



PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$10,000 submitted to the Office of State Procurement Services.

PART I: OVERVIEW			
Department Office/Division/Program:		Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education	
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Stacey Bean	
(If applicable) Department Reference #:		N/A	
Agency Department Code:	05A	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20240202*2148
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)		\$150,000.00	
CONTRACT	Proposed/Original Start Date:		Proposed/Most Recent End Date:
AMENDMENT	New Effective Date:	1/2/2026	New End Date (if Applicable):
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		Best Buddies International Inc. Miami, FL	
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		Best Buddies will provide services that assist Maine students in building the skills required to be college and career-ready through the delivery of activities that increase social interactions between students with IDD and their typical peers to create more inclusive Maine schools and communities.	

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION			
Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Competitive Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Grant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B. Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. State Statute/Agency Directed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Federal Agency Directed
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Willing and Qualified
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Client Choice
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. Higher Education Cooperative Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Other Authorization

Please respond to ALL of the questions in the following sections.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Provide a more detailed description and explain the need for the goods, services or grant to supplement the response in Part I.

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) benefit from increased opportunities to interact with their typical peers in Maine, where 94.4 percent of public-school students ages 6-21 with intellectual disabilities spend a significant part of the school day in separate settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2021-2022). Despite nationwide gains in inclusive education, a 2013 study by Carter, Gotham, Harvey, and Taylor concluded that “there is a qualitative difference between *being present* in a community and *having a presence in* a community. [The authors] suggest this difference may depend in part on the development of valued relationships and a sense of belonging.”

The exclusion and isolation of students with IDD from their regular education classrooms function as significant physical barriers inhibiting interactions between the student populations. Even when students with IDD and their typical peers do share a classroom, “interaction rarely occurs without intentional programming,” since students with IDD frequently work alone or separated from their typical peers (Carter, 2017). Studies have found that students with IDD are at higher risk of experiencing bullying than their typical peers, due to deficits in social and communication skills. (Rose et al., 2011) Student experiences in the classroom vary by disability, whereby students with autism experience high rates of bullying in inclusive settings, and students with IDD face increased bullying when they are in restrictive settings. (Rose et al., 2015) Regardless of the educational setting, students with IDD face increased rates of victimization due to social and communication deficits and social marginalization (Rose & Gage, 2017). The Best Buddies in Maine Friendship and Social Inclusion Project would address these barriers by creating opportunities for meaningful social interactions and relationships for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who often experience isolation and loneliness.

This amendment is to extend the program for an additional two years and to add the funding to support the extension.

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the solicitation (RFP/RFA/RFQ) number if applicable.

Best Buddies International is the **sole organization** capable of delivering the combined, proprietary, and globally standardized services requested in this contract. Their unique service model—supported by exclusive intellectual property, specialized training systems, a national implementation structure, and unmatched program history—makes it impossible for another vendor to replicate or replace their offerings. Accordingly, the requested services can only be procured from Best Buddies without compromising program quality, continuity, or the intended outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As a result of Maine’s participation in Best Buddies, one of our partner schools, Brewer High School has won an award for [Best Buddies Chapter of the Year](#) and has been internationally recognized as breaking down barriers and increasing social connection between students with disabilities and those without. This work supports the mission of the Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education to increase inclusion of students with disabilities in their general education environments.

Sole-Source Justification: Best Buddies International

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Best Buddies International is the only organization in the world that delivers a comprehensive, research-supported, and fully integrated suite of programs specifically designed to create one-to-one friendships, leadership development, and competitive employment skill development, and community engagement for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The program is designed to promote social inclusion and friendship between students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or IDD, and those without. The organization also promotes within schools an increased tolerance of diversity that positively impacts all people within a school community. While other disability-focused organizations exist, none provide the *combined, scalable, and internationally standardized* service model that Best Buddies has developed, refined, and deployed for more than three decades.

1. Unique, Proprietary Program Model

Best Buddies offers a proprietary program model that includes a **One-to-One Friendship** curriculum designed to boost inclusion and integrate students with intellectual disabilities into their communities by increasing social connections and providing opportunities to expand their social networks. Their program standards, training protocols, and monitoring systems are proprietary and cannot be duplicated or delivered by other community or nonprofit providers.

No other organization provides these components as an interconnected service continuum designed to support individuals with IDD from adolescence through adulthood.

This model is internally developed, trademarked, and not available through any other provider.

2. Exclusive School-Based Friendship Programs

Best Buddies Friendship Chapters—operating in elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and colleges—are exclusive to Best Buddies and cannot be replicated by any other organization. These chapters rely on Best Buddies' intellectual property, brand, training materials, and national infrastructure.

As a result, no alternative provider can legally or operationally deliver these school-based inclusion programs.

3. National Footprint with Proven Infrastructure

Best Buddies maintains a unique nationwide structure of state offices, regional directors, program managers, and trained volunteers capable of delivering standardized inclusion services at scale. This infrastructure is built over 30+ years and supported by specialized training in IDD inclusion, chapter management, and workplace integration.

No other entity has comparable reach or operational capacity for unified, national implementation of the same service model.

4. Leadership Development Designed Specifically for IDD

The **Best Buddies Ambassadors and Promoters Programs** train individuals with IDD in public speaking, self-advocacy, community leadership, and civic engagement through a curriculum available only through Best Buddies.

This is the only global leadership program tailored specifically to the communication, advocacy, and confidence-building needs of individuals with IDD.

5. Recognized Global Authority in IDD Social Inclusion

Best Buddies is widely recognized—by educators, employers, policymakers, and disability advocates—as the global authority on one-to-one friendship programs and IDD inclusion.

Their brand, expertise, and decades-long impact make them the only provider capable of delivering the specific outcomes required by this contract.

There is no other organization that provides this social emotional, transition focused, leadership opportunity for students with and without disabilities in the state.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

Best Buddies requests an investment of \$75,000 from the Maine Department of Education to create additional inclusive school communities, for each year of the contract. These funds will support volunteer training, staff supervision of school-based chapters, and program expansion efforts. The Department of Education will be able to nearly double our impact in the state, reaching approximately 340 students and positively affecting the lives of 3,400 Maine community members.

The costs for this program are comparable to rates for this type of program in other states.

The breakdown of expenses for each year of the project would be as follows:

Program Operations: \$63,120
 Program Training: \$4,380
 Program Management: \$7,500

4. Describe the plan for future competition for the goods or services.

Any future need for improvement work across the state will be discussed and then processed in accordance with State procurement policies and procedures. At the end of this contract period, the Department will review if any other provider options have become available, and if they have, the Department will explore publishing an RFP for these services.

PART IV: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) / MAINE JOBS & RECOVERY PLAN (MJRP)

Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

- Yes, MJRP funds (023) – If Yes, please attach the approved Business Case(s).
- Yes, ARPA funds (025) or (026) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.
- No – If No, proceed to Part V.

PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); CONTRACT WITH THE STATE

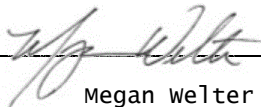
Maine law contains Conflict of Interest statutes directed to State Departments, State Officers, and Employees Generally under MRS [Title 5, §18](#) and [§18-A](#), in harmony with MRS [Title 17, §3104](#).

The requesting department's signatory affirms, understands, and acknowledges Maine's Conflict of Interest statutes and, in accordance with those statutes and to the best of their knowledge, has determined that no conflict of interest exists at the time of this contract, renewal, or amendment.

PART VI: APPROVALS

Governor/Department Commissioner or Designee


1. The signature below indicates approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:	Megan Welter	Date:	12/28/2025

2. Additional signature required **ONLY if box E (Emergency) is selected in PART II**. The signature below indicates approval by the Department's Commissioner, or the designee specifically authorized to approve emergency procurement requests.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:		Date:	

****OSPS Section Only****

Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	Signed by: 		
Typed Name:	Michelle Knox	Date:	1/28/2026

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: 4E5C4EFD-C691-4051-86B1-57AE29971B06	Status: Completed
Subject: Please Docusign This Document	
Source Envelope:	
Document Pages: 7	Signatures: 2
Certificate Pages: 4	Initials: 0
AutoNav: Enabled	Envelope Originator: Megan Welter megan.welter@maine.gov
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Status: Original 12/28/2025 5:23:07 PM	Holder: Megan Welter megan.welter@maine.gov	Location: DocuSign
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Signer Events

Megan Welter
megan.welter@maine.gov
Associate Commissioner of Public Education
Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)

Signature



Signature Adoption: Uploaded Signature Image
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Timestamp

Sent: 12/28/2025 5:23:08 PM
Viewed: 12/28/2025 5:25:07 PM
Signed: 12/28/2025 5:25:34 PM
Freeform Signing

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:
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In Person Signer Events

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Editor Delivery Events

Status

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Agent Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Intermediary Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Carbon Copy Events

Status

Timestamp

Witness Events

Signature

Timestamp

Notary Events

Signature

Timestamp

Envelope Summary Events

Status

Timestamps

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Signing Complete	Security Checked	12/28/2025 5:25:34 PM
Completed	Security Checked	12/28/2025 5:25:34 PM

Payment Events

Status

Timestamps

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure

ELECTRONIC RECORD AND SIGNATURE DISCLOSURE

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If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

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Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through the DocuSign system all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

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You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:

To contact us by email send messages to: jennifer.l.tarr@maine.gov

To advise Carahsoft OBO Maine Department of Education of your new email address

To let us know of a change in your email address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at jennifer.l.tarr@maine.gov and in the body of such request you must state: your previous email address, your new email address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address.

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