



Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (ArizonaLEND) Trainee Application for 2026-2027

Now Accepting Self-Advocate Applications for 2026-2027

Deadline: March 20, 2026

What is LEND?

LEND stands for Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities. Its purpose is to improve the health and lives of children and adults with disabilities. The program connects people who care about the lives of people with disabilities so that they can share ideas and help others across the country.

What is a LEND Trainee?

A LEND trainee is someone who has been selected to participate in a 9-month program to develop their leadership skills. They may be a graduate student who plans to work with individuals with disabilities, a parent of a child with a disability, or a Self-Advocate who wants to share their experience and make their voice heard. The LEND program helps each trainee develop their own skills as a leader while they learn from each other.



What is a LEND Discipline?

Each LEND Trainee represents a different LEND Discipline, or area of study or expertise. It can be a health field specialty, like Physical Therapy, Social Work, or Nursing. It can be Family, meaning a parent of a person with a disability, or, it can be Advocacy, meaning the trainee is a Self-Advocate with IDD who wants to be more involved in advocacy activities that support the disability community.

What does a LEND Self-Advocate Trainee do in the program?

The LEND Self-Advocate trainee will be a full member of the program and do the same core LEND activities that all trainees do. The Self-Advocate trainee will have an education coach for support as they work in the program.

All trainees from every discipline attend a seminar every Friday from 1:00 to 4:15 where they learn, and work together in large and small groups and share ideas.

All trainees must attend Leadership Workshops:

- Tuesday, August 11, 2026 through Friday, August 14, 2026
- Saturday, September 26, 2026
- Saturday, January 30, 2027

All trainees participate in projects they select and are interested in.

All trainees work hard, have fun, and learn new things.

All trainees work every week. The Self-Advocate Trainee will spend between 10 and 20 hours a week working on LEND projects.

Remember, the Self-Advocate trainee will have an education coach for support while being a LEND Self-Advocate Trainee, along with any accommodations needed to participate.

Who can apply to be a LEND Self-Advocate Trainee?

Applicants to be a LEND Self-Advocate Trainee must:



Want to be a leader in their community and be willing to speak up for themselves and others.

Have completed high school in special education

Have some education, training, or work experience after high school

Use a computer for email and internet

Be able to share ideas by writing, typing or assistive technology

Want to learn about and be involved in the disability field.

Why would someone want to be a LEND Trainee?

Being a LEND Trainee is a great opportunity. If you are selected to participate as a LEND Self-Advocate trainee, you will have the chance to:

Improve your leadership skills

Work on projects

Be a part of a team that learns from each other

Practice speaking up for your rights and the rights of others

Continue education in a university program

Receive a financial stipend for participating



When does the LEND Program begin and end?

August 28, 2026 through May 7, 2027

When is the deadline to apply?

Applications must be received by **11:59 pm March 20, 2026**. After we receive all of the applications, we will schedule an interview before we make our final selection.

How do I apply?

- Fill out the application form (below).
- Include your resume
- Include two (2) letters of reference written by a teacher, a boss, or someone you have worked with (not from a family member).

Contact Dr. Eileen McGrath ermcgra@peds.arizona.edu with any questions you have.

Application for ArizonaLEND Self-Advocate Trainee **Deadline: 11:59 pm on March 20, 2026**

Applicant Name: _____

Academic Degrees/Credentials/Certificates Achieved _____

Date Degree Completed _____

Current Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Primary Email: _____

Secondary Email:

Cell Phone: _____ Message Phone: _____

Permanent Address (include city, state & zip code):

Please answer the following questions:

- 1) Why are you interested becoming a LEND Self-Advocate trainee?

- 2) Give an example of a time that you spoke up for yourself.

3) Why do you want to continue your education?

4) What are some of your goals for the future?

5) What do you think makes a person a good leader?

6) Did you have support to complete this Application? Yes No

Personal Relationship with Disabilities:

(Check all that apply)

- Person with a disability
- Person with a special health care need
- Parent of a person with a disability
- Parent of a person with a special health care need
- Family member of a person with a disability
- Family member of a person with a special health care need

This application along with an unofficial copy of your transcripts and two (2) letters of support are due by March 20, 2026. You may mail to the address below, or email to Dr. McGrath ermcgra@peds.arizona.edu

Please send all correspondence to:

Eileen R. McGrath, Ph.D.
ArizonaLEND Director
The University of Arizona
PO Box 245073
Tucson, AZ 85724

ermcgra@peds.arizona.edu