Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities

Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) Application

for Federal Fiscal Year 2024

Organization: JUSTin HOPE Foundation

Project Name: HOPE Works: Advancing Workforce Opportunities for All

If past grantee, please list year(s) awards received: 2020, 2021, 2022

1. NGCDD Goal/Objective

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

Response limited to 250 characters.

GOAL III:

In conjunction with individuals with I/DD and community entities, develop and strengthen systems that improve quality of services and access to quality services and supports in their local communities.

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 I/DD.

1.Provide coordinated education and outreach to 20 community-based employers/employer groups on National best practices and the benefits of employing individuals with I/DD.

2.Provide coordinated education and outreach to 30 individuals with I/DD and their families on their employment rights and options.

2. Executive Summary

Provide a brief overview of the proposed project.

Response limited to 2000 characters.

In Northern Nevada, jobs for individuals with disabilities are rare, often menial, offering low wages. Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) struggle to enter the workforce, let alone land minimum-wage jobs. Nationally, over 80 percent of people with an IDD are unemployed. While competitive integrated employment opportunities are slowly increasing, many individuals still experience barriers in the work environment due to their lack of social and self-advocacy skills. As a result, there is a significant rise in the number of adults being dismissed due to a “lack of proper job skills.” This perceived “failure” profoundly affects the individual's willingness to seek other employment or career exploration opportunities. Individuals with disabilities typically learn the mechanics of a job quickly, but little, if any, training is offered to navigate the social and empowerment side of employment. People with disabilities face unique vulnerabilities in the workplace, largely due to intersecting forms of discrimination related to harmful stereotypes.

In turn, the lack of understanding of social skills can harm their overall success in the workforce. HOPE Works was designed to achieve equitable employment opportunities. It aims to enhance workforce development and career advancement opportunities through a comprehensive approach that combines education, empowerment, mentorship, skill-building, and systemic changes throughout the employment journey. By providing a comprehensive suite of services and resources, this project aims to empower individuals, enhancing their employability and career progression prospects. We believe that by equipping individuals with IDD and employers with the necessary skills and opportunities, we can facilitate inclusive and successful participation in the workforce, promoting equality and economic growth.

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.

HOPE Works participants have the abilities, skills, and talents to enrich the community and the people around them. This initiative will truly change lives through education, training, advocacy and empowerment.

HOPE Works will:

* Economic Empowerment: Competitive employment can provide a pathway out of poverty, disproportionately affecting women with disabilities. With equal pay for equal work, individuals will attain financial independence and stability.
* Reduced Dependency: Employment can decrease reliance on social benefits and potentially exploitative or harmful situations. It gives individuals with IDD more control over their lives and decisions.
* Skill Development: Competitive employment provides continuous learning, skill enhancement, and professional development opportunities. This leads to increased employability and career progression.
* Self-esteem and Confidence: Gainful employment contributes to a positive self-image and boosts confidence. It reinforces the idea that women with disabilities are capable and valuable members of the workforce.
* Social Inclusion: The workplace is a social environment; being part of it helps individuals with IDD build networks and form relationships. It fosters a sense of belonging and combats social isolation.
* Promoting Equality and Challenging Stereotypes: Individuals with IDD often face a dual disadvantage due to gender and disability biases. Competitive employment helps challenge these stereotypes, promoting a culture of equality and diversity.
* Role Modeling: Individuals with IDD in the workforce serve as positive role models, showing that successful employment is achievable. They also help educate employers and coworkers about the abilities and potential of individuals with disabilities.
* Health and Well-being: Employment is associated with better physical and mental health outcomes, providing a sense of purpose and identity.

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.

The NGCDD is renowned for its work in empowering individuals with IDD to become leaders in their communities, advocating for their personal, professional, and career goals. This program will bolster the legacy of the NGCDD in several ways:

* Empowerment through Employment: By focusing on workforce development and career advancement, we'll empower more individuals with IDD to secure competitive employment, thereby expanding the financial independence NGCDD has traditionally promoted.
* Education and Skill-Building: In keeping with the NGCDD focus on education, our program will offer workshops, training, and mentorship that not only build vocational skills but also foster leadership abilities and self-confidence.
* Advocacy: By working with employers to create inclusive and accessible workplaces, we'll continue advocating and broadening its scope to emphasize disability rights and inclusive employment.
* Networking and Community Building: Our program's networking events will extend the community-building, connecting people with IDD with industry professionals, potential employers, and peers.
* Group Supported Employment: This employment model is the bridge to successful integrated employment for individuals with disabilities who might not yet be ready for independent, competitive employment. Group employment provides a supportive environment where individuals can learn and practice work skills while also benefiting from social interaction with their peers. This temp to hire module serves as the stepping stone to independent employment. Helping engrain the notion to employers and the larger community that individuals with IDD are truly an untapped asset to the economic development of our community.

By aligning with and expanding on the core principles and goals of the NGCDD, HOPE Works aims to carry forward its valuable legacy, empowering individuals of ALL ABILITIES to achieve their potential and make a significant impact on their communities.

Response limited to 5,000 characters.

4. Timeline

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

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

HOPE Works: Advancing Workforce Opportunities for All will be piloted over the course of one year. If awarded the $50,000 grant, we will distribute the resources to support different components of the program as detailed below:

Months 1-4:

* Program Development and Recruitment: We'll develop training modules and prepare workshop materials.
* Training and Workshop Development: We will finalize the program structure and content based on research and needs assessments and start participant and employer recruitment.

Months 5-10:

* Launch of Training and Workshops: We'll launch our educational sessions, covering a range of topics from digital literacy, to leadership skills, and more to promote independence and empowerment.
* Mentorship Program and Career Counseling: We will begin the mentorship program and offer career counseling services.
* Internship/Job Placement and Networking Events: We'll start connecting participants with job opportunities and host networking events.

Months 10-12:

* Review, Feedback, and Future Planning: We'll conduct a review of the program, collect participant feedback, plan for future iterations, and publish an impact report.

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.

The JUSTin HOPE Foundation has received over $160,000 in federal and state funds to support our vital Community Safety program for the last four years, including being a previous recipient of grants awarded by NGCDD. All grant requisites were completed within the required timelines.

Today, The JUSTin HOPE Foundation has redesigned its programs and services to build a community of inclusion, empowerment, and support. Over the last decade, we have served more than 2403 participants annually, awarded over $80,000 to families in need through our Giving Awards Program, hosted over 120 events and workshops, and trained over 3,500 first responders in community safety statewide.

Our programs focus on increasing Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility efforts by promoting the independence and self-determination of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in various ways. Pillars of impact include:

* Skill Development: We provide life skill workshops to help young adults learn skills such as cooking, cleaning, money management, interpersonal communication, and more.
* Vocational Training: Our job training HOPE Works program helps prepare young adults for the workforce. This involves resume-building, interview practice, and career exploration.
* Community Engagement: The organization strongly believes in community engagement through social activities such as club participation and service learning events to foster community and camaraderie among young adults with disabilities and their community.
* Transition Services: Transitioning from high school to higher education or work, navigating public transportation, or moving into independent or semi-independent living is overwhelming for the entire support network. We help individuals navigate “young adulthood” by creating person-centered plans focusing on their life goals and improving their quality of life.
* Advocacy: The organization provides advocacy services to help young adults with disabilities access the resources, accommodations, and support they are entitled to. This involves liaising with schools, employers, or government bodies. Advocacy is embedded in all program service delivery modules.
* Family Support: All of our services extend to families, offering resources, respite care, support groups, and counseling referrals to help family members better understand and support their loved ones.
* Community Safety: The JUSTin HOPE Foundation is actively training first responders, support networks, and individuals with IDD on safe interactions during emergency calls for service.

We have extensive knowledge and expertise in the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, with a focus on creating an inclusive environment and eliminating barriers to employment. Our agency maintains a wide network of relationships with local businesses, community organizations, and educational institutions, allowing us to build partnerships that benefit our program participants.

Our team's collective expertise, combined with our agency's long-standing commitment to enhancing inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities, positions us ideally to execute this project effectively and achieve its intended outcomes.

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.

It is anticipated that this initial first-year evaluation, as with newer projects, will be primarily formative, emphasizing putting data systems in place and obtaining applicable data and information. This will, in turn, be used to implement continuous quality improvement of initiatives designed to clarify, strengthen, and tighten project design and efficiency. Evaluating the progress and success of HOPE Works will be achieved through a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures:

1. Pre- and Post-Program Surveys: We will administer surveys to participants before and after they complete the program to assess changes in their confidence, skills, and overall readiness for employment or career advancement. As well as their satisfaction with our program service delivery.
2. GenArete Skill Assessments: Participants will undergo skills assessments throughout the program that evaluates what they can do. These assessments will measure the improvement of technical and soft skills learned during the training sessions. Results will determine rapid skill-building goals.
3. Job Placement Rates: One of the key measures of success will be the job placement rate for program participants. We will track the number of participants who secure interviews, employment, or internships after completing the program.
4. Job Retention Rates: Job retention is an important metric besides job placement. We will follow up with participants and their employers after 3, 6, 9 months, and one year to measure job retention rates.
5. Career Advancement: For those already in employment, success will be gauged by any advancements in their career, such as promotions, increased responsibilities, or higher wages.
6. Feedback from Employers: We will solicit feedback from employers who hire our program participants. Their input on participants' job readiness, performance, and program effectiveness will be valuable.
7. Participant Testimonials and Case Studies: The personal experiences and stories of our participants will also be a significant measure of the program's impact. We will collect testimonials and case studies, with consent, to highlight individual successes and challenges.
8. Review of Program Goals and Objectives: The program's success will be reviewed by measuring the outcomes against the program's original goals and objectives. An impact evaluation will be conducted one year after the initiative's launch.
9. Feedback from Program Staff and Stakeholders: Regular meetings and trainings will be held with staff and stakeholders to review the initiative's processes and identify any areas of improvement.

7. Sustainability

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

Response limited to 3,000 characters.

Sustainability is a critical factor in the long-term success of HOPE Works. Once the initial funding has ended, we plan to sustain this project in several ways:

* Diversified Funding Streams: While the initial grant is instrumental in launching this project, we will also pursue a variety of other funding sources to ensure its ongoing sustainability. This includes other grants, private donations, and potential corporate sponsorships.
* Fee for Service: State Regional Centers and Vocational Rehabilitation (DETR) will fund service delivery to participants.
* Temp to Work Business Contracts: A temporary employment agency employment structure committed to empowering individuals with disabilities by helping them find suitable employment opportunities. We work closely with a network of diverse employers across various industries who value diversity and inclusivity in their workforce. Employers will pay JHF fees, dependent on the scope of work, enabling us to pay participants at or above minimum wage.
* Partnerships: We aim to build strong relationships with other organizations, community groups, and businesses. Through these partnerships, we may secure additional resources, whether financial or in-kind support.
* Volunteer Engagement: By involving volunteers in delivering aspects of the project, we can reduce costs while also creating a stronger community investment in our mission.
* Building Capacity (Internships): We can rely on year-round inters by maintaining a strong relationship with the University of Nevada, Reno’s Social Work department. The experience the interns gain from working on the project can help them become well-prepared professionals in the field of social work, particularly in the area of disability support. This helps to build the future workforce in this crucial sector.
* Advocacy and Public Awareness: By raising public awareness about the importance and success of our program, we can attract more support and potential funding sources. We will highlight the positive impact of the program to the broader community.
* Program Evaluation and Adjustment: Continuous program evaluation will allow us to identify areas for cost-saving and efficiency. Making data-driven decisions will enable us to allocate resources effectively, contributing to the program's sustainability.

By implementing these strategies, we are confident that we can secure the necessary resources and supports to sustain this project in the long term, allowing us to continue making a positive impact and help enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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.

HOPE Works aims to address employment disparities faced by people with disabilities, a historically underrepresented and disadvantaged population in the workforce. In particular, women face unique challenges, not only due to their disabilities but also due to intersectional barriers related to gender discrimination. The JUSTin HOPE Foundation also strives to reach the Latinx community. Connecting with language and culture to bring service awareness to families facing language barriers.

Our project has several key objectives and strategies designed to positively affect targeted subpopulations:

* Identification and Outreach:

We will partner with local disability advocacy groups, women's organizations, social service providers, and community centers to identify those who are in need of our services. We will conduct outreach initiatives aimed at spreading awareness about the project within these communities.

* Education and Skills Development:

The initiative will provide workshops, vocational training, and educational resources to equip participants with the necessary skills for competitive employment. The curriculum will be tailored to address the specific challenges that women with disabilities face in the workplace, focusing on building confidence, self-advocacy, and resilience, along with job-specific skills. All trainings are created with cultural competency.

* Employer Partnerships and Job Placement:

We will partner with local businesses and employers committed to diversity and inclusion. We will work with them to facilitate job placements and internships for our participants, as well as providing support for necessary accommodations in the workplace.

* Advocacy and Public Awareness:

We will conduct public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and stigmas associated with hiring with disabilities. By highlighting their capabilities and success stories, we aim to shift perceptions and encourage more employers to consider hiring individuals.

* Ongoing Support:

Once participants secure employment, we will continue to provide support, addressing any issues that may arise, such as workplace discrimination or accessibility concerns, and helping them to advance in their careers.

In addressing these employment disparities, we hope to help enhance the quality of life, financial independence, and societal inclusion of people with IDD.

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.

Several successful initiatives in various states and Southern Nevada focus on improving employment opportunities for individuals within the IDD community. Although Nevada is a key state in eliminating workplace inequities for individuals with IDD, inclusive workforce development opportunities are rare in Northern Nevada and surrounding communities.

* Pride Industries (Sacramento, CA): Since 1966, PRIDE Industries has led the industry in person-centered workforce inclusion, training, support services, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. They are the nation's largest employer for people with disabilities.
* Opportunity Village: Their programs have contributed to increasing the quality of life and reducing the chances of people with disabilities falling into homelessness and poverty. Over the last 60 years, their positive impact on their community has been immeasurable.

These programs demonstrate that strategic, well-implemented initiatives can effectively address disparities within the disability community, helping individuals overcome barriers and achieve their career goals. Our project will seek to partner, learn from and build upon these successful examples and implement in Northern Nevada.

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.