



### Who We Are

*Title of Project, Name of Lead Entity, Partner, Counties in Indiana we are impacting.*

Belonging Matters is a two year pilot project being undertaken by Volunteers of America Mid-States. With the assistance and guidance from Starfire Council of Greater Cincinnati, we are going to assist families who have a family member with a label of an intellectual/developmental disability with designing and growing a good life in the community. We will also host intentionally structured conversations with existing neighborhood/civic groups, focusing on raising their own awareness of the isolation that exists for people with a label of a disability and how members of that community can address this. Our efforts will impact Clark and Floyd Counties in Southern Indiana.

### What We Expect if We Achieve our Vision

*Expected short-term and long-term outcomes; and positive impacts on individuals if your project successfully carries out these actions.*

- \* Connections are made and relationships built with a person with a label of a disability and his/her neighbors.
- \* Individuals with a label of disability are known by their interests/traits/personalities rather than their disabilities.
- \* Family members feel comfortable in their role of supporting the person with a label of a disability to be known by other people in the community.
- \* Community/Civic organizations that participate have more inclusive cultures that are more welcoming and have an awareness to maintain this culture.

- \* Family members and community members spread their experiences and knowledge learned to other families and organizations.
- \* Individuals with a label of a disability are spending more time in valued roles with other people who are not paid to be in their life.
- \* There will be an increase by the family members/community members on their expectations of how someone with a label of a disability can contribute to their community.

### What We Will Do

*Specific actions your agency will take to carry out pilot project.*

- \* Research existing organizations/entities that are focusing their efforts on inclusion of people with a label of disability into their community.
- \* Identify families/individuals who are interested in building a more inclusive life in the community.
- \* Conduct training/coaching sessions, workshops for individuals/family members around foundational awareness and emotional readiness.
- \* Provide guided practice and technical assistance for individuals/family members in implementing new practices.
- \* Conduct structured conversations with neighborhood/community entities.

### How We Will Do It

*Plan and implementation*

- \* Families will conduct projects within their neighborhood centered around the interest of the person with a disability.
- \* Our staff will ensure the neighbors and community are involved in the project.
- \* The project will host monthly conversations with families, as well as with neighborhood groups/community entities to discuss the isolation/loneliness of individuals with a label of disability.
- \* Develop mentors to help others

### What Will Result

*Long-term goals to transform services and/or better support individuals.*

- \* Families conducting projects within their neighborhood centered around the interest of the person with a disability.
- \* These intentional conversations will have the purpose of raising the awareness and developing ways for neighbors/community to be involved.
- \* Valued social roles will be identified for people with a label of disability within their neighborhood/community.
- \* Families and community members will be given resources and tools to help them build community connections.
- \* Will create a guide/road map of how the value of inclusion was developed and how targeted connections were made.

### What We Want to Avoid

*Outcomes that may take away from the vision and will serve as "red flags" to consider course correction.*

- \* The conversations with family members become about trying to get the person with a disability into a program
- \* More grouped activities that are of just people with disabilities.

