



PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 submitted to the Division of Procurement Services.

PART I: OVERVIEW
Table with fields: Department Office/Division/Program, Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator, (If applicable) Department Reference #, Amount, Advantage CT / RQS #, CONTRACT, AMENDMENT, GRANT, Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State, Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant.

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION
Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)
Table with checkboxes for options A through L.

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 IDD will 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.

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the RFP number, if applicable.

Best Buddies® is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Founded in 1989 by Anthony K. Shriver, Best Buddies is a vibrant, international organization that has grown from one original chapter to nearly 3,000 middle school, high school, and college chapters worldwide, positively impacting the lives of over 1.3 million people with and without IDD. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 states and in 49 countries around the world.

Best Buddies in Maine was established in 2019 and has since grown to support 236 students at chapters at 29 schools across the state. The participants in Best Buddies programs have a positive impact on the lives of nearly 2,360 Mainers.

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 an additional ten inclusive school communities. These funds will support volunteer training, staff supervision of school-based chapters, and program expansion efforts. We 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.

**PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

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.

**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) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.

No – If No, proceed to Part V.


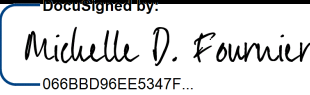
**PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); PURCHASES BY THE STATE**

Does the requesting Department signatory understand and acknowledge Maine’s COI Statute?

Yes, the requesting Department signatory understands and acknowledges [Title 17, Chapter 101, §3104](#).

**PART VI: APPROVALS**

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department’s Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:	Daniel Chuhta	Date:	3/11/2024
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	<small>DocuSigned by:</small>  <small>066BBD96EE5347F...</small>		
Typed Name:	Michelle D. Fournier	Date:	4/1/2024