



# FAQ

## Best Buddies Illinois Citizens Program

### What is Best Buddies?

Best Buddies is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves people with and without Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD). The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with IDD. Best Buddies was founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver and has programs in 50 countries & all 50 United States. Best Buddies offers seven programs – Citizens, e-Buddies, Colleges, High Schools, Middle Schools, Jobs, and Ambassadors. Visit [www.bestbuddies.org](http://www.bestbuddies.org) for more information.

### What is the Citizens Program?

The Best Buddies Illinois Citizens Program provides opportunities for one-to-one friendships for adults (18+) with and without IDD. Buddy Pairs commit to one year of friendship, get together 1-2 times each month, and share communication each week.

### Does it cost anything?

Once matched, participants are responsible for their own costs when on an outing.

### How are matches made?

Matches are based on same gender, location, common interests, and similar age.

### Who is in the match?

Each friendship consists of a:

#### Citizen Buddy

- Volunteer with no disability diagnosis

#### Buddy

- Participant with an IDD

#### Sponsor

- A person with no disability diagnosis who knows the Buddy very well; often a parent, guardian, or case manager

### What is the application process?

#### Paperwork

- Citizen Buddies
  - Online Membership Application, Two References, & Background Check
- Buddies
  - Online Membership Application & Background Check

#### Screening Interviews

- Before meeting potential participants, a Program Manager will conduct a Screening Interview by phone with the volunteer or Sponsor to determine if a person is appropriate for the Citizens Program.

#### Home Visit

- The Program Manager will come to the potential participant's home for an in-person interview. This is scheduled at your convenience. When meeting with a Buddy, the Sponsor also attends this meeting.

#### Buddy Search

- After completing the Home Visit, the future participant is placed on the Wait List while the Program Manager reviews waiting Citizen Buddies or Buddies and recruits new ones. *This process may take time.*

#### Match Meeting

- This meeting allows the Buddy, Sponsor, & Citizen Buddy to determine if they feel compatible. The meeting is always held at the home of the Buddy. If the meeting goes well, the match is made!

\*Applicants who are unable to participate in a *mutually* enriching friendship, who are not independent in personal care tasks, who have severe behavior or anger management issues, and/or have a criminal background are not appropriate for participation.

### How else can I get involved with BBIL?

- e-Buddies@ is an online pen-pal program that provides opportunities for one-to-one e-mail friendships between people with and without IDD. Matches are asked to exchange e-mails once per week for at least one year. [www.ebuddies.org](http://www.ebuddies.org)
- Volunteers can also join the Best Buddies Illinois Associate Board made up of young professionals in the Chicago area. Call 312-828-9313 for more info!

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