Teen Advocacy Program Participant FAQ

Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center | October 2, 3, 4
This FAQ is designed to help teens know what to expect during the Teen Advocacy Program focused on learning how to advocate for people with epilepsy.

Program Overview

What is the Teen Advocacy Program?
This program brings teens together to learn how to be strong advocates for people with epilepsy through workshops, discussions, and hands-on activities.
Do I need prior experience with advocacy or epilepsy?
No prior experience is needed—just curiosity, respect, and willingness to learn.
What will we be doing during the program?
You'll participate in interactive sessions, learn advocacy skills, meet other teens, and hear from speakers with lived experience.
Do I have to have epilepsy?
Yes. You must have an epilepsy diagnosis to attend this program and be living in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, or Rhode Island.
Who is eligible to apply for the Teen Advocacy Program?
The program is designed for teens living with epilepsy living in one of the states that Epilepsy Foundation New England serves. Our goal is to create a supportive, engaging experience for all participants. If accommodations are needed during the application process, please contact please contact Kathy Hatch at: khatch@epilepsynewengland.org

Arrival & Departure

When do I arrive?
Please arrive on **Friday, October 2nd** , in time for dinner.
Where do I go when I arrive?
Check in at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and look for program staff in the lobby.
Sturbridge Host Hotel
366 Main Street
Sturbridge Massachusetts 01566

When does the program end?
The program concludes Sunday**, October 4th**, after **breakfast**.
What if my travel is delayed?
Contact the program staff using the emergency number provided before the event.
EFNE Contact: Kathy Hatch khatch@epilepsynewengland.org (518-929-4566)

Hotel Stay

Who will I room with?
Participants will have their own rooms for themselves and their guardian.
Are rooms supervised?
Our conference rooms will be supervised and staff will be available throughout the stay.

Can I leave the hotel on my own?
No. Participants must stay with the group unless given permission by staff or accompanied by a parent or guardian.
Is Wi-Fi available?
Yes, free Wi-Fi is available at the hotel.

Meals & Food

What meals are provided?
Dinner on October 2nd , all meals on October 3rd , and breakfast on October 4th are provided.
What if I have allergies or dietary needs?
Please share dietary restrictions ahead of time so accommodations can be made.
Can I bring snacks?
Yes—nut-free snacks are encouraged.

Health, Safety & Support

What if I have epilepsy or another medical condition?
Staff are trained to support participants with medical needs. You can privately share information with staff upon arrival. **If available, please provide a Seizure Action Plan prior to or upon arrival.**

What happens if someone has a seizure?
There is a seizure response plan in place, and trained staff will assist immediately.

What if I need a break or feel overwhelmed?
Quiet space and staff support are always available.

Am I under any obligation after attending the Teen Advocacy Program?
Teens must embark on a Year of Service prior to or directly after attending the conference. There will be more details provided at the program. Please reach out to Kathy if you have any questions beforehand. Teens who wish to become young epilepsy advocates and potential Teens Speak Up! participants may also complete a Year of Service. The Foundation will then consider your Year of Service activities if you are nominated to attend the Teens Speak Up! program. If you are selected to attend the program, your Year of Service will culminate in a trip to Washington, D.C. to receive formal advocacy training and go to Capitol Hill.
The Year of Service empowers teens to take on a leadership role and advance their advocacy to the next level. Teens will explore ways to raise public awareness, strengthen relationships with elected officials, and help create positive change for the epilepsy community. Advocacy is year-round and there are many opportunities to make a difference in their state and local community.

For more information regarding the Year of Service, please reach out to Kathy Hatch at khatch@epilepsynewengland.org

What to Bring

- Comfortable clothes and shoes
- Pajamas and personal toiletries
- **Any required medications**
- Reusable water bottle
- Phone and charger (optional)
- Notebook or journal (optional)
- Laptop recommended but not required

Expectations & Participation

Will I have to speak in public?
You'll have chances to practice advocacy skills, but sharing is always encouraged—not forced.
What behavior is expected?
Be respectful, inclusive, and supportive. This is a safe space for everyone.
Is there a curfew?
Yes. Staff will review curfew and evening expectations on the first night.

Parents & Guardians

How can parents reach staff in an emergency?
Emergency contact information will be shared before the program begins.
EFNE Contact: Kathy Hatch khatch@epilepsynewengland.org (518-929-4566)

We're excited to welcome you to Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center and can't wait to learn and advocate together!