

Citizens Onboarding Guide

Best Buddies International



Citizens Onboarding Process



Recruit: Promote the Best Buddies Citizens program through community engagement events, targeted outreach with corporate partners and local businesses, service providers, posting to volunteer bulletin boards, and on social media.

Manage Applications: Direct interested applicants to submit a membership application at bestbuddies.org/join. Once received, review the application and update the status as the onboarding process progresses.

Interview: Arrange a time to conduct an in-person or virtual interview with each applicant to learn more about their interests and availability. Provide them with more information about what they can expect from their involvement in the program, the one-to-one commitment, and the potential wait time to be matched.

Screen: All applicants with and without an intellectual or development disability (IDD) must complete a background screening through [Sterling Volunteers](#) to confirm their eligibility to participate.

Match: Make matches based on location, interests, availability, and compatibility. Utilize a mapping tool may help to identify applicants who live near one another. Consider hosting a social meet and greet to introduce applicants to each other and see if any natural connections form. Once matches are identified, enter them into Salesforce and send an introductory email providing buddy pairs with each other's contact information. Encourage them to talk through preferences and boundaries to help acclimate to their new friendship. Share resources from [Best Buddies University](#).

Engage: Provide members with opportunities to connect throughout the year by hosting citizen socials, sharing information about free local activities, and provide suggestions for outings they can try as a buddy pair. All members, whether they are matched or unmatched, are welcome and encouraged to attend state events as well. Maintain consistent communication with all members through periodic check-ins to ensure they are having a good experience and share progress about the development of their friendship. Consider sending a monthly or quarterly e-newsletter to keep them informed of upcoming activities, share outings ideas, and highlight members and buddy pairs.

Interview Topics

- Communication preferences: what methods of communication is the applicant most comfortable using?
- Preferred activities: what does the applicant enjoy doing in their free time?
- Interests: are there any hobbies or interests that the applicant has that they could share with their buddy?
- Schedule: what availability does the applicant have to spend time or communicate with their new friend?
- Transportation: what mode of transportation is the applicant most comfortable utilizing?
- Supports: does the applicant require support with any tasks that their buddy should be aware of?
- Additional contacts: is there someone such as a family member, caregiver or friend that knows the applicant well and could be contacted if additional support is needed?

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Sample Communication Messaging

Introductory Messaging

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am reaching out today on behalf of Best Buddies in [YOUR STATE OR REGION]. Best Buddies is an international nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

One way that our organization works to achieve this mission is through our adult friendship program, Best Buddies Citizens. This program matches those 18 years and older with and without IDD in mutually enriching one-to-one friendships and can help bring an end to the social isolation that so many people with IDD experience throughout their adulthood. Buddy pairs are matched based on location, common interests and availability and are encouraged to communicate weekly and get together monthly. We also offer a variety of group activities to help foster connections and create a sense of belonging for all our members.

We are currently seeking new members so that we can build a more inclusive community in your area and make new life changing friendships possible. Please let me know if you are interested in learning more about this opportunity.

In friendship,
BB staff name & contact information

Match Messaging

Congratulations! We have identified a match for you in the Best Buddies Citizens Program! We are so excited for your friendship journey to begin! Below is some need-to-know information to help you get started:

- YOUR BUDDY'S NAME
- YOUR BUDDY'S CONTACT INFORMATION
- BEST BUDDIES STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

From this point on we ask that you work to create a relationship with [BUDDY'S NAME]. Please communicate weekly (via phone, through e-mail, etc.) and get together at least four hours per month. I will be checking in with you to see how things are going and provide support as needed. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of any assistance as your new friendship forms.

Keep in mind that friendships take some time to develop. This [Citizens Friendship Guide](#) is a great resource to utilize as you are building your friendship.

Thank you again for your involvement!

In friendship,
BB staff name & contact information