Application Report

Applicant Organization:

CLU Transitions

environments

Project Name:

Application ID:

FundingAnnouncement:

Requested Amount:

DDS Employment Grant

Project Summary: This project is designed to provide neurodiverse digital artists with customized employment service in virtual competitive integrated setting caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

Customized employment service for neurodiverse digital artists in remote work

Project Director/Manager:

Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

1. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Check all that apply. If selecting "Other" please specify your type of organization.

Applicant Response:

- Regional Center Vendor
- Community-Based Organization

Applicant Comment:

Regional Center Vendor - Employment Training Program, Partial Day Program

501c3 Organization

2. Applicant Question: Description of Agency/Organization

Provide a brief description of the organization or group. You may add a website link for additional information.

Applicant Response:

Founded in 2018, CLU Transitions, Inc (CLU-T) is dedicated to guiding digital artists to successfully engage in competitive integrated employment (CIE). CLU-T is a leading organization that provides innovative customized employment (CE) services for individuals with I/DD in remote work, a mainstream work practice caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the digital art industry.

3. Applicant Question: Applicant in Good Standing



Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Please upload confirmation letter(s) or proof of good standing.

Applicant Response:

Yes

Attachment:



4. Applicant Question: Subcontractors in Good Standing

Are the applicant's subcontractors in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Select "N/A" if you do not plan to use subcontractors for your project.

Applicant Response:

Yes

Section Name: Grant Application

Sub Section Name: Proposal Summary

1. Applicant Question: Project Type

Choose one project type that best describes your activities.

Applicant Response:

Service Model Transformation

2. Applicant Question: Duration of Project

Choose the duration of your project, 12 months or 18 months.

Applicant Response:

18 months

3. Applicant Question: Regional Centers in Service Area

Identify the Regional Center(s) in the community to be served by this project. Select all that apply. For a regional center map, see Attachment F.

Applicant Response:

• Harbor Regional Center

4. Applicant Question: Counties Served

List the county or counties that the project will serve. Check all that apply.

Applicant Response:

Los Angeles County

5. Applicant Question: City of Los Angeles

If your project proposes to serve the City of Los Angeles, list the zip codes your project will serve.

Zip code information for Los Angeles County can be found here. If your project does not serve the Los Angeles area, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

6. Applicant Question: Collaborating Organizations or Other Entities

Does your project include partnerships with one or more organizations either as a co-applicant or subcontractor? If "yes", please upload a letter of support from each organization, that includes an explanation of their role in the partnership.

Applicant Response:

No

7. Applicant Question: Consultants and Trainers

Describe the qualifications of the consultant/trainer/training organization, including their subject matter expertise in competitive integrated employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Describe their prior experience as a consultant/trainer, professional credentials, including names of other organizations/entities for whom they have provided consultation or training.

If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A"

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment: Not Applicable

Section Name: Target Population

Sub Section Name: People Served

1. Applicant Question: Number of youth (under 18) with I/DD that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

2. Applicant Question: Number of adults (18 and older) with I/DD that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

15

3. Applicant Question: Number of family members that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

4. Applicant Question: Number of professionals and staff that will be trained

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

3

5. Applicant Question: Number of other individuals that will be served/trained

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. Please describe the individuals that will be served. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment: Not Applicable

6. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Group Served

Select the ethnicity group(s) the project will serve. For "Indian", "Pacific Islander", "Slavic" or "Other" use comment section to list specific groups.

- "Indian" includes: Indian (nationals of the present-day Republic of India), Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan.
- **"Pacific Islanders"** includes: individuals whose origins are the original peoples of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Polynesia includes Guam, Hawaii (Native Hawaiian), Samoa (Samoan), American Samoa (Samoan), Tokelau (Tokelauan), Tahiti (Tahitian), Tonga (Tongan) and other Pacific Islands.
- "Slavic" includes: Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian (East Slavic), Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Sorbian (West Slavic), and Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Slovene (South Slavic).
- The "other" category includes ethnicities not specified in the ethnicity options.

Applicant Response:

- Hispanic
- Other
- African American
- White

Attachment:

Section Name: Project Application

Sub Section Name: Project Application

1. Applicant Question: Project Abstract

Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined target population, geographic area, and project design. Specifically describe what your project will accomplish and the intended impact it will have on the employment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Due to COVID-19, remote work became a permanent fixture and is often the preferred entry-level option in the digital art industry. Because of remote work settings, all integration efforts occur virtually, yet virtual integration has not been seriously considered in the I/DD employment field. In addition, remote working situations assume that employees have the technology and equipment at their homes and unintentionally eliminates the role of the job coach who provided support to individuals with I/DD at the worksite as they did in the past. CLU-T has responded to this change to support digital artists to continue their path toward employment.

This project is designed to help digital artists discover their strengths and prepare for success in virtual competitive integrated employment (V-CIE). Through this grant, CLU-T plans to create a digital art studio where digital artists work on paid art projects while accessing full CE services. They include advanced technical and soft skills training, and job development services. The digital art studio will provide technology and equipment, which clients would have not been able to purchase otherwise. It will also offer fully-integrated work settings by 1. allowing digital artists without I/DD to rent studio space, 2. ensuring that at least 50% of the client's time working virtually will include interaction with their coworkers, and 3. receiving regular training from various professionals at the studio.

The project's target population is 15 young adults who 1. had no or little work experience, 2. completed CLU-T's current employment training programs, and 3. through intensive PCP, demonstrated desire to work at its digital art studio. 100% of clients reside in LA county and are Harbor Regional Center's clients, and have the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Lastly, CLU-T started developing replication guidelines and will offer consultation on how to provide the best CE support in the remote work environment.

2. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 1

Please describe the underlying problem, challenges, or issues that your project will address.

Applicant Response:

The COVID pandemic dramatically changed the work environment from an in-studio setting to a remote-work setting in the digital art industry. Therefore, "place and train" models such as Supported Employment or Tailored Day Program would not work for many neurodiverse artists and prevent CIE from becoming a reality. Also, for digital artists, purchasing technology and equipment is a tremendous financial burden. Lastly, there is little research about overall job satisfaction for adults with ASD.

3. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 2

Provide facts or data to support the need for this project

Only 17.41% of Harbor Regional Center (HRC)'s clients from age 16 to 64 are employed (2022). There is very little data available for job satisfaction for those who are employed.

85% of the clients in CLU-T's ETP never worked in the past. 15% of them briefly worked in entry-level positions in the food and delivery industry. Compared to their peers with other types of disabilities, young adults with ASD had the lowest rate of employment (29.9%).

Due to the COVID pandemic, the majority of jobs in the digital art industry became remote positions: the number of remote positions is 13 times greater than that of in-studio positions based on Indeed job listings in the Los Angeles area as of July 2022.

100% of CLU-T's prospective project participants cohabitate with their parents. 64% of their parents reported that their adult children could not find work during the COVID pandemic and stayed home unemployed despite their strong desire to pursue careers in the digital art industry.



4. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 3

Describe how the project will involve and benefit participants who are from diverse backgrounds

Applicant Response:

This project's CE approach is based on CLU-T's strong cultural competence of the workforce to benefit the participants who are very diverse ethnically, linguistically, and culturally. (client's in the CLU-T's Employment Training Program and in the CLU-T's Partial Employment Day Program (PEDP) - 42% are Hispanics, 11% Asians, 11% African Americans, 4%, first generation Armenian, 11% mixed-races, and 19% Whites - *approximate percentage*) CLU-T acknowledges the diversity of its clients and plans to embed such diversity into their career strengths.

CLU-T hired and trained staff members from diverse backgrounds as well to provide clients with culturally sensitive support and training. In addition, CLU-T will heavily emphasize creativity and customization in consideration of the clients' diverse backgrounds when writing career plans that cater to their strengths to advance their careers.

5. Applicant Question: Approach Question 1A

For Business Focused Practices, Employment Preparation Services and Supports, Service Models for Individuals with High Support Needs, and Training and Implementation project types.

- Describe the objective for your project
- Describe the new or innovative methods and activities that will be used that correspond to the proposed objective and project type that:
 - Use innovative, evidence-based, best, or promising practices, services and /or supports
 - Promote increased and meaningful opportunities for participants to make an informed choice for career options and prepare for CIE
 - · Are designed to achieve, maintain, or advance individuals with I/DD in competitive integrated employment
 - Are designed to be replicable

- Include how you used input from the community and/target population in the design of the project
- Describe any project deliverables

If your project is not Business Focused Practices, Employment Preparation Services and Supports, Service Models for Individuals with High Support Needs, or Training and Implementation, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

6. Applicant Question: Approach Question 1B

For project type, Service Model Transformation

- A description of the transformation team that will be developing the action plan and includes representation by individuals with ID/D, family members, those who provide direct support, and other relevant community members (e.g., businesses, peer organizations, partnerships, etc.,)
- The objective and activities to be used in developing the action plan, including an outline of the areas to be addressed in the transformational planning and organizational change that will affect the CIE employment services.
- Include how you used input from the community and/target population in the design of the project?
- A detailed description of the planning process that will be used
 - Descript project deliverables
 - Describe how you plan to engage the regional center in the transformation plan

If your project type is not Service Model Transformation, select "N/A".

The transformation team will consist of 1 project director, 1 project senior coordinator, 1 assistant coordinator, 1 production coordinator, 1 job developer, 3 employment facilitators (EF). This project will focus on 13 neurodiverse digital artists who phased out from CLU-T's previous ETP.

The project director is responsible for the overall management of grants and supervising grant staff. The project senior coordinator (SC) will lead the implementation of the action plans. The assistant coordinator will assist the SC collect data and implement day-to-day employment practices. The production coordinator will provide CE technical support to clients. The job developer will customize employment opportunities from a variety of businesses and industries and work on neurodiversity awareness training for potential business partners. Three EFs will receive 120 hours of intensive training on how to provide customized soft skill support for each client.

The objective of this project is to design customized employment support for neurodiverse digital artists in the remote work environment. The concept of the digital art studio differs from traditional day programs because the clients' work experiences are carefully designed with their individual strengths and its services are highly customized at the CLU-T's digital art studio. Therefore, CLU-T's digital art studio is effectively an autonomous workplace where clients accept differentiated CE support to maximize their ability to succeed as competitive artists. It also differs from tailored day programs as a tailored day program's employment services traditionally focus on supporting participants at the physical worksite.

This project is also designed to address financial challenges brought on by COVID-19. Since digital artists are asked to work at home, they are financially responsible for the purchase of the necessary equipment to maintain employment. Because digital arts equipment and software are extremely costly, digital artists find it more challenging to seek employment opportunities.

CLU-T's digital art studio is a transformation of employment support mechanisms by creating a place where employment support services can be provided for remote work careers. The art studio provides the necessary equipment and software for its clients to thrive in the digital art industry without bearing all the financial burden.

The HRC will remain as a crucial partner with CLU-T. The HRC will be a strong referral partner for CLU-T as well as an advisory agency to provide constant feedback. CLU-T will share its client's employment data with HRC to support systematic improvements of employment opportunities for individuals with I/DD.

7. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 1

How will individuals served by the project continue receiving employment services and supports once the project has ended?

Applicant Response:

Upon the completion of the grant project, clients will differentiate support levels and CLU-T will customize support to meet their career needs accordingly.

After receiving comprehensive CE services through this project, CLU-T will support future career decisions that clients make. They could decide that they do not need CLU-T's CE support and discontinue service from CLU-T. Others may purchase datadriven CE services from CLU-T with their earnings. Their family members may pay CLU-T directly for their adult children's services.

Alternatively, they can explore other funding sources to continue CLU-T's CE service such as the Self Determination Program (SDP) or Work Incentives Benefits Planner (WIPA) through Social Security (SS).

8. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 2

How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?

With established evidence-based implementation practices for CE for neurodiverse digital artists in the V-CIE environment, CLU-T will focus on a strategic outreach roadmap to promote more participation in its CE services. CLU-T will launch a proactive interagency referral system with DOR, local schools, and other governmental organizations, including HRC. CLU-T plans to open 2 more digital art studios to meet the needs of potential digital artists in the V-CIE setting by 2025. CLU-T's CE services will be paid privately, client's sponsor support from HRC such as SDP budget, and/or other public service benefits as discussed in the sustainability question 1.

9. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 3

Describe your plan to engage the regional center for future sustainability of the project and individuals served.

Applicant Response:

Collaboration with the HRC will be one of the most significant factors for future sustainability. First, CLU-T plans to establish a strong referral system with HRC. Second, CLU-T envisions the HRC to be an advisory organization to guide CLU-T to be compliant with the federal and state level-action plans regarding employment of individuals with I/DD, and to keep it informed of HRC's innovative employment policies and changes. Third, CLU-T plans to seek collaborative partnership with the HRC to develop best practices to support individuals with I/DD in the V-CIE setting, which can be replicable in the non-digital art industry.

10. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 1

Please include details about the history of the organization, its mission or purpose, summary of major programs, services and activities and details about how they tie to the target population. If from a large organization with multiple departments, provide a brief overview of entire organization and then focus on the department or program involved with this proposal. Describe any ongoing collaborative partners in your community.

Applicant Response:

The parent organization of CLU-T, Center For Learning Unlimited (CLU) was founded in 2002 on the belief that every student should have a path forward to learning. To provide neurodiverse school-aged children with highly individualized educational services, CLU purposely chose to stay small-scale, which has proven to be very successful for 23 years.

In 2018, CLU decided to extend its expertise to better support those who entered into adulthood, believing in "Lifelong Learning and Serving." That was why CLU-T was founded with the mission to provide seamless support for young adults with I/DD beyond the school system. Like CLU, CLU-T focuses on serving a small pool of adult clients with intensely CE services so that they are prepared for success in a CIE setting.

Furthermore, CLU-T will also utilize its long-established network with community partners to pioneer more community social inclusion events for young adults to promote well-being of their mental health.

11. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 2

Describe your agency's experience supporting the proposed target population.

Applicant Response:

CLU-T employs a highly-trained instructional staff with more than 30 years of professional work in digital arts, job coaching, and educating neurodiverse individuals. Credentials of staff include Cal Arts with certifications in animation software, and special educational specialists with focus on vocational special education and training in job coaching.

12. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 3

Describe employment (or other relevant services) you currently provide.

CLU-T offers a three-year ETP and one year Partial Day Employment program (PDEP). After completing the ETP, the client transitions to PDEP, which offers two hours of technical training and two hours of soft skills training per day. CLU-T is in the third year of developing data tracking software called Milestones. It collects data to measure client's progress in technical and soft skills, integrated into peer to peer and self-evaluation systems, and overall their satisfaction with career path.

13. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 4

How will the grant help the organization/agency build expertise to support individuals with I/DD to achieve competitive integrated employment?

Applicant Response:

This grant will help CLU-T to continue to refine evidence-based practices to support individuals with I/DD through innovative employment support mechanisms in the V-CIE setting. This grant will also fund continued development of CLU-T's staff members to build expertise to maximize its clients' strength and create replication guidelines for other agencies in remote work environments.

14. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 5

Describe your organization/ agency experience and current capacity to support grant-based activities and reporting.

Applicant Response:

CLU-T has extensive experience to apply and manage private grant funding. However, this is CLU-T's first time applying for public grant funding. CLU-T plans to continue the guidance of an independent grant manager as a subcontractor to support grant-based activities and reporting.

15. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 1

Describe how the organization/agency will recruit participants and/or families for participation in the project.

Applicant Response:

CLU-T anticipates having participants immediately. There are currently 25 clients in CLU-T's ETP and PEDP. 6 clients will complete the PEDP November of 2022 and CLU-T refers to them as their 1st cohort of graduates. Through the exit PCP, 6 clients indicate they will need further support to be a successful digital artist in V-CIE settings and their desire to continue receiving support from CLU-T. Those 6 clients from its first cohort of graduates are expected to be participants for this project. The second cohort of graduates consists of 7-9 clients. They expect to complete ETP by November of 2023 and are expected to be candidates for the project by the 3rd quarter of this project.

16. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 2

Describe how the organization/agency will collaborate with other groups, organizations, employers, and/or agencies to achieve the objective of the project.

CLU- T will collaborate with the Department of Rehabilitation and the Department of Education to serve potential clients with a more comprehensive career plan, incorporating all other career support that benefits the clients. These services will demonstrate the success of CLU-T's data driven, evidence-based CE support. CLU-T will continue to establish strong interagency networks in the HRC catchment areas.

17. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 3

Service Model Transformation Projects must also include a plan to make two community presentations to key stakeholders and community members. The first presentation is to receive feedback about the proposed changes within the agency. The second community presentation is to present the completed action plan. Describe your plan for these two community presentations.

If your project is not Service Model Transformation, please select "N/A"

Applicant Response:

CLU-T plans to make the first community presentation in the 3rd quarter of the first year of and the second one in the 2nd quarter of the second year. The 3rd quarter of the project will focus on cultivating employment opportunities and by the 3rd quarter, it is anticipated that clients will be able to complete 2-3 customized paid art projects. CLU-T plans to report the results from its projects, present quantitative data to measure their progress in employment, and seek feedback from the presentation attendees. The 2nd quarter of the second year of the project will focus on ongoing support plan and evaluation. The second presentation will include updated training curriculum, summary of replication guidelines, and job development plans based on the feedback from the first presentation. Both presentations will invite clients, their family members, HRC staff members, representatives from the chamber of commerce, and the local business owners having needs for digital arts work.

18. Applicant Question: Project Activities

Clearly and specifically state how the schedule of activities demonstrates the steps that the project will take to achieve its stated objective and measures. See Attachment H for instructions on entering objective and activities into GrantVantage.

Applicant Response:

The schedule of activities are designed to be chronologically implemented over 18 months.

Y1Q1: (December 2022-February 2023) - Hiring, onboarding, and training of three Employment Facilitators(EF), Completing workstation, Implementing pre-planning for 7 clients who graduated from CLU-T's ETP

Y1Q2: (March 2023 - May 2023) - Completing a career plan for each client through interviews, home and neighborhood visits, and researching benefits planning query

Y1Q3: (June 2023 - August 2023) - Project supervisor launching advanced technical and soft skill training, Job developer identifying 2-3 paid art projects based on client's career plan, clients collaborating to complete art projects with EF's customized support, Creating video and picture book resumes

Y1Q4: (September 2023 - November 2023) - Clients completing their first art project, project supervisor continuing advanced technical and soft skill training, hosting the first required community presentation

Y2Q1: (December 2023 - February 2024) - Reorganizing the training curriculum for 6 clients who are anticipated to graduate from CLU-T's ETP. Revisiting client's career plan for existing 7 clients based on feedback from the community presentation

Y2Q2: (March 2024 - May 2024) - Hosting the second required community presentation, Completing ongoing support career plans for 9 clients, Creating a replication guide how to support individuals in remote-working environments

19. Applicant Question: Project Data

Provide a clear plan of how data will be collected to track project objectives, activities and measures (e.g., what data collection tools will be used, who will collect, software used, who will summarize, etc.).

CLU-T will use primary data collection methods through its own data tracking software called Milestone.

For qualitative data collection, Milestone involves semi-structured questionnaires and interviews for clients, their family members, and its own staff members. It also tracks CE service team's observation notes on clients. It will also allow clients to answer unstructured questionnaires so that they can express their opinions more freely, leading to more relevant, in-depth, and valid data.

For quantitative data collection, face-to-face interviews and structured surveys will be conducted and results will be stored in Milestone. tracks each client's progress on soft skills and technical skills each day. Daily data collection will identify individual clients' strength and areas for growth. The digital art studio staff will continuously modify and develop the best CE service for each client accordingly. Milestone also includes self-evaluation and peer-to-peer evaluation in order to train clients to strengthen their ability to take ownership of their career progress. All of the information will be converted to numerical and statistical data to be evaluated further via Milestone.

The studio team will analyze the collected data to measure clients' progress and to customize the employment services for each client. The grant management contractor will evaluate data collection results to determine if the grant activities stay on track to meet its objectives.

20. Applicant Question: Budget Template and Narrative

Explain how the project budget is consistent with the stated project objective and activities, and clearly and concisely explain how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design.

Applicant Response:

The budget for this project has been thoroughly reviewed by the grant project team. It will support the proposed activities to achieve our project outcomes.

In the budget template, costs for computers and other related equipment are calculated for 9 participants. The total number of grant-project participants is anticipated to be 15. In July 2022, CLU-T had to purchase 6 computers and equipment to meet the immediate needs of some clients who already completed its Partial Day Program and needed to move into the digital art studio. Therefore, CLU-T seeks funding only for 9 participants through this grant.

Please see the budget template for details.

21. Applicant Question: Budget Costs

Confirm that that budget does not include non-allowable costs or costs funded by other sources. See Attachment D for allowable and non-allowable costs.

Applicant Response:

I Confirm

Section Name: Proposal Certification

Sub Section Name: Certification

1. Applicant Question: Confirm Proposal Discussion with RC(s)

Applicants are required to discuss their proposal with each RC(s) service area to be served. Have you discussed your proposal with each RC you are intending to serve?

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: RC Contact

Applicants are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) service area the applicant is intending to serve. State the name(s) of the contact person(s) at each RC you have discussed your proposal with.

Applicant Response:

Patrick Ruppe, Harbor Regional Center Executive Director

Elizabeth Garcia-Moya, Harbor Regional Center Community Services Manager, Vendorization and Resource Development

Brenda Bane, Harbor Regional Center Provider Relations Specialist

3. Applicant Question: Regional Center Service Provider

If you are a vendored regional center service provider, are you in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4652.5?

If you are a not a vendored regional center service provider, please select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Yes

4. Applicant Question: Confirm review of Standard Measures

DDS has developed standard project measures for each project type. Have you read the guidelines and agree to the standardized measures for your project type. See <u>Attachment C</u> for Standard Project Measures.

Applicant Response:

Yes

5. Applicant Question: Applicant Certification

By submitting this application, the applicant is certifying the truth and accuracy of the proposal. The applicant also certifies that if you have subcontracting organizations, each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget.

Applicant Response:

Yes