

# PROPOSAL

## Regional Job Fairs and Readiness Project

Submitted to

**Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council**

Submitted by

**Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge**

2356 Drusilla Lane  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809  
225-216-7474

|                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Period</b>       | October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027 |
| <b>Amount Requested</b>     | \$45,000                             |
| <b>Match Contribution</b>   | \$15,000                             |
| <b>Total Project Budget</b> | \$60,000                             |

*Prepared for submission in response to the Council's Solicitation of Proposals*

## 1. Executive Summary

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge respectfully submits this proposal to plan, coordinate, and implement accessible regional job fairs and job readiness activities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Louisiana.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council seeks an organization to host in-person job fairs in every region of Louisiana, recruit employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities, provide job readiness supports, coordinate with workforce and disability service partners, ensure accessibility, track participation and employment outcomes, and prepare a final project report. The project will operate from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027, with funding of up to \$45,000.

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge (FHFGBR) proposes the Louisiana Thrives Project, a coordinated statewide initiative designed to connect qualified and motivated job seekers with intellectual and developmental disabilities to employers who have current or anticipated employment opportunities.

- Nine accessible, in-person regional job fairs;
- Employer recruitment and disability-inclusive hiring assistance;
- Pre-event job readiness workshops;
- Resume preparation and application assistance;
- Interview preparation and practice;
- Workplace communication and self-advocacy education;
- Coordination with workforce systems, disability providers, families, and community partners;
- Individual follow-up and referrals after each event; and
- Collection and reporting of participation, employer engagement, interviews, referrals, job offers, and employment outcomes.

The job fairs will focus on meaningful employment connections rather than general career exploration. Participating employers will be encouraged to attend with information about current job openings, application procedures, required qualifications, accommodations, and next steps for applicants.

## 2. Organizational Background

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge is a nonprofit resource center organized and directed by family members of individuals with disabilities. For nearly three decades, FHFGBR has provided individualized assistance, information and referrals, peer support, education, training, advocacy, community outreach, and resource connections to individuals with disabilities and their families.

FHFGBR serves individuals and families in East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, Iberville, and Ascension parishes. Through partnerships with other Families Helping Families centers and statewide disability, workforce, education, and community organizations, FHFGBR is positioned to coordinate outreach and activities across Louisiana.

### Mission

Families Helping Families strengthens and supports individuals with disabilities and their families by providing individualized services, resources, and education that empower them to achieve independence within their communities.

### Vision

We envision a community where individuals with disabilities can live, learn, work, and thrive.

Employment is essential to independence, financial security, personal growth, self-determination, and meaningful community participation. FHFGBR will address both sides of the employment connection by preparing job seekers for meaningful interaction with employers while helping employers understand how to recruit, hire, onboard, and retain individuals with disabilities.

### **3. Summary of Qualifications**

#### **A. Experience Serving Individuals with Disabilities and Families**

- Individualized information and referral assistance
- Disability resource navigation
- Peer-to-peer and family-to-family support
- Community education and outreach
- Transition and independent-living education
- Self-advocacy support
- Employment-readiness activities
- Life-skills training
- Community workshops
- Partner meetings
- Accessible events and presentations

#### **B. Employment Readiness Experience**

- Workplace behavior
- Communication
- Time management
- Following directions
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Self-advocacy
- Personal presentation
- Resume preparation
- Application completion
- Interview skills
- Workplace safety
- Transportation planning
- Understanding employer expectations

#### **C. Community Event Planning and Coordination**

- Venue identification
- Accessibility review
- Partner coordination
- Employer and vendor recruitment
- Participant registration
- Event promotion
- Staffing and volunteer coordination
- Event setup and breakdown
- Accessible materials and accommodations
- Participant flow and safety planning

- Data collection and post-event follow-up

#### **D. Employer and Workforce Partner Engagement**

- Direct employer outreach
- Employer information sessions
- Disability awareness resources
- Guidance on accessible recruitment
- Information about reasonable accommodations
- Connections to workforce and disability employment partners
- Assistance identifying suitable job roles
- Pre-event preparation and post-event follow-up

#### **E. Commitment to Accessible and Inclusive Events**

- Accessible entrances, parking, and routes
- Accessible restrooms
- Clear directional signage
- Seating and rest areas
- Plain-language and large-print materials
- ASL interpretation when requested
- Communication assistance
- Sensory-friendly areas
- Support-person participation
- Accessible registration procedures
- Individual application assistance

#### **F. Fiscal Management**

- Project-specific budget
- Separate tracking of grant and match expenditures
- Staff time documentation
- Monthly budget-to-actual review
- Documentation of in-kind contributions
- Review and approval of expenditures
- Maintenance of receipts, invoices, contracts, and travel records
- Timely programmatic and financial reporting

### **4. Statement of Need**

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities want meaningful work, financial independence, personal achievement, social connection, and opportunities to contribute their skills and talents. Yet many job seekers face barriers that limit access to competitive employment.

- Limited access to employers
- Lack of previous work experience
- Difficulty completing online applications
- Limited interview experience
- Inaccessible hiring processes
- Employer misconceptions
- Transportation challenges

- Communication barriers
- Limited access to workplace accommodations
- Lack of coordinated follow-up
- Uncertainty about the effect of employment on benefits
- Limited knowledge of available employment supports
- A lack of employment opportunities in rural communities

Employers may also be interested in inclusive hiring but uncertain about where to recruit, how to make applications and interviews accessible, how to provide reasonable accommodations, and which organizations can provide ongoing assistance. Regional job fairs designed specifically for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can address these challenges by creating direct, organized, and supported connections between job seekers and employers.

## 5. Project Goals and Objectives

### Goal 1: Increase Access to Inclusive Employment Opportunities

- Conduct one accessible, in-person job fair in each of Louisiana's nine regions.
- Recruit a diverse group of employers representing multiple industries.
- Prioritize employers prepared to discuss actual job opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for job seekers to submit applications, participate in interviews, or schedule follow-up interviews.
- Connect participants to workforce and disability employment supports.

### Goal 2: Strengthen Job Readiness

- Offer job readiness workshops before each regional job fair.
- Provide individual resume and application assistance.
- Offer interview preparation and practice.
- Educate job seekers about workplace expectations, communication, self-advocacy, and accommodations.
- Provide materials in plain language and accessible formats.

### Goal 3: Strengthen Employer Capacity for Inclusive Hiring

- Provide participating employers with an employer preparation guide.
- Offer employer orientation before each event.
- Share information about reasonable accommodations and accessible hiring practices.
- Connect employers with workforce and disability service partners.
- Encourage participating employers to identify current openings suitable for event participants.

### Goal 4: Build Regional Employment Partnerships

- Establish a regional planning network for each job fair.
- Coordinate with workforce systems and disability service providers.
- Engage families and support professionals when appropriate.
- Develop a follow-up process for employment referrals and services.
- Document regional challenges and partnership opportunities.

### Goal 5: Measure Employment Connections and Outcomes

- Track job seeker and employer participation.
- Document applications submitted, interviews conducted, referrals made, and job offers reported.

- Conduct follow-up with participants, employers, and partner organizations.
- Identify barriers that prevent participants from moving forward in the hiring process.
- Prepare a comprehensive final report with outcomes and recommendations.

## 6. Project Design and Implementation

### Phase 1: Project Planning and Regional Coordination

- Confirm project staff and responsibilities
- Develop standardized job fair procedures
- Create an accessibility checklist
- Establish employer recruitment procedures
- Identify regional workforce and disability partners
- Establish regional planning teams
- Develop participant registration and data-collection tools
- Create outreach materials
- Establish outcome-tracking procedures
- Develop a statewide event calendar

### Phase 2: Employer Recruitment and Preparation

- Recruit employers from healthcare, hospitality, retail, food service, manufacturing, warehousing, government, education, technology, customer service, and other regionally relevant industries
- Require participating employers to identify current or anticipated openings
- Provide employer orientation on accessible recruitment, reasonable accommodations, and inclusive interviewing
- Connect employers with workforce and disability support resources

### Phase 3: Job Seeker Outreach and Registration

- Conduct targeted outreach to individuals with I/DD, families, supported employment programs, schools, postsecondary programs, self-advocacy groups, and rural communities
- Collect employment interests, accommodation needs, transportation needs, and readiness support needs during registration

### Phase 4: Job Readiness Supports

- Resume and application preparation
- Interview preparation and mock interviews
- Workplace readiness and professional behavior
- Self-advocacy and reasonable accommodation education

### Phase 5: Regional Job Fair Implementation

- Accessible registration and employer tables
- Resume and application support stations
- Workforce and employment support partners
- Sensory-friendly or reduced-noise area
- Private interview space when available
- Participant and employer evaluations
- Collection of participation and outcome data

## **Phase 6: Follow-Up and Employment Connections**

- Conduct follow-up approximately two weeks, 30 days, and 90 days after each event when timing allows
- Track applications, interviews, job offers, hires, referrals, and barriers
- Refer participants to workforce, supported employment, benefits-planning, transportation, and disability service resources

## **Phase 7: Evaluation and Final Reporting**

- Summarize events, participation, employer engagement, outcomes, accommodations, lessons learned, regional differences, and recommendations

## **7. Accessibility and Accommodation Plan**

Each venue will be reviewed before selection using a standardized accessibility checklist addressing parking, entrances, interior routes, restrooms, table and aisle spacing, seating, lighting, sound levels, transportation access, emergency exits, and space for interpreters, support persons, and mobility devices.

- American Sign Language interpretation
- Large-print and plain-language materials
- Communication assistance
- Alternative registration methods
- Individual application support
- Support-person participation
- Sensory-friendly areas
- Reduced-noise periods
- Flexible interview formats
- Additional interview time
- Accessible seating
- Virtual or telephone follow-up when appropriate

## **8. Statewide and Regional Outreach Strategy**

FHFGBR will use a coordinated outreach strategy to ensure participation from all nine regions and from rural, suburban, and urban communities.

- Direct email and telephone outreach
- Families Helping Families networks
- Disability provider networks
- Workforce partner distribution lists
- Social media and community calendars
- Printed flyers and local media
- School transition programs
- Postsecondary disability programs
- Self-advocacy groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Rural community partners
- Local government contacts
- Healthcare providers
- Word-of-mouth recruitment through individuals and families

| Period         | Major Activities                                                                             | Deliverables                                 |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| October 2026   | Contract initiation, project staffing, statewide planning, development of procedures         | Detailed implementation plan                 |
| November 2026  | Establish regional planning teams, identify partners, develop accessibility and data tools   | Regional partner list and accessibility plan |
| December 2026  | Develop employer materials, outreach materials, registration forms, and readiness curriculum | Employer and participant toolkits            |
| January 2027   | Begin statewide employer recruitment and participant outreach; confirm first venues          | Employer recruitment and venue reports       |
| February 2027  | Conduct readiness activities and first regional job fair                                     | Event report and outcome tracking            |
| March 2027     | Conduct second regional job fair and continue follow-up                                      | Event report and follow-up data              |
| April 2027     | Conduct two regional job fairs and related readiness activities                              | Two event reports                            |
| May 2027       | Conduct two regional job fairs and related readiness activities                              | Two event reports                            |
| June 2027      | Conduct two regional job fairs and related readiness activities                              | Two event reports                            |
| July 2027      | Conduct final regional job fair and continue follow-up                                       | Final event report                           |
| August 2027    | Complete follow-up and analyze outcomes                                                      | Preliminary outcome report                   |
| September 2027 | Prepare and submit final project report and closeout package                                 | Final report and closeout package            |

## 9. Proposed Work Plan and Timeline

## 10. Performance Measures and Evaluation

| Performance Area  | Measure                                 | Proposed Target |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Regional coverage | Regions hosting an in-person job fair   | 9 of 9          |
| Job fairs         | Accessible regional job fairs completed | 9               |

|                                   |                                                         |                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Job seeker participation          | Individuals with I/DD attending                         | At least 360          |
| Employer engagement               | Employers participating across all events               | At least 90           |
| Employer participation per region | Average employers at each event                         | At least 10           |
| Job readiness                     | Participants receiving readiness training or assistance | At least 270          |
| Workforce coordination            | Workforce, disability, and community partners involved  | At least 45           |
| Applications                      | Applications submitted or initiated                     | At least 225          |
| Interviews                        | Interviews or employer screenings completed             | At least 135          |
| Employment connections            | Participants referred for additional employer follow-up | At least 90           |
| Employment outcomes               | Job offers or hires reported during the project period  | Target of at least 36 |
| Accessibility                     | Events completing accessibility review                  | 100%                  |
| Accommodations                    | Approved accommodation requests provided                | 100%                  |
| Participant satisfaction          | Participants reporting that the event was useful        | At least 85%          |
| Employer satisfaction             | Employers reporting value in participating              | At least 85%          |
| Final reporting                   | Final project and outcome report completed              | By September 30, 2027 |

Employment outcomes will depend partly on employer hiring timelines, applicant qualifications, transportation, support availability, and the timing of regional events. FHFGBR will report both direct hires and measurable intermediate outcomes such as applications, interviews, second interviews, referrals, and job offers.

## 11. Project Management

The project will be led by a designated FHFGBR Project Director with support from program, outreach, administrative, and evaluation personnel.

**Project Director – Stefanie Ashford**

Overall project leadership, Council communication, statewide coordination, budget oversight, staff supervision, partnerships, quality assurance, and final deliverables.

**Employment Engagement Coordinator – Carolyn Johnson**

Employer recruitment, workforce partnerships, employer orientation, job opportunity tracking, and employer follow-up.

**Outreach and Event Coordinator – Nadia Jenkins**

Venue coordination, regional planning teams, participant outreach, event logistics, accommodations, staffing, and volunteer coordination. Registration, participant tracking, data entry, scheduling, purchasing documentation, evaluation forms, and record maintenance.

**Job Readiness Specialist – Kimberly Smith**

Job readiness curriculum, resume assistance, interview preparation, participant support, and employment referrals.

**Regional Partners and Volunteers**

Local outreach, venue assistance, participant support, event setup, job seeker navigation, and follow-up referrals.

## 12. Risk Management

| Potential Risk                            | Mitigation Strategy                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Limited employer participation            | Begin recruitment early, use direct outreach, engage chambers and workforce partners, and request commitments in advance.                          |
| Employers attend without current openings | Require employers to identify current or anticipated opportunities before the event.                                                               |
| Low job seeker attendance                 | Use multiple outreach channels, partner referrals, reminder calls, and accessible registration.                                                    |
| Transportation barriers                   | Select centrally located venues, coordinate with local partners, provide transportation information, and explore allowable transportation support. |
| Accommodation requests                    | Collect requests during registration, confirm arrangements in advance, and maintain backup options.                                                |
| Rural participation challenges            | Use regional partners, local venues, rural providers, schools, and community organizations.                                                        |
| Participants arrive unprepared            | Offer pre-event readiness activities and on-site application and resume assistance.                                                                |
| Limited employment outcome data           | Establish consent-based follow-up procedures and maintain contact with employers and workforce                                                     |

|                                      |                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | partners.                                                                         |
| Scheduling or venue disruption       | Maintain backup dates and alternate venue options.                                |
| Inconsistent regional implementation | Use standardized procedures, forms, accessibility tools, and reporting templates. |

### 13. Proposed Budget

The RFP provides up to \$45,000, limits indirect costs to no more than 8% of the total budget, and requires a match contribution equal to 25% of the total project budget. FHFGBR proposes a total project budget of \$60,000, consisting of a \$45,000 Council request and a \$15,000 match contribution.

| Budget Category                      | Council Funds   | Match/In-Kind   | Total           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Personnel                            | \$14,500        | \$7,000         | \$21,500        |
| Regional Venue and Event Costs       | \$8,100         | \$1,800         | \$9,900         |
| Travel                               | \$5,000         | \$1,000         | \$6,000         |
| Accessibility and Accommodations     | \$4,500         | \$500           | \$5,000         |
| Job Readiness Materials and Supports | \$3,000         | \$1,000         | \$4,000         |
| Employer and Participant Outreach    | \$2,500         | \$1,000         | \$3,500         |
| Data Collection and Evaluation       | \$1,750         | \$500           | \$2,250         |
| Printing and Final Reporting         | \$1,150         | \$450           | \$1,600         |
| Indirect and Administrative Costs    | \$4,500         | \$750           | \$5,250         |
| Volunteer and Donated Resources      | \$0             | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>\$45,000</b> | <b>\$15,000</b> | <b>\$60,000</b> |

## **14. Budget Narrative**

### **Personnel - \$21,500**

Personnel funds will support project management, employer engagement, regional outreach, event coordination, participant assistance, data collection, follow-up, fiscal documentation, and report preparation. The match contribution will include eligible staff time devoted to supervision, material development, partner coordination, administrative support, and project monitoring.

### **Regional Venue and Event Costs - \$9,900**

This category will support nine in-person job fairs, including venue rental, tables and chairs, event equipment, setup costs, signage, registration supplies, audio equipment, refreshments when allowable, safety supplies, and other necessary event expenses. FHFGBR will seek donated or reduced-cost venues whenever possible.

### **Travel - \$6,000**

Travel funds will support statewide and regional event coordination, including mileage, lodging when necessary, parking, approved meal expenses, and other allowable travel costs.

### **Accessibility and Accommodations - \$5,000**

This category will support ASL interpretation, communication supports, large-print and accessible materials, sensory-support supplies, accessible equipment, alternative formats, individual participant assistance, and other approved accessibility expenses.

### **Job Readiness Materials and Supports - \$4,000**

Funds will support resume templates, job readiness workbooks, interview preparation materials, participant folders, application support supplies, professional presentation materials, mock interview resources, and other participant preparation tools.

### **Employer and Participant Outreach - \$3,500**

Funds will support printed flyers, digital outreach, postage, telephone outreach, regional promotion, employer recruitment materials, community distribution, and accessible registration information.

### **Data Collection and Evaluation - \$2,250**

Funds will support registration and tracking systems, participant and employer surveys, outcome tracking, data entry, follow-up communication, analysis, and evaluation support.

### **Printing and Final Reporting - \$1,600**

This category will support printing, editing, formatting, accessible document preparation, and distribution of the final project report and related summaries.

### **Indirect and Administrative Costs - \$5,250**

Indirect and administrative costs will support the portion of general organizational expenses required to manage the project, including financial oversight, communications, office operations, insurance, and administrative infrastructure.

### **Volunteer and Donated Resources - \$1,000 Match**

The match contribution may include documented volunteer hours, donated professional assistance, donated venue use, or other approved in-kind resources supporting the project.

## 15. Sustainability

The project will strengthen regional relationships that can continue beyond the grant period. FHFGBR will promote sustainability by maintaining employer and workforce partner contact lists, sharing accessible hiring resources, connecting job seekers to long-term employment supports, encouraging continued inclusive hiring events, documenting successful practices, and developing reusable job readiness materials.

- Effective employer recruitment strategies
- Successful accessibility practices
- Common job seeker preparation needs
- Regional employment barriers
- Transportation and support-service gaps
- Industries with strong hiring potential
- Opportunities for continued collaboration
- Recommendations for future inclusive employment initiatives

## 16. Conclusion

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge is prepared to lead a coordinated, accessible, and employment-focused initiative that connects individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to employers across Louisiana.

FHFGBR understands that a successful job fair must do more than bring people into the same room. Job seekers must be prepared, employers must have meaningful opportunities, accommodations must be available, support organizations must be involved, and follow-up must occur after the event.

Through nine regional job fairs, targeted job readiness activities, proactive employer engagement, statewide partnerships, accessible event design, and consistent outcome tracking, the Louisiana Inclusive Employment Connections Project will help individuals with disabilities move closer to meaningful and competitive employment.

FHFGBR respectfully requests \$45,000 from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council and will provide a proposed \$15,000 match contribution, resulting in a total project budget of \$60,000.

## Required Application Attachments

- Application Cover Sheet
- Completed W-9
- Documentation of organizational ownership or a board resolution
- Summary of Qualifications, limited to five pages
- Proposal and Work Plan
- Activities and timelines
- Performance measures
- Detailed budget and budget narrative
- At least two letters of support
- Staff resumes or biographies
- Organizational chart, when appropriate
- Any additional documents required by the Council's funding guidelines

The application must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26, 2026, and submitted by email to [Stephanie.Carmona@la.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Carmona@la.gov).