**Maine Developmental Disabilities Council**



**Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant**

**Purpose:**

Maine Developmental Disabilities Council’s (MDDC) Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant provides funding for individuals with developmental disabilities and family members or guardians of individuals with developmental disabilities to participate in conferences, workshops, and other training opportunities that will increase their knowledge of disability issues and increase their skills as advocates for people with developmental disabilities.

These funds are intended to provide these individuals with the opportunities, experiences, resources and information they need to participate meaningfully in decisions which will affect their lives.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

The Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant is open to any resident of Maine who is:

* An Individual with developmental disabilities\*

or

* A parent, family member or guardian of an individual with developmental disabilities\*

Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant funding is not available to:

* MDDC members
* MDDC staff
* Immediate family members of MDDC members or staff (including spouses/partners, children, parents, and siblings)

*\*Please note: MDDC abides by the federal definition of developmental disabilities, which is provided at the end of this document.*

**How much funding can I receive?**

The Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant provides up to $500 to support an individual to attend a conference or other eligible event. An individual may receive funds only one time within each MDDC fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). An individual will not be eligible to receive funds to attend the same event two years in a row.

**How can the funds be used?**

Personal Education & Leadership Development funds can be used to cover expenses associated with attending conferences, workshops, trainings, and other events designed to do any of the following:

* Increase attendees’ understanding of issues related to developmental disabilities
* Promote the ability of individual’s with developmental disabilities to lead more inclusive, self-directed, productive, and meaningful lives.

Expenses that can be covered by Personal Education & Leadership Development funds include:

* Registration Fees
* Transportation
* Lodging
* Meals
* Personal Assistance Services
* Child Care or Respite

Personal Education & Leadership Development funds cannot be used for:

* Camps or activities that are solely recreational.
* Tutoring or therapy services.
* Events that are held outside of the continental United States.

**How and when is funding provided?**

Funding for approved Personal Education & Leadership Development Grants is provided as reimbursement for actual cost of pre-approved expenses after the event has been attended\* and:

* The Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant reimbursement form and required receipts has been submitted – these must be received within 20 days following the event.
* All post-event provisions and criteria have been met (see “What am I required to do?” below).

Reimbursement checks will be issued by check within 2 weeks following receipt of the completed reimbursement request, dependent upon availability of MDDC funds.

*\* Upon request and with suitable justification, MDDC may consider exceptions to this policy.*

**How and when do I apply?**

To be considered for a Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant, you must:

* Meet all eligibility criteria (see “Who can apply?” and “How can the funds be used?” above).
* Submit your application at least 30 days prior to the event for which you are requesting funding.
* Fully complete the Personal Education & Leadership Development application and supply all required information and materials.
* Agree and commit to all post-event criteria and requirements (see “What am I required to do if my application is approved?” below).

**What will I be required to do if my application is approved?**

In order to receive Personal Education & Leadership Development funding, you will be required to agree and commit to:

Prior to the event:

* Sign and return the Award Acceptance Agreement
* Notify MDDC as soon as possible if your plans for attending the event change.

Following the event

* Complete a Post Event Report providing information on how you benefited from the experience, the knowledge and information you gained, how you will make use of that knowledge and information and your plans to share that knowledge and information.
* Supply any additional information or reports and meet any additional requirements agreed upon in your award acceptance form.
* Report to MDDC on follow up activities and/or information sharing related to your attendance at the event. (specifically the number of other individuals who received information or benefitted from your attendance at the event)

Failure to meet any of these requirements will result in non-consideration of any subsequent requests for funding from MDDC.

**What is the process for reviewing applications and awarding grants?**

When a Personal Education & Leadership Development Grant application is submitted:

* Designated MDDC staff review the application to verify that it is complete and all required information is provided. If an application is not complete or does not meet all requirements, the applicant will be notified and provided the opportunity to correct the application.
* Applications that meet all requirements will be reviewed and evaluated by a designated MDDC committee, typically the Executive Committee.
* The committee reserves the right to approve an application at a different level of funding than requested or to offer provisional approval of an application.
* The committee reserves the right to require the applicant to participate in an interview and/or provide additional information.
* In evaluating an application, the committee will take into consideration:
  + Availability of MDDC Funds
  + The purpose of the event and how it relates to MDDC’s mission, and State Plan
  + The applicant’s reasons for wanting to attend the event.
  + The applicant’s plan on how to use and share the information and/or knowledge gained from attending the event.

Priority will be given to:

* + Applicants who have not previously received funding from MDDC
  + Events that directly relate to one or more goals and objectives within MDDC’s state plan.
* The final decision to approve or not approve an application will be made by a majority vote of Committee members.
* MDDC reserves the right to deny any application as it sees fit.
* Applicants who are not approved for funding will receive a notification of that decision and, when appropriate, an explanation for the decision.
* Applicants who are approved for funding will receive notification of the approved funding amount and any provisions or requirements related to the award along. In addition, they will receive an Award Acceptance form to be signed and returned to MDDC and all needed information and forms for requesting reimbursement following the event.

**Other Important Information:**

* Applicants are expected to make all necessary arrangements for attending the event themselves. MDDC takes no responsibility for any such arrangements.
* Expenses will be approved and reimbursed as consistent with MDDC policies.
* MDDC retains the prerogative to make exceptions to any policy requirements or require additional provisions on a case by case basis.