



Welcome to The NET Program's *Getting Beyond the System*[®] Self-Advocacy Seminar. After you complete the seminar you will join a select group of graduates who have learned how to achieve their long-term goals through self-advocacy.

Schedule: Check with Future Link for the dates of the next seminar (In general, seminars are given winter, spring and summer sessions)

Location: **Montgomery College-Rockville Campus**
Humanities Building, Ground Floor Conference Room 009
51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850

Graduation will be at the end of the seminar (exact date to be determined).

Please read the following contract and make sure you understand everything before you sign it. Ask your caseworker, a teacher or a family member to read and sign this contract also.

If you complete the Seminar, you will:

- **Learn how to reach your personal goals through self-advocacy**

You will gain skills and experience in:

- Establishing long and short term goals
- Developing analytical skills
- Presenting your strengths
- Developing supporters and allies
- Understanding the needs of the other party
- Developing solutions for achieving your goals
- Using your experiences in the system to your advantage
- Writing self-advocacy letters
- Planning agendas
- Making presentations

- **Learn to conduct an informational interview with an expert** to gather information and make contacts with professionals willing to advise you about what it will take to achieving your long-term career goals.
- **Conduct an informational interview** with a top professional in the career of YOUR choice.
- **Be eligible for a Future Link scholarship to Montgomery College or another educational institution of your choice.**
- **Receive a Certificate of Self-Advocacy Competency.** You may also request a letter of recommendation that you can use for applying to college or getting a job.
- **Be better prepared** to take college level courses.
- **Make new and important friendships** with other students.

The Seminar

The Seminar will be held once a week. Through discussion, instruction, and participation in these classes, you will learn how to advocate for yourself. The Seminar is designed for students who want to be successful in their future lives.

Each week you will be given written assignments. **Don't worry!!** You can do these assignments and get help when you need it.

The Informational Interview

The Informational Interview is the major project for the semester. During this interview, you will gain an opportunity to practice the self-advocacy skills you learned during the semester. You also will have the opportunity to gain valuable information about the nature of your intended career and the methods of reaching your goals in the field. Your Informational Interview will be of great importance to achieving your long-term future goals.

You will select a career field as your long-term goal. During the semester the Seminar Facilitator will set up an informational interview with a high level and experienced professional in the career field you have selected. Much time and effort is devoted to setting up your interview and it is expected that you will make a major effort to make these interviews successful.

Requirements for Completing Advocacy Seminar

1. Time Requirements

- a. You must attend all seminar sessions, every week for 10 weeks.
 - i. The seminar sessions will run in consecutive weeks for 2 ½ hours.
 - ii. You must arrive *on time* and remain through the entire session.
- b. You must work an additional two hours a week on homework.
- c. You may miss **only one** Seminar session for illness or emergency.
 - i. *A missed day consists of any time you either miss a seminar session or are late to a session.* You are required to make up the missed work.
 - ii. If you miss a second session, you will be asked to withdraw from the Seminar and take it over the following semester.

2. Homework

- a. Written homework is assigned every week. Assignments must be completed on time to support your learning.
- b. Homework will be evaluated. If homework is late your grade will be lowered.
- c. If you have difficulty completing the homework, it is your responsibility to get help from your agency coordinator or from the Seminar facilitator.

3. Participation

- a. You must show that you are willing to contribute to group discussions in a constructive manner. You need to demonstrate support for other students by respecting their opinions and by allowing others to be heard.
- b. You must respect the facilitator when she/he asks you to stop talking or to stop behavior that distracts the teacher or the other group members. Disruptive members will be given a warning. If after the warning is given, the disruptive behavior continues, that member will be asked to withdraw from the Seminar.
- c. The Seminar uses the "Socratic Method." This requires students to be active learners, and it requires the facilitator and every student to respect and listen to all points of view.

4. Evaluations & Exams

You will be required to complete an evaluation before and after the Seminar. You must satisfactorily pass the final evaluation given at the completion of the seminar.

5. Final Project- The Informational Interview

You must identify a long-term career goal by the third week of class. In addition, you must prepare for and conduct an informational interview with an expert in your selected career field. The Seminar facilitator will set up this informational interview.

6. Youth Coach

You must agree to meet with a NET Trained Youth Coach a minimum four times over a three month period to continue and enhance your GBS work. This opportunity will allow you to keep the process of reaching your dreams to persist with the support of an interested adult.

7. Success

You have been selected for the Seminar because of your strengths and ability to succeed. Many students have taken this Seminar and report that it has been extremely important in helping them reach their future goals and become successfully independent.

I _____, have read and understand the rules for the self-advocacy seminar. I understand that the *Getting Beyond the System*[®] Self-Advocacy Seminar is extremely important for my future success and will make every effort to learn and practice self-advocacy skills. I also understand that acceptance into this Seminar requires a full commitment of time and effort as outlined above.

Student (Signature) Date

Supporter Date

Caseworker and/or Social Worker

Intended Career Field

Supporter's Address

Date of Birth

Supporter's Phone Number

Address

Email address

City

Facilitator

Phone Number

Email Address