

Citizens Program Overview

Best Buddies International



Best Buddies Citizens creates one-to-one friendships between adults with and without intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) in workplaces and in the community. These opportunities for friendship and inclusion are especially important for adults with IDD, who often have limited opportunities for social connections as they age.

Citizens chapters typically partner with local organizations that serve those with IDD. These organizations are known as Host Sites and the individuals they support have an opportunity to join the chapter to be matched in 1:1 friendships with community or corporate volunteers and participate in group activities. Through these efforts, the Best Buddies Citizens program strives to build a community where everyone is valued and feels a sense of belonging.

Commitment:

- Participants commit to at least one year of friendship
- Get together in person for a minimum of four hours per month
- Maintain weekly contact (phone, email, social media, etc.)

Benefits:

- By spending time with one another, the lives of both individuals are enhanced through a mutually enriching friendship
- Everyone involved with the program learns to see the world from a brand new perspective, becoming more understanding, patient and accepting of others
- Best Buddies annual survey results indicate that the majority of participants in the program feel less isolated and experience improved mental health and a better quality of life as a result of their involvement.

Participation requirements:

- Must be over the age of 18
- Have a genuine interest in forming a new friendship
- Connect with Best Buddies staff to determine if the Citizens program is the right fit for you
- Submit a membership application at www.bestbuddies.org/join.
- Complete an interview with the Best Buddies staff
- Complete a background screening
 - Required for individuals with and without disabilities
 - All participants must have cleared background screenings in order to be matched or attend Best Buddies Citizens Program events.

Matches:

The program attempts to match individuals who:

- Are of within the same age range
- Share common interests
- Live or work in close proximity to each other

Expenses:

A Best Buddies friendship is like any other

- Aside from the fee associated with the background screening (fee assistance available in some markets), there is no cost for this program
- Each person is responsible for paying their own way for outings. Keep in mind that there are many activities and events that you can enjoy together at no cost at all.

