



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 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
- ♦ 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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