident?**

**Option 1:** YES. I am a RI resident

**Option 2:** No, I am not a RI resident, but I will be supporting a fellow class member who is.

**Option 3:** NO. I am not a RI resident.

### **Eligibility Requirement 3: Are you age 18 or older? If not, will you be turning 18 in 2025?**

**Option 1:** YES. I am of voting age (18 or older).

**Option 2:** NOT YET. I'm 17 years old, but I'll turn 18 before the end of 2025.

**Option 3:** NO. I won't be old enough to vote by the end of 2025.

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 1: Contact Information**

#### **QUESTION 1: What is your full name?**

After you've completed the Leadership Series, we'll celebrate your success with an official graduation ceremony.

We need the correct spelling of your full name, written the way you'd like it to appear on your diploma.

**First Name:**

**Last Name:**

#### **QUESTION 2: What is your mailing address?**

We need your mailing address to send you materials related to class during our time together. While most of the materials we use will be available online to download, we'll also be sending you various printed resources and other items that you'll need for class.

This is usually an applicant's home address. If you're using a different address, make sure that you'll be able to check the mail there often and are able to receive packages at this location.

**Address:**

**City**

**State:**

**Zip Code:**

### **QUESTION 3: What email address will you be using for class?**

Applicants need to have a way to send and receive email. We'll be using email throughout our time together to share homework assignments, information about group projects and contests (with real prizes when you win!), extra resources about the topics we cover in class, and invitations to other meetings or events you might be interested in.

We also encourage class members to stay connected with our Leadership Series team by emailing us any questions, comments, or ideas you want to share.

Using email is an important requirement for being in the Leadership Series, but it doesn't mean you need to do it alone. If you don't have an address or use email, you can ask a family member, friend, or one of your paid support staff to use theirs. If you decide to use someone else's email address, you'll be able to enter their name and how they're related to you in the next question.

Remember, if this isn't your address, you'll need to connect with the person who owns it at least once a week to check for messages from our Leadership Series team and send a reply.

Write the email address that you'll be using for class in the space below. Make sure you enter it in the correct format. For example, if your email is "DonaldDonald@gmail.com", remember to include the three-letter extension (.com) at the end.

This is important because if we don't have your correct address, we won't be able to contact you!

**Enter your email address:**

**Re-enter your email address:**

### **QUESTION 4: Who does the email address you'll be using for class belong to?**

You must be able to send and receive email on a regular basis to be in the Leadership Series, but you don't need to own the address you'll be using.

Select the answer that describes who this email address belongs to from the two options listed below. Note, if you select the second option, a dialogue box will open so you can enter that person's name and how they're related to you.

**Option 1:** This is my email address.

**Option 2:** This email address belongs to someone else.

If this address belongs to someone else, write that person's name and describe how they're related to you:

### **QUESTION 5: What is the best phone number to reach you?**

Although we'll be using email as the primary way to connect with class members, we also need a way to reach you by phone. We'll use this number to contact you if we have questions or information to share that's better suited for a phone conversation than an email message.

We prefer calling class members directly, but if talking on the phone isn't your thing, you're welcome to use a number that belongs to another person.

If the number you're using belongs to someone else, remember that you'll need to check with them for messages from our Leadership Team between classes.

Write the best phone number to reach you, beginning with the area code, in the space below. When entering your number, please remember to add a dash between the area code, the first three numbers and the last four numbers, or it won't be correct.

**Phone Number:**

### **QUESTION 6: Who does the phone number you're using belong to?**

We need a phone number where we can reach you to share updates and other information, but you're welcome to use someone else's number if necessary.

Select the answer that describes who the phone number you're using for class belongs to from the two options listed below. Note, if you select the second option, a dialogue box will open so you can enter that person's name and how they're related to you.

**Option 1:** This is my phone number.

**Option 2:** This phone number belongs to someone else.

If this number belongs to someone else, write the person's name and describe how they're related to you in the dialogue box that opens. For example, are they a family member, friend, or paid support person?

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 2: Contact Person**

We'll send any printed materials you may need for class and other correspondence directly to you, the applicant.

You're welcome to make copies and share whatever message we send with others who will be supporting you in the Leadership Series.

In addition, we can also send a copy of those messages to your designated contact person. When we do this, it means we'll send messages directly to you and will also include your contact person in our "Cc list" so they get a copy of the same information.

PLEASE NOTE: Adding a Contact Person to our Cc list isn't the same as bringing a Support Person with you to class.

If you add a contact person, we'll email them the same information whenever we send you a message about class. If you need to bring a support person with you to class, you'll be able to add that information in Section 4: Accommodations and Accessibility.

You're welcome to bring a support person if you think you'll need their assistance during class. Our Leadership team will also be available to help, and the fact that classes will be virtual means you may not need the same assistance as you would if we met in person, such as transportation or help with personal care.

If you do decide to bring a support person, that individual needs to complete a separate application to join the Leadership Series. If we're able to accept you into next year's class, we'll accept your support person, too, which means you don't need to add them as your contact person because they'll already be on our mailing list!

#### **QUESTION 7: Would you like to add a Contact Person?**

**Option 1:** Yes. I'd like to add a Contact Person.

**Option 2:** No. I do not wish to add a Contact Person at this time.

## **QUESTION 7, Continued: Who is your contact person?**

*Note: This question is only required for those who selected to add a contact person in the previous question.*

**Contact's First Name:**

**Contact's Last Name:**

**Contact's Email Address:**

**Contact's Phone Number:**

**Describe how this person is related to you.** *For example, are they a family member, friend, or paid support person?*

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 3: Connecting for Class**

Our next Leadership Series will meet virtually once a week using the Zoom video app. In addition, you'll have a variety of online activities, homework projects, and other ways to get involved during our time together. This Section is about the type of equipment you'll be using to do those things.

If you're not familiar with Zoom or how to navigate the internet, NO WORRIES! Those are some of the topics we'll talk about in class. Our Peer Mentors will also be available to meet with you 1:1 and help you get started.

#### **QUESTION 8: How much experience do you have using Zoom?**

You don't need to have any experience using Zoom to join the Leadership Series! We can show you how, but first, we need to know how comfortable you are using the app. Your answer will help us make recommendations about the courses, resources, and extracurricular activities you may be interested in to help you learn more about using the app.

Select an answer from the 3 options listed below that best describes your experience level using the Zoom video app. *Note: You'll also be able to add comments about your answer on the application form.*

**Option 1:** Beginner Level - Not much experience

**Option 2:** Some Experience

**Option 3:** Power User - A lot of experience

## **QUESTION 9: What type of equipment will you use to participate in the Leadership Series?**

Class members must have the right equipment and a way to connect to the internet to participate in the Leadership Series.

If possible, we strongly recommend using a computer with the Zoom Desktop App for the best overall experience possible. We don't recommend using a Smartphone to connect, but you're welcome to do so if that's your only option. *Note: You'll also be able to add comments about your answer on the application form.*

Select the type of device(s) you'll be using from the 4 options listed below:

**Option 1:** Computer

**Option 2:** Tablet

**Option 3:** Chromebook

**Option 4:** Smartphone (not recommended)

**Option 5:** Other device:

## 2025 Leadership Application Questions

### Section 4: Accommodations and Accessibility

This section is about any type of accommodations you may need to participate in the class. Although we ask whether or not you feel comfortable reading and writing, remember that you DON'T need the ability to do either of those things to join the Leadership Series!

We make all of our materials available in a variety of formats, such as pictures, videos, music, and games, to make the information accessible, inclusive, and easy to understand for people with a variety of learning styles. We provide free text to speech technology that will read aloud and translate the materials we share in class, homework assignments, and other resources. Finally, we teach the class with a team of Peer Mentors who'll be there to help.

There are no wrong answers to the following 2 questions! Your response, combined with those we receive from other applicants, will help us customize our materials and improve the overall class experience for everyone.

#### **QUESTION 10: Are you comfortable READING?**

This question is about whether or not you feel comfortable reading. We realize that people communicate in many different ways, from books to body language and beyond! In this instance, "reading" refers to the printed word, either on paper or screen.

Remember, you DON'T need to read to be part of the Leadership Series. We ask this question because we value your feedback, and your response will help us improve the experience for everyone who joins our next class.

If you're not comfortable reading, it's nothing to be embarrassed about!

Select the response that best describes how comfortable you feel about reading from the following options. Once you've made your selection, a dialogue box will open so you can add comments if you'd like to clarify your choice.

For example, you might be comfortable reading alone but not enjoy reading in front of others.

If you don't have any comments make an "X" or type "none".

If you have a different answer to share, select the 4th option and write your response in the box that opens.

**Option 1:** No. Reading isn't really my thing.

**Option 2:** YES and NO. It depends on what I'm reading.

**Option 3:** YES. I enjoy reading.

## QUESTION 11: Are you comfortable WRITING?

Like the previous question, when we say "writing", we're referring to using pen and paper, a computer, or other technology to communicate your thoughts with words.

While you'll need a way to record your answers for some of the homework and other activities, there are lots of different ways you can do that. For example, some people communicate with pictures, music, videos, drawing, and other artwork.

We actually encourage members to be as creative as possible as they work on projects for class. After all, being creative is an excellent quality in leaders. There's no wrong way to record your answers to the work we'll be doing together, so you won't need to write things in the traditional way if you'd prefer to draw, paint, record, or sing about them instead.

The responses we receive to this question will help us make our next class as accessible and inclusive as possible for everyone who joins us.

Please don't feel embarrassed if you're uncomfortable with reading or writing! The majority of previous class members weren't, either, and your answer won't affect your application in any way.

Select the response that best describes how comfortable you feel about writing from the following list. Once you've made your selection, a dialogue box will open so you can add comments or additional information about your response. If you have nothing else to share, make an "X" or type "none".

If you want to share a different answer, select the 4th option (Other) and write your response in the box when it opens.

**Option 1:** No. Writing isn't really my thing.

**Option 2:** YES and NO. It depends on what I'm reading.

**Option 3:** YES. I enjoy reading.

**Option 4:** Other. *Select this answer to add a different answer.*

## **QUESTION 12: Will anyone be taking the class with you to provide support?**

Your support person is welcome to join you in class if you think you'll need their assistance to participate in the Leadership Series.

We require everyone who plans to be present when we meet to complete a separate application and follow the graduation requirements listed in section 5, including support staff.

If we accept your application for the next Leadership Series, we'll accept your support person, too, but they need to complete a separate application form.

Let us know if you'll have someone with you during class by selecting an answer from the 4 options listed below.

**Option 1:** YES. I need to bring a support person and I know who it is.

Write the name of your support person:

**Option 2:** YES. I need to bring a support person, but I'm not sure who will be with me, yet.

**Option 3:** NO. I won't be bringing a support person to class.

**Option 4:** NOT SURE. I don't know if I'll need a support person, yet. I want to talk about this at my interview.

## **QUESTION 13: Do you need any other accommodations to participate in the Leadership Series?**

We create class materials in multiple formats and strive to make them both accessible and as user-friendly as possible. The Leadership Series also takes place virtually, which means all of the homework assignments, handouts, and other resources we share will be available in digital format. In addition to saving some trees, that means you'll be able to use the Browse Aloud screen reader tool available on the Advocates in Action website,

along with other accessibility features, to listen to the text, change the font size, and translate information into other languages if needed.

At the same time, we know everyone is unique, especially when it comes to communication styles and accommodation, and will work with you to provide the most appropriate accommodations possible to help you succeed.

Select one of the 3 options listed below to explain your accommodation requests.

**Option 1:** NO. I don't have any additional accommodation requests at this time.

**Option 2:** YES. I will need the following accommodations to participate in next year's class.  
Enter your accommodations request:

**Option 3:** YES. I think I may need some additional accommodations to participate in class, but I don't know what type of support to request. *Note: We'll talk about this at your interview.*

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 5: Graduation Requirements**

The following seven requirements describe some of the time commitments, homework assignments, extracurricular activities, and privacy guidelines for members of the Class of 2025. We understand they may look like a lot of work, but remember, looks can be deceiving!

While it's true that you'll be busy, we guarantee the Leadership Series is NOT your typical classroom. Chances are, the activities you'll be doing, and the time we spend talking about them together, will be unlike anything you ever experienced in school.

For example, you don't need to have any special training or technical skills to join us. Don't worry if you've never done some of the things on this list, like attending meetings using the Zoom Video App, researching an important topic on the internet, or giving a Virtual Presentation in front of a large group of people. We'll teach you about all of those things and more during our time together!

We meet often, so there's no need to rush. You'll have plenty of time to relax, ask questions, get to know your classmates and be yourself. And we spend time practicing together before doing any activities outside of the classroom. If you don't feel ready, say the word, and we'll practice some more.

Members will also have access to a Peer Mentor. Peer Mentors are Leadership Series graduates who work for Advocates in Action to support current members. Your Peer Mentor can meet with you for a private Zoom session between classes to review materials, explain homework projects, and answer any questions you may have.

And speaking of homework, aka, Funwork, you should also know that we don't grade your work. That means the only way you can "fail" is by refusing to try. In order to graduate, you need to come to class, give it your best effort, and remember that it's ok to ask for help.

If you're concerned about these requirements or worried about something else that might prevent you from being part of next year's class, use the last item on the following list to open a dialogue box and explain your situation.

We'll review that information with you and discuss how we can help during your interview.

Overall, rest assured that our Leadership Series team is flexible, creative, and committed to your success. We know you'll be amazing, and we'll be there to help figure things out whenever you need us, every step of the way!

## **QUESTION 14: Do you agree with our Leadership Series Graduation Requirements?**

Everyone who is applying for the Leadership Series must agree with the following seven requirements to graduate. Once you've indicated your agreement, **CLICK THE LAST CHECKBOX** on the list to share any comments or questions you have about them. If you have nothing to add, make an **X** or write **NONE**.

### **Requirement 1: Attend the Kick-Off retreat on Wednesday, February 5th, 2025.**

The retreat will take place on the Zoom Video Platform from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with an hour-long lunch break at noon.

### **Requirement 2: Attend weekly classes on Wednesdays from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

The Leadership Series is a BIG commitment! Classes meet every Wednesday, from February 12th to June 25th.

Attendance at weekly classes is an important graduation requirement! Members should only miss class if they have an excused absence. An "excused absence" means you can't attend class due to circumstances beyond your control.

For example, missing class because you're sick or you lose your internet connection are both excused absences. On the other hand, deciding to skip class and go to the beach isn't

### **Requirement 3: Do the Work**

As a member of the Leadership Series, you'll have various assignments to work on outside of class. You'll also have a team of Peer Mentors you can contact for assistance.

While we don't assign any grades, we do require members to work on these assignments and bring their answers to class. We also encourage everyone to ask for help as needed. After all, asking questions is one of the best ways to learn!

### **Requirement 4: Be as Involved as Possible**

Extra activities outside of class can include field trips, court hearings, public forums, various committees and workgroups, songwriting sessions, and other team-building activities. Many of these will be optional, but we encourage members to attend whenever possible.

### **Requirement 5: Practice Your Leadership Skills**

Leadership Series members will actively participate in planning and presenting at Rhode Island's Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference, which will take place on Thursday, May 9th, 2025.

The Conference Day will be held on Zoom from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and members are required to attend.

The Conference Dinner Dance will be at the Providence Marriott on Friday, May 10th. Evening participation is optional, but we strongly encourage everyone to join us at this fun-filled event!

**Requirement 6: Respect Privacy**

The Leadership Series is a safe place to share personal information related to the topics we'll be discussing. This information is private, and you must respect everyone's confidentiality. This means you agree not to repeat confidential conversations that take place during class and won't share a fellow member's personal contact information without their consent.

**Requirement 7: Photo/Video Release**

Advocates in Action will share recordings from our retreat and weekly classes on a private 2025 Leadership Series web page. We also take photos during our in-person activities. Class members must agree to be recorded and allow Advocates in Action to use some of the media we produce on our website and other social media platforms.

**Questions, Comments, or Concerns**

You can use this last item to share any questions, comments, or concerns you have about our graduation Requirements. To do so, click the checkbox and share your feedback in the dialogue box when it opens. If you have nothing to add, make an X or write none.

## 2025 Leadership Application Questions

### Section 6: The RI DD Service System and You

This section is about your connection to the RI DD System. You don't need to be connected to the DD System to join the Leadership Series. However, you should know in advance that we spend a significant amount of our time together discussing DD Services and Supports, how to navigate the DD system, and what options are available for those who either Self-Direct or use a Provider Agency to manage the Services they receive.

Your answer to the following question will help us customize our curriculum for this year's class.

#### **QUESTION 15: Do you currently receive DD services?**

By "DD Services", we mean services and supports that are funded through the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities, such as Residential, Shared Living Arrangements, Supported Employment, and Community Day Supports.

Not every Rhode Islander who has an I/DD uses services that are funded through the Division. If you're someone who does, you can manage these services yourself ("Self-Direct"), go through a licensed Provider Agency, or use a combination of these 2 options.

Indicate if you currently receive services funded through the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities by selecting one of the options listed below. Once you've made your selection, add the additional information requested in the box that opens.

**Option 1:** YES. I currently receive DD Services.

**Option 2:** NOT YET. I've already applied to the Division of Developmental Disabilities, but I haven't begun to receive services yet. For example, select this option if you're new to the DD System and still in the process of finding a Provider Agency or hiring your own Direct Support Staff.

**Option 3:** NO. I have an I/DD but I don't receive any services funded through the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities.

**Option 4:** N/A (Not Applicable). I don't have an I/DD, but I'm applying to support a fellow applicant who does.

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 7: About Being a Leader**

As the name implies, this class is about leadership. Although we'll talk about things like, how to vote, and how to pick political leaders, the class isn't about politics! The topics we talk about are non-partisan. That means we don't promote one set of political beliefs over others, and we ask class members not to do it, either. Leadership can

mean many different things to different people which have nothing to do with who the current president, governor, or local elected officials are.

Note, both of the questions in this section are "open-ended", which means you will need to write something instead of selecting your answer from a list. Some people refer to this as an "essay question", which can sound pretty scary, but we hope it isn't for you. We're really NOT looking for a lot of big or fancy words here, and we definitely aren't worried about how you spell them! =)

Please relax and feel free to write as little or as much as you want. Remember, these are your thoughts and ideas, so there's no wrong way to answer.

#### **QUESTION 16: Why are you applying for the Leadership Series?**

We're really looking forward to hearing your thoughts about why you're applying, written in your words and voice! We've also included a few examples of what you could talk about if you get stuck. These are just ideas. You don't need to answer any of them unless you want to.

**Idea 1:** How did you hear about the Leadership Series?

**Idea 2:** If someone you know is a Leadership Series graduate, what did they do or say about their experience that inspired you to apply?

**Idea 3:** What do you hope to learn or achieve by taking the Leadership Series?

**Share the reasons you want to join the Leadership Series in the space below:**

### **QUESTION 17: What does being a leader mean to you?**

In this question, we'd like you to share some of your ideas about what it means to be a leader. As we mentioned above, Leadership means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?

There's no wrong way to answer. You could share an experience from your own life, talk about one of your favorite leaders and why you like them, or include a quote about leadership and what it means to you.

Or you can write something entirely different for your answer! Speak from your heart and let us know what you think.

**Share what “being a leader” means in the space below:**

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 8: About an Amazing Person named YOU!**

Each of us comes with our life experiences, skills, interests, and ideas. We designed this section to help us learn about some of yours and get to know you better.

#### **QUESTION 18: Who are you? Tell us about yourself!**

When we say, "tell us about yourself", we don't mean sharing your whole life story! We're also not looking for any personal or confidential information that you'd prefer to keep private. In this question, we're simply hoping to get to know a bit more about who you are and "what makes you tick".

Do you have a job or do volunteer work? Who do you live with? Do you belong to any sports teams or social groups? Are you taking any classes, either for fun or for school? Do you have any pets? What are some of your favorite hobbies? Do you play an instrument or sing? Are you an artist? Who do you call "family"?

As you can imagine from these few examples, the possibilities of what to share are endless! What you choose to include in your answer is also totally up to you, so let's hear it!

**Tell us more about yourself in the space below:**

### **QUESTION 19: What are 5 words or phrases that describe you?**

In this next question, we'd like you to describe yourself in 5 words or short phrases. What are some of the qualities and characteristics that make you the person you are?

Your description should be about who you are on the inside, not how you look on the outside. What makes you unique?

Share five words or short phrases that capture your personality, individual qualities, and other characteristics in the space below.

**#1:** A word or phrase that describes me is:

**#2:** A word or phrase that describes me is:

**#3:** A word or phrase that describes me is:

**#4:** A word or phrase that describes me is:

**#5:** A word or phrase that describes me is:

## **2025 Leadership Application Questions**

### **Section 9: Final Thoughts**

You've almost reached the end of the application! This last section is the place to share any other questions, comments, or concerns you have about joining the Leadership Series.

This is the 5th year we're offering the class online. While there have been a few speed bumps along the way, our recent graduates have enjoyed the flexibility of a virtual format and shared positive feedback about their experience overall.

In previous years we've had to cancel classes when it snowed. Members have also had to drop out because they didn't have a way to get there, while others had to leave early or wait for transportation after class because of staffing issues or problems with the RIDE bus.

After having conducted the Leadership Series virtually for the past several years, we know that those types of situations don't happen when members meet online. We've also had a great deal of success helping everyone learn the ins and outs of using the Zoom video app to connect virtually.

Remote learning can open a whole new world of opportunities, and we're excited to have you join us!

#### **QUESTION 20: Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

This is the last question, and it's optional.

As we mentioned above, there may be a few speed bumps during our time together, but that can happen with almost anything new (and lots of not-so-new stuff, too). Nevertheless, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about participating in next year's class. If you have suggestions about what we can do to address those concerns, we'd love to hear those, as well!

Your ideas will help us improve the Leadership Series experience for everyone. We'd never be able to do it alone, but together we can create something extraordinary!

**With that in mind, we'll leave you with the space below to share any final words you may have:**