



**Utah Parent Center**  
Special needs, extraordinary potential

**A Network Supported by  
the Utah Parent Center**

# **Policies and Procedures**

*Updated September 2010*



## Policies and Procedures

***The mission of the Family to Family Network is to educate, strengthen and support families of persons with disabilities.***

The Family to Family Network is a statewide volunteer organization that provides information, education and support to families with family members that have disabilities. In February of 2009, the Family to Family Network became a project of the Utah Parent Center (UPC), with funding and support from the Division of Services for People with Disabilities and the Department of Human Services for the State of Utah. The contract that was previously held by the UPC in agreement with the Division ended June 30, 2009.

The strength of the Network has been in its ability to maintain statewide collaboration with many disability organizations and systems that serve individuals with disabilities and their families; its dedicated and trained parent volunteer leaders; and the financial support and assistance the organization receives from its partners.

Local Network groups are directed by volunteer parent leaders who serve as a resource for other parents in their vicinity. The goal is to help families access services and programs that will help them meet the challenges of supporting family members with special needs. In order to meet this goal and represent families in the disability community, Local Network Leaders may choose to:

- plan educational meetings for family members,
- mentor families one-on-one,
- send pertinent information to families through e-mail or other means,
- host recruitment and awareness activities,
- collaborate with other disability-related organizations for meetings and activities,
- consult with other Local Network Leaders about meetings, activities and management of Networks,
- participate in community disability-related events and
- participate on local disability board and committees.



Network Leaders are encouraged to be aware of needs and issues that affect people with disabilities in their area and assist families with finding solutions to those needs. Network/UPC staff is available to assist and consult with meeting and event planning, implementing policies and procedures and budgeting questions.

The following information contains the essential policy and procedure guidelines for those who will be associated with the Family to Family Network. Network Leaders and Staff will be informed of any changes to these policies and procedures in writing.

These guidelines are intended to help simplify, improve and build our organization, and provide continuity across the Network. If you have any questions or concerns at any time about policies and procedures, please ask a member of the Family to Family Network staff at the UPC to clarify the information.

Your service in this organization is much appreciated, and we look forward to helping you more successfully fill a vital role as a parent leader in the disability community!



## SECTION I. BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR OUR ORGANIZATION AND OUR PARTNERS

### As a representative of the Networks, you agree to:

1. Use the Family to Family Network name and logo whenever possible and appropriate to advertise events you are planning for families in your area. Also include the Utah Parent Center name and logo, if appropriate.
  - A. If you are soliciting donations (cash or in-kind) you MUST include an explanation of the Network's relationship with the Utah Parent Center. The Networks are not a non-profit organization and all donations received for use by the Networks must be channeled through the UPC accounting office. There is a more detailed protocol for this in Section 4, Number 2 of these policies.

*The Network name and logo can only be used by active Leaders/  
Networks as determined by the Network/UPC staff.*

2. Conduct yourself in a professional, respectful manner in your interactions with parents, agencies, Network Leaders and staff, legislators and anyone else on whom your conduct might have an impact and reflect on the organization. This guideline applies to written, as well as verbal communications, and is especially important in e-mail and other online communications that can be forwarded to other parties over which we have no control.
3. Make efforts to become familiar with the agencies in your area that serve individuals with disabilities and let them know that you are available as a resource for families. Include representatives from those agencies on your email lists and invite them to your meetings and activities. Find out how you as a leader can partner with them to help meet the needs of the families you both serve.
4. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with your Volunteer Agreement. As a leader, you may become aware of or involved in matters that include personal information. You need to maintain confidentiality



related to all personal information about individuals, families and others with whom you work.

## SECTION 2: ADVOCACY

### As a volunteer leader in this organization you may be asked to provide:

1. Training: In order to assist parents with advocacy, it is important that you are comfortable with your own advocacy skills. Chances are, you have had some formal advocacy training by now, but if not, make it a priority to hone your own advocacy skills. If you have had some training, brush up on your skills whenever you can. We recommend that you review training materials from the Utah Parent Center LAMP courses, the 10 Step Advocacy, Month to Month Advocacy, Parents as Policymakers, or other familiar resources so you can easily access your skills whenever needed. (Contact UPC staff for more information on these resources.) You can also schedule regular advocacy trainings in your area so that parents always have opportunities to learn these important skills that can be used in **any** system, whenever they might be needed.
2. Information on legislative Issues: It is important to remember that it is not our place as an organization to lobby for or against any particular legislation. In fact, because of our relationship with the UPC and their standing as a federally and state funded nonprofit organization in Utah, we cannot use our positions with the Family to Family Network to lobby for or against a particular legislation. We are not to use our influence with parents to get them to vote for particular candidates, or tell parents how **we** think they should act on particular issues. It is our role simply to educate, inform and encourage advocacy on disability-related issues. An excellent way for parents to receive information on disability legislation and get involved in advocacy is to direct them to the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities and the Grassroots Advocacy Project (GAP – a project under the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council).



## SECTION 3: PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Network Leaders may plan fundraising activities to supplement their budget allocations from the funds received from UPC allocations to support families through this project. Because of the economic climate and the severe cuts to budgets, Network/UPC staff will engage in some fundraising on a state level by searching for appropriate grants or agency sharing activities that would benefit the Network organization. Additional funds may be available from the UPC to support your events. Prior to undertaking any major fundraising efforts, please contact the UPC.

Fundraising activities can also often be a great way to raise community awareness and collaborate with other organizations. The same guidelines that apply to your other Network activities also apply to fundraising in terms of prior planning, reporting and use of the organizations' names and logos.

**We encourage Local Leaders to keep the following guidelines in mind when planning their meetings and fundraising activities.**

### COMMUNICATE WITH UPC STAFF PRIOR TO ANY ACTIVITY

1. Please do not assume that activities approved and reimbursed in the past will automatically be approved again. It is essential that you communicate with staff **well in advance** of an activity, mailing, or travel to ensure that it meets the guidelines and that there is money in the budget to support your plan.
2. We have requested your plans in advance but realize that adjustments will need to be made. We will fund as many requests as possible, but will give priority to those activities that use prior planning, community collaboration and that support the Network mission statement to provide education, information and support to families.
3. Expenses that may be covered if included in your approved plan are:
  - A. Mileage
  - B. Food/Refreshments



- C. Postage
- D. Copying and Printing
- E. Phone/Phone Cards
- F. Supplies
- G. Other if preapproved – Refer to Section 3, Number 5.

We encourage you to get donations to help cover your expenses whenever possible. Following are some suggestions to help offset some of the costs we are often asked to fund:

**Bulk Mailing/Advertising:** Our budget has been drastically reduced, so please avoid large mailings and find other ways of advertising your meetings. Many groups are having success partnering with school districts to distribute information. There are several websites where you may post information and email lists are an excellent way to communicate with a large number of people with minimal effort and cost. You could also consider putting posters and flyers in public buildings or medical facilities where your families are likely to see them, or using phone calling trees.

**Food:** If you choose to offer refreshments, consider having potluck, where families bring an item and split the costs or ask agencies to participate by providing the refreshments for the meetings. In-kind donations of food are also acceptable, but should be reported to the Utah Parent Center and appropriate receipts and recognition should be given to the donor.

**Supervised Children's Activities:** If you choose to offer supervised children's activities for children with disabilities and/or their siblings at your meeting or activity, consider asking the paid care provider if you can supplement with volunteers to lower the cost. Ask a church group or school service group to volunteer to offset the cost of the paid staff. We encourage you to have families orient care providers to the needs of their family member prior to joining in the meeting or activity. Avoid calling this support for families "child care" because of legal requirements for child care providers.



4. Network funds may **not** be used for:

**Durable Goods:** Funds may not be used to purchase durable goods such as filing cabinets or hand trucks.

**Facility Rental:** Find venues that have little or no cost for your meetings and activities. When you approach a facility that requires rent, offer an explanation about our organization and its mission, and see if the fee can be reduced or waived. If a facility fee cannot be waived and is excessive, reimbursement for the expenses will likely be denied. Some groups have had success finding sponsors for events that have required a facility rental. The Network/UPC staff is happy to assist with writing letters to address specific situations. Just let us know your particular need and we are happy to help.

5. The purchase of items other than what has been approved in your plan **must be pre-approved** by contacting staff.
6. Instead of requesting reimbursement for expenses and turning in appropriate documentation, Leaders may request a "stipend" for services provided. The stipends in the amount of \$15 per month can be requested following the submission of reporting up to and not exceeding the total amount your Network has received for their budget for the current year.

## SECTION 4: EVENT, FUNDRAISING, AND REPORTING GUIDELINES

### 1. EVENT GUIDELINES

- A. Events **must** be approved in advance by the Family to Family Network/UPC staff to ensure that they do support the missions of the Networks and our partners.
- B. Any costs associated with the event must be disclosed and approved in advance and will be reimbursed with appropriate receipts and documentation.





- C. These policies include events that are planned collaboratively with other agencies or entities.
- D. The Family to Family Network may serve as a co-sponsor to events as long as they are events that meet the above guidelines. Proper recognition should be given to the Family to Family Network at events which we help plan and assist with other resources.
- E. These guidelines also apply to fundraising and community awareness events.

## 2. FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES

**The Family to Family Network is not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since this the case, the only way for donations made to the Networks to be eligible for tax deductions, they must be made to the UPC on behalf of the Networks. Donations for Network activities will be set aside for use ONLY by the Network the donation was made to support. Should funds be donated to the UPC for use by the statewide Network, the funds will set aside specifically for that purpose.**

- A. Any and all funds raised by Local Network groups under the Network name must be submitted to the Utah Parent Center for tax accounting purposes. The Utah Parent Center is our 501 (c) (3) non-profit umbrella organization for the Networks. No separate bank accounts or cash receipts should be held by any local Network.
- B. In-kind donations should also be reported as these have value to the Networks and to the entity who has donated them. Even if the organization does not request a tax receipt, these donations should be reported so we can acknowledge the gift.
- C. The Charitable Solicitation Permit issued to the Utah Parent Center by the State of Utah requires that no other non-profit organization be used as a fundraising arm for the Family to Family Network.
- D. Fundraising events must also be approved by the Utah Parent Center to ensure that they meet the guidelines of the Center's Charitable Solicitation Permit.
- E. The UPC's Charitable Solicitations Permit also specifically outlines appropriate fundraising activities. Please contact the UPC prior to



- planning and advertising a fundraising activity to be sure it is covered by the permit. Failure to do so may jeopardize your standing with the Networks as well as the UPC's standing with the state.
- F. Funds raised for a particular Network will be accounted for separately by the Utah Parent Center and will be set aside for use only by that Network entity. If the funds are designated by the donor for a specific use, it is imperative that they be used only for that use (education, training, services, respite, etc.)
  - G. Donation solicitation can be prepared by the Utah Parent Center upon request for a specific purpose. Please do not send solicitation letters without prior approval of the Center.

### 3. REPORTING GUIDELINES

- A. Please report time spent on all events, meetings, etc. in which you, as a Local Network Leader, participate in your community. These include:
  - events you help execute on behalf of families in your area on behalf of the Network,
  - any trainings you attend,
  - committees on which you participate that are disability-related,
  - other events on which you are asked to collaborate with other agencies,
  - fundraisers you plan for your local Network,
  - time you spend creating and sending information about specific topics, resources, trainings and other information to families, and
  - time you spend mentoring other parents in finding services and meeting the needs of their children.

All of these things illustrate what you contribute as a Leader in your community and the positive difference you make in the lives of families! This information helps us compile accurate data for funding sources, possible funding sources and state agencies and organizations as needed.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***How do I report my events and volunteer hours?***

Please report your events and volunteer hours for the previous month by the first Wednesday of the next month to Katie Rowley at the Utah Parent Center. Katie compiles the information for our reports. You can report to her via e-mail, phone, fax, mail on the NING site or by using the online reporting form. Our planning forms make it easy to plan your entire event from start to finish and make your reports by using the information there, if you choose to use them.

### ***I need help finding a speaker on a particular topic. Who should I call?***

You can contact any member of the Network/UPC staff for a suggestion, or you can also ask the question on the Network Leader Group site and get suggestions from the other Network Leaders. Someone is sure to have an answer for you! The *Disability Resource Book* from the Utah Parent Center is also available on their website and is updated regularly. It has some wonderful ideas of resources and agencies that might be able to provide helpful training and information to parents.

### ***I have submitted my receipts for reimbursement or submitted a request for a stipend. How soon should I receive a check from the Utah Parent Center?***

The UPC processes checks regularly every two weeks, so depending on when during the schedule they received your paperwork, it should never be more than two weeks.

### ***I have a parent whose concerns are beyond my skills to help. She takes a great deal of my time and it is affecting my ability to have enough time for my own family and for the other families in my Network.***

Be sure to give **all** parents information on the other resources that are available for finding support so they don't become dependent on you as their "lifeline" for support. These would include: Utah Parent Center, Utah Family Voices, our



online support site (Family Network Support Ning site), other disability listservs you may know of, a local mental health center or DSPD office, a religious leader who might offer support and other professionals in the community. Remember that you are only ONE member of a person's support team and are not responsible to carry the burden of support for any one individual. If you think they would benefit from talking with another Network leader whose child has similar needs, ask that Leader if you could refer them for more help. Sometimes just getting a fresh perspective can help!

***I keep planning meetings, but no one comes! I feel like I'm the only one in my area who really thinks this is important. How can I find out what parents want from meetings and activities?***

Sometimes there is no way to predict which meetings and activities will be successful. Those who have been in volunteer leadership for a while tell us that consistency is important, but then sometimes trying something new and innovative will get people out, and will reach people who have never come out to something before! One key thing we want you to remember is that the measure of success is not necessarily in how many people attend a meeting, but whether the leader went through all the proper steps in planning it and preparing and whether those who did attend had their needs met. If so, the meeting was successful. There are also many other ways to offer support and meaningful help in our communities besides holding events and meetings. You may want to consider developing a list of e-mail addresses and e-mail information on a specific topic to families, forward information on resources, webinars, workshops, etc., or help families one-on-one. Leadership in the Network organization is much more than the meetings you plan; it is all the many ways you raise awareness and improve life for families and individuals in the disability community.