

Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) Application  
for Federal Fiscal Year 2024

Organization: Best Buddies International, Inc.

Project Name: Best Buddies Inclusive Employment Training Project

If past grantee, please list year(s) awards received: FY 2023

### 1. NGCDD Goal/Objective

List the NGCDD Goal AND Objective(s) you are applying for.

Response limited to 250 characters.

Best Buddies International, Inc. is applying for Goal III, Objective 3.2: Educate individuals with I/DD, their families, and community-based employers/employer groups on National best practices, and the benefits of hiring individuals with IDD.

### 2. Executive Summary

Provide a brief overview of the proposed project.

Response limited to 2000 characters.

Best Buddies proposes to deliver a project that will assist the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, in conjunction with individuals with IDD and community entities, to develop and strengthen systems that improve the quality of services and access to quality services in their local communities. The FY2024 Best Buddies Inclusive Employment Training Project will provide coordinated education and outreach to 25 community-based employers and employer groups on national best practices and the benefits of employing individuals with IDD and 35 individuals with IDD and their families on their employment rights and options.

Best Buddies' state director and deputy director of programs and operations will deliver project-specific training content developed with guidance and support from Best Buddies' national Jobs team. With support from the deputy director, the state director will conduct outreach and deliver group training sessions to 25 community-based employers and employer groups in Nevada. The deputy director will deliver one-hour group training sessions to 35 individuals with IDD and their families.

As a result of the project, a minimum of 25 community-based employers and employer groups statewide will be educated on national best practices and the benefits of hiring individuals with IDD and a minimum of 35 individuals with IDD and their families will receive training on their employment rights and options. These individuals with IDD will experience an increase in employment options available to them, as well as an increase in information and access to

integrated and competitive wage jobs. The FY2023 project funded by the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities has developed the capacity of Best Buddies staff to speak knowledgeably with community members about the benefits of hiring individuals with IDD, best practices for inclusive employment, and the employment rights and options available to individuals with IDD.

### 3. Detailed Narrative

Answer this question in **2** sections:

Section A) Identify and reference one or more of the strategies listed in the NOFA that will be utilized in your project.

Section B) Describe how that strategy, or strategies will be used, providing specific detail regarding your proposal and the activities you will use to accomplish the strategy or strategies, goal(s), objective(s) AND expected outcome(s) of the grant.

Response limited to 5,000 characters.

Section A: The proposed project will deliver training to 25 community-based employers to educate them on the benefits of employing individuals with IDD and national best practices for inclusive employment. Additionally, the project will deliver training to 35 individuals with IDD and their families on their employment rights and options.

Section B: Through Best Buddies' FY2023 partnership with the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, we have created two training modules for individuals with IDD and for Nevada-based employers. We will now focus on improving the training content from our previous project with the goal of ensuring that the materials remain up-to-date and relevant. Best Buddies staff will continue to collaborate with our national Jobs team to implement adjustments to the two project-specific training modules based on participant feedback and our experience delivering the FY2023 project.

Best Buddies will continue to draw from these existing trainings as well as best practices according to the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and our own best practices that we have developed over 29 years of providing supported employment services, and which we implement nationwide through our supported employment program, Best Buddies Jobs. This training, developed for employers, references and draws from a 2019 Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) report created in conjunction with Best Buddies International, which details the business benefits of hiring employees with IDD. (*The Inclusive Talent Pool: Employing People with Disabilities, 2019*)

The second training module has been successfully developed for individuals with IDD and their families, focusing on educating them about their employment rights and available options. Should Best Buddies be awarded funding for FY2024, our staff will update and enhance this module in Q1 and throughout the year as needed to ensure its relevance and accuracy.

Best Buddies will recruit individuals with IDD to participate in training by promoting the training opportunities through our relationships with other disability service agencies, Best Buddies school friendship chapters, and Clark County School District Transition Services, as well as through the employers and employer groups we meet with, as we expect that some of the employers or employer groups will be able to refer individuals with IDD to the training.

Best Buddies staff will simultaneously identify, approach and conduct outreach to employers, employer groups, individuals with IDD, and their families to invite and engage them in a combination of in-person and virtual trainings to be held starting in January 2024 and continuing throughout the rest of the project year. Best Buddies has identified a list of 20 new employers to target for the project based on their interest in Best Buddies, including Bank of America, Bank of Nevada, Boogie Time, Cafe Rio, Gabbi Coffee, Grand Sierra Resort and Casino, Horizon Printing, JJ's Pie Company, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, Marcos Pizza, Martin Harris Law Firm, Panorama Towers, PRG Entertainment, RiSE Festival, Sand Martin Hospital, Shelby Auto Museum, Station Casinos, The Doctors Center Las Vegas, The Refuge Climbing and Fitness, and The Shops at Crystals. Through the FY2024 project, Best Buddies will focus on establishing a pipeline of employers in the cities of Elko, Moapa, and Tonopah.

Beginning in January 2024, the state director will deliver in-person trainings on the campuses of community-based employers or at the Best Buddies office. The state director will be assisted by the deputy director when needed. In cases when it is not possible for Best Buddies staff to travel to employer sites, or when employer sites are unable to host Best Buddies staff, the state director and deputy director will deliver the training via a virtual webinar. Each training will be one hour in length, and trainings may be delivered one-on-one or in a small group setting. The state director and/or deputy director will train five to ten employers per quarter between January 1 and September 30, 2024, to reach our target of 25 employers.

The deputy director will conduct a minimum of six in-person and virtual training sessions for individuals with IDD and their families with the goal of training six individuals per session. The deputy director will be supported by a Best Buddies volunteer who will assist with logistics and co-lead the trainings as needed. The first in-person and virtual trainings will occur in January 2024. The second and third in-person trainings will occur in April, May, or June, and the fourth in-person training and second virtual training will occur in July or August of 2024. Best Buddies may schedule a fifth in-person training to occur in August or September 2024, to ensure we reach our goal of training 35 individuals with IDD and their families.

#### 4. Timeline

Provide a proposed timeline for completion of each activity you described above.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

Quarter 1 - October, November, December, 2023

- Review notes and feedback from FY23 project to make changes/updates to FY24 outreach materials and trainings
- Finalize target employer list

- Conduct outreach to employers to schedule small group trainings in 2024
- Set dates for trainings, and invite participants to trainings in 2024
- Develop and finalize training content for employer and participant trainings
- Complete quarterly reporting

#### Quarter 2 – January, February, March

- Host first in-person training reaching six individuals with IDD and their families
- Offer and host the first virtual training reaching six individuals with IDD and their families
- Conduct in-person or virtual trainings reaching ten employers
- Collect survey responses from participating individuals with IDD
- Complete quarterly reporting

#### Q3 – April, May, June

- Host second and third in-person trainings reaching twelve individuals with IDD and their families
- Conduct in-person or virtual trainings reaching ten employers
- Collect survey responses from participating individuals and employers
- Complete quarterly reporting

#### Q4 – July, August, September

- Host fourth in-person training reaching six individuals with IDD and their families
- Offer and host second virtual training reaching five individuals with IDD and their families
- Conduct in-person or virtual trainings reaching five employers or employer groups
- Collect survey responses from participating individuals and employers
- Survey all 25 employers trained through the project to collect data on how employment practices have changed
- Option to host fifth in-person training for individuals with IDD and their families
- Complete quarterly and annual reporting

## 5. Qualifications

What are the qualifications of the agency and key personnel involved in this project. If you have received a grant with us in the past, provide specifics on what you accomplished with that grant that would make you a good candidate to receive another one.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

Through our FY2023 partnership with the Council, we have created two training modules and delivered five in-person and virtual trainings engaging a total of 42 individuals with IDD and four trainings engaging a total of 24 employers, including Bank of America, Bellagio Casino, CarMaxx, City of Henderson Recreation Department, Clark County School District, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, European Kitchen, EoS Fitness, Findlay Auto Group, Green Valley Ranch Resort, Jersey Mike's Subs, MGM Grand, MGM Casinos, Mountainview Hospital, Move 4 Less, NV Energy, Opera Las Vegas, Red 7 Communications, RSVP Party Rentals, Securitas, Station Casinos, and University of Nevada – Las Vegas.

While we are still collecting survey results from training participants, initial findings show that respondents have a better understanding of integrated employment options available to them, feel more confident in finding and maintaining employment, and had several questions or concerns about employment rights or job coaching which were addressed through the training they attended. We are well poised to continue to recruit employers and individuals to participate in trainings to assist the Council with its objective to educate individuals with IDD about employment options available to them and educated employers about the benefits and best practices of inclusive hiring.

Key personnel for the project include the state director and deputy director, programs, and operations. With combined expertise in community engagement, event planning, cultivating relationships, and volunteer management, the state director and deputy director are well-qualified to deliver the project.

State Director Kristina Crawford joined Best Buddies in February 2022. She has extensive experience in leadership positions, programs, staff management, marketing, events, and building relationships with organizations in Native and rural Nevada communities. Kristina has worked in the travel and tourism industries, specializing in casino marketing and special events. In 2011, Kristina joined The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, where she served as events director, regional campaign director, and managing director of the Las Vegas office. From 2014 -2019, Kristina oversaw all state programs, operations, and fundraising initiatives as executive director of the American Lung Association in Nevada. She is an expert in cultivating strong community relationships and coordinating public outreach activities. Kristina holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nevada, Reno, in Human and Community Sciences.

Michele Vogan, Deputy Director, Operations and Programs, has 18 years of experience managing logistics, data, finance, and operations for businesses and non-profit organizations in Nevada. Her experience includes seven years of event planning and seven years of recruiting and managing volunteer teams. Michele holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from West Virginia University.

## 6. Evaluation Process

Provide an overview of how you will evaluate the impact and effectiveness of your project. All grantees will be required to submit quarterly and final project reporting forms in addition to personal stories of impact and consumer satisfaction surveys supplied by the Council for ALL grant activities. A portion of the quarterly and final report will require tracking and reporting on data about projects and participants.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

To evaluate the project, Best Buddies will submit all quarterly and final project reports and solicit personal stories of impact and consumer satisfaction surveys. We will continually assess training content in partnership with the national jobs team to improve the training.

We will track attendance for trainings delivered, document the number and content of trainings delivered, and solicit feedback from employer and individual training participants after training via survey.

Pre-event and post-event surveys for individuals with IDD will provide opportunities for participants to report whether there is an increase in employment options available to them and whether information and access to integrated and competitive-wage jobs have increased as a result of the project. We will also conduct a consumer satisfaction survey for all individuals with IDD who attend the trainings. We plan to survey participants when training is completed, as well as in Q4 of the project, so we can document if employers have hired someone with IDD and determine how their employment practices have changed as a result of the project, or if someone with IDD has gained employment.

## 7. Sustainability

Explain how or if you expect to sustain this project once the funding has ended.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

Best Buddies continually strives to develop diverse sources of revenue for our programs, and we expect to sustain project activities beyond the project's end through a combination of special event revenue, corporate and individual donations, foundation and government grants, and other community support. After the project concludes on Sept. 30, 2024, Best Buddies has the capacity to continue to host one virtual training per quarter alternating between training for employers and training for individuals with IDD, for example: Q1 – employer training; Q2 – employment rights and options training for individuals; Q3 – employer training; Q4 – employment rights and options training for individuals.

## 8. Targeted Disparity/Un/Underserved Populations

Describe how your project will identify and positively affect a targeted disparity/sub population within the disability community (i.e., racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, mental/behavioral health, gender minority groups or other stigmas with developmental disabilities) that are vulnerable to disparities (i.e., health, education, employment, overall safety, transportation, etc.) as a part of your proposed project.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

The Best Buddies Inclusive Employment Training Project will work to identify and positively impact Native American individuals with IDD in Clark County and the cities of Elko, Moapa, and Tonopah by recruiting individuals with IDD to benefit from trainings on their employment rights and options and by partnering with employers in these communities to deliver trainings on the benefits of hiring individuals with IDD and best practices for inclusive employment. We have learned through our current project that we can do more to accomplish this goal.

We are aware that the unemployment rate among Native Americans has historically been lower than other groups. The unemployment rate for Native Americans was 7.9% in December 2021, compared to 3.9% for the total population, and further increased to 11.1% in January 2022, compared to 4.4% for the overall population. (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2022; Brookings Institution, 2022)

To address this disparity, Best Buddies staff will work to identify and develop a pool of employers as project participants in the cities of Elko, Moapa, and Tonopah, where Native Americans are the second-highest single non-white minority groups and may actually be underrepresented in census data due to many Native American individuals identifying as two or more races. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020) Best Buddies will partner with local organizations to conduct outreach in these cities to recruit Native American individuals with IDD to attend and benefit from trainings on their employment rights and options. We will also work to identify and cultivate linguistically and culturally proficient volunteers to assist with leading trainings for those individuals. When needed, Best Buddies will coordinate translation and interpretation services and/or assistive technology to be available at trainings for individuals who would benefit from these resources.

## 9. Replicable Changes

Are there other states that have shown success in areas that you are targeting? If so, please provide details on this success and include information on geographic representation and information about any sub populations within the disability community that may have been impacted from this project.

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

In the past year, Best Buddies staff in New Mexico successfully engaged 10 interns with IDD representing Navajo and Zuni reservations in Pre-Employment Transition Services. These interns participated in the Gallup-McKinley County Schools' Project SEARCH program and received 23 hours of Pre-ETS programming from Best Buddies staff. This experience has contributed to Best Buddies' institutional ability to deliver employment-related services to indigenous communities. We hope to draw from this experience to successfully engage members of Native American communities in the FY2024 Inclusive Employment Training Project.

## 10. Additional Information

Provide any additional information, relevant to the grant, that did not fit in the above categories.

Response limited to 3,500 characters.

Best Buddies International, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that provides opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with IDD. Established in Nevada in 2008, Best Buddies has chapters at 31 schools. The 454 participants in our programs positively impact the lives of 4,540 individuals in Nevada.

The Best Buddies Jobs program provides adults with IDD individualized supported employment services to secure and maintain integrated employment at competitive wages in a job of their choosing. Since its inception in Miami, Florida, in 1994, Best Buddies has grown to provide employment services in an average of two new states each year and now works with more than 1,368 participants in 36 markets in the United States. Best Buddies is an approved supported employment provider with 19 state vocational rehabilitation agencies and has 13 Medicaid Waiver

provider approvals nationwide. Best Buddies is currently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in California, Illinois, Indiana, New Mexico, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. This rigorous accreditation process ensures we provide high-caliber services and are dedicated to continuous quality improvement.

Over 29 years, Best Buddies has demonstrated a track record of success in making quality, long-term placements. The 1,034 competitive integrated jobs supported by Best Buddies average 20.25 hours per week at an average hourly wage of \$15.58, significantly higher than the average 12 -15 hours worked per week and \$9.54 - \$9.88 hourly wage earned by employed individuals with IDD nationwide. (National Core Indicators, 2018 - 2019)