



Project Overview

Community Advocates for Special Education (CASE) Project is a volunteer advocacy project brought to you by the WV Developmental Disabilities Council. The goal of this project is to provide high quality and comprehensive training for volunteer special education advocates. These volunteers will gain the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to assist West Virginia's students and their families in securing appropriate educational services and supports.

In addition to providing guidance and insight on an advocate's role and scope of work, the CASE Project will prepare participants to navigate advocacy relationships and address parent or caregiver concerns regarding the educational process. Training topics will also include relevant state and federal laws and policies, fostering collaborative team and district communication, frameworks such as IEPs and 504 plans, identifying and implementing individualized supports, etc. While no previous special education experience is necessary, participants will be provided the materials and resources they need to be prepared and well-equipped to serve in their own communities.

Who Should Apply?

The CASE Project seeks to engage parents, professionals, and community members who are interested in being trained to provide advocacy support in a volunteer capacity to West Virginia families and students with disabilities to ensure they understand their educational rights and are empowered to fully participate in the Special Education process.

If you are available during regular school hours for the training sessions and subsequent advocacy engagements, and are looking for an opportunity to fulfill a critical need in your local community that will ultimately help students succeed in school, we encourage you to apply.

CASE Project Participants Are Required To:

- Live in Wood, Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, or Jackson counties
- Attend and actively participate in all training sessions (this includes 2 weekend/in-person sessions and 2 weekday/virtual training sessions)
- Have the ability to participate in virtual meetings with the use of a microphone and speaker
- Have the ability to travel to Wood County or surrounding areas to fulfill post-graduation volunteer advocacy commitments

What Are The Commitments?

- If your application is accepted, attendance is mandatory for all training sessions to successfully complete and graduate from the course.
- After the training is complete, participants will be required to support at least 6 families in an advocacy capacity throughout the school year.
- Provide feedback on advocacy engagement to the WV Developmental Disabilities Council.

Timing

The application deadline for participation is November 25, 2026, with the first cohort beginning January 15th, 2027.

Friday, January 15

- In Person at The Blennerhassett Hotel - Parkersburg 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Saturday, January 16

- In Person at The Blennerhassett Hotel - Parkersburg 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Thursday, January 21

- Virtual Zoom Session 10:30 pm - 12:30 pm

Wednesday, January 27

- Virtual Zoom Session 10:30 pm - 12:30 pm

Saturday, January 30

- In Person at The Blennerhassett Hotel - Parkersburg 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Application

The Community Advocates Special Education Project believes that when properly trained and given the opportunity, volunteers can be strong advocates for all children and their families and we hope you will join us in this endeavor.

The application can be found on the WV Developmental Disabilities Council website at ddc.wv.gov. For any questions, concerns, or assistance with your application, please contact Katie Arbaugh at (304) 558-4185 / katie.o.arbaugh@wv.gov, or Christina Smith at christina.smith@astrive.org.