

**Section 1:**

Name of Applicant: Heather J. Williamson

Name of Person Filling out Application (can answer questions): Heather J. Williamson

Email and Phone of Responsible Person: [heather.williamson@nau.edu](mailto:heather.williamson@nau.edu); Office (928) 523-2031; Cell (813) 924-9481

Address: PO Box 4065

City, State, Zip: Flagstaff, AZ 86005

## **Section 2: Narrative Response and Attachments:**

- 1. Provide a one-page Executive Summary of proposed project. Include the following: What is the intent of the project; Who is targeted; Explain how the project impacts the I/DD community; What data has been collected to state this is a problem to address; and What is the overall cost to carry out your project for one year.**

What is the intent of the project and what data has been collected? Due to a history of marginalization in the United States, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) are underemployed as compared to their peers without I/DD [1-2]. A recent report from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (Council) found that 72% of Arizonans without a disability were employed as compared to 36% with a disability and 26% with a cognitive disability [3]. Moreover, an Arizona-based report called *The Graduation Cliff: Improving the Post School Outcomes of Students with Disabilities*, found that individuals with I/DD in Arizona are overwhelmingly more likely to be employed in jobs which require in-person completion of job duties (i.e. retail, food service, or other site-based labor) as opposed to technology enabled jobs [4]. Therefore, it is very likely that their job prospects have been reduced due to COVID-19.

Individuals with I/DD already face a digital divide compared to their peers without I/DD, and as such are not prepared to enter a technology-enabled workforce [5]. This inequity in access to employment is a health equity issue as gainful employment for individuals with developmental disabilities has been linked to improved health and quality of life [6-11]. Moreover, a 2020 survey from the Council among 245 adults with developmental disabilities in Arizona identified access to gainful employment as a top priority [12]. The project team will utilize an existing technology job skill building program for neurodiverse adults, Daivergent, to implement and evaluate its ability to increase opportunities for technology-based employment for adults with I/DD in Arizona. The Daivergent program provides personalized online training for 21st century technology job skills and also offers social skills and peer support. Adults with I/DD in the program will be provided accessible, universally designed training as well as individualized support through Daivergent.

Who is targeted? Twelve adults with I/DD will access Daivergent services for up to 9 months with the ultimate goal of being placed in technology-based employment opportunities. The project will undergo a multi-level evaluation involving the adults with I/DD enrolled in the project (N=12), the support person for each adult with I/DD in the project (N=12), and the Daivergent training coaches (N=6), all completing individual interviews regarding the project's processes and outcomes. Additionally, Daivergent programmatic data for each adult with I/DD will be reviewed.

How will the project impact the I/DD community? Employment among individuals with I/DD is associated with improved (self-rated) physical health, mental health, self-esteem, self-confidence, quality of life, and independence [6-11]. As per the Council's summer 2020 survey of individuals with developmental disabilities in Arizona, individuals with developmental disabilities identified gainful employment as a top 3 priority ("A job in my community where I am respected and valued.") [12]. If funded, this pilot project will provide training to a dozen individuals with I/DD to assist them in gaining meaningful employment. By demonstrating that adults with I/DD can learn high-technology skills and both obtain and sustain employment with companies operating in technology-enabled industries, this project can offer new avenues of opportunity to Arizonans represented by the Council. It will address a fundamental need in the I/DD community and address one of the Council's key priorities.

What is the overall cost? \$48,843 (Total direct & ADDPC indirect costs); \$16,281 (In-kind match)

- 2. Describe your program in the first year. Include the following information: Activities or strategies that will be used, your target population and expected numbers to reach, how outreach to unserved and/or underserved populations or areas of the state will be conducted, who is responsible for major activities, and other information on program design. Also describe how barriers will be addressed.**

Project Activities and Strategies: In the first three months of the project (quarter 1), we will bring together our Community Advisory Board (CAB) monthly to assist with project planning, developing evaluation tools, designing processes for recruitment and obtaining the Northern Arizona University's Institutional Review Board's approval for evaluation activities. This will include identifying best practices for the recruitment of the project's target population: 12 adults with I/DD to participate in the Daivergent program. We anticipate outreach to unserved and/or underserved populations will occur through already existing employment and/or disability service programs for adults with I/DD in northern Arizona. We will leverage our partnerships with the Council, The Arc of Arizona, the Northern Arizona Community of Practice Transition Team, and Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation to reach underserved adults with I/DD in northern Arizona. Interested adults with I/DD will be enrolled in Daivergent's services for a duration of 9 months. Prior to beginning the Daivergent program, each participant with I/DD will complete an informed consent document, which will review all evaluation data that will be collected including Daivergent programmatic data and qualitative data from interviews.

The universally designed Daivergent program will provide a personalized plan for the 12 adults throughout the 9 month duration (quarters 2-4). This will consist of strengths-based assessments and interest evaluations, video-based training modules for job readiness and social skills, virtual work simulations of common technology-enabled jobs, and pairing with an online coach who is responsible for ensuring that the adults are progressing through the personalized plan. This upskilling content is provided by Daivergent, and the personalized plan can also accommodate additional third-party support person training materials based on the needs of the participating adult. Furthermore, the online coach will conduct regular meetings (e.g. twice a week) with the participant via video conferencing/text chat, and record progress notes for service providers and other affiliates of the participants (e.g. in-person job coaches, family members, etc.) to enable members of the participant's support network to support the participant on their work readiness upskilling journey. In the final 3 months (quarter 4) of the personalized plan, the Daivergent platform will connect participants to prospective job roles and work opportunities tailored to their performance.

During the second and third quarter of the program, the CAB will meet monthly to continue to monitor program progression. Finally, in the fourth quarter, the CAB will meet monthly and oversee the project team activities which will involve completing both process and outcome evaluation of the effectiveness of Daivergent services for developing technology-based work skills. Ideally, we will have 12 individuals with I/DD gainfully employed in technology-enabled jobs at the end of the year. The CAB will meet again at the end of the project to review project results and discuss options for program sustainability documented in a future implementation plan.

Responsibility for major activities: Mr. Byran Dai will be primarily responsible for overseeing the Daivergent program implementation and will assist with CAB facilitation activities. Dr. Heather Williamson, Mr. Jon Meyers, and Mr. Russ Randall will oversee formation and engagement of the CAB and all recruitment activities. Dr. Heather Williamson will oversee the evaluation process

including any required approval from the Northern Arizona University institutional review board. Dr. Williamson will also supervise up to three entry-level occupational therapy doctoral students who will assist with data collection and analysis activities.

Potential barriers and how they will be addressed: As in any project trying to reach underserved individuals, the project team may encounter issues with recruitment. If this occurs, the project team will consult more frequently with CAB members to identify alternative recruitment strategies. If an individual is recruited later in the project timeline, the project team will consult with the Council requesting an extension of the budget timeline to ensure the ability of the individual to access Daivergent's services for the full 9 months. The project team has budgeted for the purchase of required hardware and software for all 12 individuals with I/DD. As individuals with I/DD may or may not have good internet access in their homes, the project team has also budgeted for hotspots and required data to utilize Daivergent's services. Finally, some individuals with I/DD may require additional assistive technology to utilize a computer. In these cases, the project team will work with Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP). AzTAP can provide one-on-one consultation through its employment and assistive technology programs to address assistive technology needs of individuals with I/DD [13].

### **3. Describe community partners involved and their role in this project.**

#### Project Core Community Partner Staff:

Mr. Byran Dai is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Daivergent. Founded in 2017, Daivergent's mission is to "to support the autism spectrum and developmental disability community in work readiness training, allowing them to successfully pursue their professional aspirations [14]." Mr. Dai has an extensive career within healthcare technology and data science. He has substantial experience working alongside national, state, and local service provider partners to develop vocational readiness capacity within their organizations. Mr. Dai founded Daivergent as he saw limited opportunities for his brother, who is on the autism spectrum, to find employment. Since starting Daivergent, the program has successfully provided work opportunities to 576 individuals with I/DD across 137 service providers in the US. Mr. Byran Dai will help with CAB engagement and will be primarily responsible for overseeing the Daivergent program implementation.

Mr. Jon Meyers is the Executive Director of The Arc of Arizona, providing policy and practice leadership to advocate for the rights and full community inclusion of all Arizonans with I/DD. Mr. Meyers will collaborate with the project team to oversee the formation and engagement of the CAB and will assist with recruitment and evaluation activities.

For over 35 years, Mr. Russ Randall has mentored and case managed students with special needs and instructed them in secondary level Special Education classes. In 2008, Mr. Randall developed a Transition from School to Work program for the Flagstaff Unified School District, collaborating with Arizona Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation to provide enhanced transition services to youth with I/DD in our community. Mr. Randall is also an active advocate in the community, serving on multiple committees and commissions that advocate for youth and adults with disabilities. Mr. Randall will collaborate with the project team to oversee the formation and engagement of the CAB and will assist with recruitment and evaluation activities.

### Project Community Advisory Board Members:

Ms. Kelly Arnold is the Chair of the Northern Arizona Community of Practice Transition Team (NACoPTT). The NACoPTT includes representatives from the following groups/organizations: Arizona Department of Education; Coconino Community College; Division of Developmental Disabilities; Elite Community Services, LLC; Flagstaff Unified School District Transition to Work Program; Hozhoni Foundation; Northern Arizona University; Over the Rainbow Butterfly Garden; Quality Connections; and Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition to her role on the NACoPTT, Ms. Arnold is also the Employment Services Director at Quality Connections. Quality Connections has a stated mission to “help individuals with disabilities become independent, productive members of our community by providing them with employment opportunities, job training, and practical life learning programs.” Ms. Arnold is motivated to serve on the CAB as she sees the need for more technology-based job opportunities. Ms. Arnold will be able to contribute to the project recruitment efforts through her leadership role on the NACoPTT and at Quality Connections.

Mr. Leon Campbell is a self-advocate and a Special Projects Associate at Daivergent. Mr. Campbell initially completed the Daivergent individualized training program as a college internship before transitioning into a full time employee at Daivergent. He has previously served as a representative for Daivergent users to the Daivergent Executive team. Mr. Campbell will provide important insights on recruitment ideas and best practices for designing the program evaluation of Daivergent.

Mr. Jason Snead is the Research and Communications Specialist at the Council. As a self-advocate, Mr. Snead has worked in Arizona to improve programs and services for individuals with I/DD. Mr. Snead holds a Juris Doctorate and will play a critical role in assisting with the design of the program implementation and evaluation.

Mr. Joseph Spence is a self-advocate and also Vice-Chair of the NACoPTT. Mr. Spence is currently in the Coconino High School Transition from School to Work program and has been unable to work at his place of employment (Continental Country Club) since March, due to COVID-19. Mr. Spence is personally motivated to serve on the CAB as he feels that technical training designed to be accessible will increase his and other individuals' (with I/DD) potential for being employed.

Mr. Abel Young is the Statewide Transition Coordinator and will represent the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Vocational Rehabilitation program. He will assist with distributing the information about the project to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. He will also work with the project team to identify strategies for potentially embedding Daivergent services as an ongoing option available to individuals with I/DD who access Vocational Rehabilitation services in the future.

**4. Describe how feedback from participants, family members or other stakeholders will be gathered and used as you design your project and make changes to it during the implementation phase.**

A Community Advisory Board (CAB) will be formed to oversee all project activities. The CAB members, who were described in the previous section, will meet monthly to help oversee all project activities, including planning, implementation, and evaluation activities. Two members of the CAB are self-advocates who either have been or could be potential Daivergent clients. Two members of the CAB are directly involved in employment services for adults with I/DD. Finally, the CAB also includes representation of the Council.

During the planning phase for recruitment, the CAB will work to develop a screening process for identifying interested adults with I/DD. The screening process will ensure the potential participating adult with I/DD's interests match with Daivergent's available services. The CAB will also help with the design and implementation of the program's evaluation. Since the CAB will be meeting monthly, there will be ample opportunities to make changes to the project over time as the CAB finds necessary.

The CAB meetings will be hosted via Zoom and plans for reasonable accommodations will be made as necessary. Zoom has built-in accessibility features including: customizing font size of the chat; automated closed captioning; screen reader accessibility; keyboard shortcuts; rearranging videos; and multi-spotlight and multi-pinning of speakers. Zoom is also compliant with the following standards: WCAG 2.1 AA, Revised Section 508 Standards; and EN 301 549 Accessibility Requirements [15].

**5. Describe the evaluation process to capture data. Who will be in charge, what data methods will be used and what types of data will be collected. How will the data be used after funding for one year?**

Who will be in charge? Dr. Heather Williamson, with guidance from the CAB, will oversee the evaluation process. This will include obtaining required Northern Arizona University Institutional Review Board approval. Up to three Northern Arizona University entry-level occupational therapy doctoral students will be responsible for completing the interviews. Dr. Williamson will provide required training on interview methods to the students. After the interviews are complete, Dr. Williamson will work with the students to complete the qualitative data analysis. Dr. Williamson will also work with Mr. Dai to oversee the review of Daivergent programmatic data to develop the case studies.

What data methods will be used and what types of data will be collected? Following previous examples of obtaining informed consent with individuals with I/DD, the informed consent materials will be modified using the concepts of universal design to meet communication skill level of individuals with I/DD and other participants who may have non-disclosed literacy limitations [16-17]. The informed consent document will use everyday words, short sentences, active voice, imagery and teach-back questions, to ensure participants understand the benefits and risks of participating in the project. Consent forms will be read to all individuals interested in participating in the project. The teach-back process includes asking questions at the end of the consent paperwork to the individual consenting to join the project to ensure understanding. The teach-back questions proposed for use

include: Please tell me in your own words: 1) What is this project about? 2) What will you be doing if you take part in this project?; 3) What are the risks of being in this project?; 4) When I say your choice to join the project is voluntary, what does that mean?; and 5) What can you do if you start the project but don't want to finish? Among individuals with I/DD with guardians, the researchers will review the consent form with their guardians first. After receiving the guardian's consent for the potential participant, the researchers will discuss the project with the individual with I/DD in order to get their assent. All participants (adults with I/DD, support person, Daivergent coaches) will undergo the same informed consent process.

During the fourth quarter of the project, we will complete individual semi-structured interviews with the adults with I/DD (N=12) who enroll in the 9-month Daivergent program. The interviews will cover their overall experience with the Daivergent services and their plans for obtaining a technology based job. Previous employment research among individuals with I/DD in Arizona also found that families or friends were integral in assisting individuals with I/DD in gaining employment [4]. Therefore, we will also complete individual semi-structured interviews with a support person (N=12) for each adult with I/DD who enrolls in the Daivergent program. Each adult with I/DD in the program will nominate the support person they would like to be interviewed. This support person could be a family member, friend or paid professional. The interviews will cover the overall experience with the Daivergent services. We will also complete individual semi-structured interviews with Daivergent coaching staff (N=6) who provided direct support to the 12 adults with I/DD in the program. The interviews will cover the overall experience with providing Daivergent services to adults with I/DD.

The framework method will be used to structure the analysis of data from the interviews. The framework method guides the research team through seven stages in the qualitative analysis including: transcription, familiarization with the data, coding, developing a working analytic framework, applying the analytic framework, charting the data into the framework matrix, and interpreting the data [18]. The framework method encourages the constant comparative method in developing and applying the analytic framework and in charting the data to the framework matrix. All qualitative data analysis will be supported by NVivo 12, which is available through NAU resources at no cost [19].

In addition to the qualitative evaluation data, the project team will also have access to Daivergent's data on each of the 12 participants with I/DD regarding their progress through the program. This data includes a strengths-based assessment, interest evaluation, and weekly progress notes for each program participant. Outcome data regarding improvement in vocational skills, work opportunities explored and job attainment will also be tracked in the evaluation. Mr. Dai, with guidance from the CAB, will oversee all Daivergent data collection and summary analysis. A case study of each program participant's experience with Daivergent program will be completed using their Daivergent data and results of their relative qualitative interviews.

How will the data be used after funding for one year? Beyond the first year of the project, the interviews, Daivergent data, and case study results will be shared with the Council, with Daivergent (for program development), and with the broader community, with all personally identifying information concealed, to share opportunities and lessons learned regarding future technology-based employment opportunities for adults with I/DD in Arizona.

**6. If funding for year 2 will be available by the ADDPC, describe any new changes that could be implemented in Year 2, including program design, target numbers, collaborators, implementation, staffing, evaluation, and other activities.**

Results of year one will be used to design new activities for year two. The CAB will discuss options for program continuation and expansion in year two over the course of the project's first year. With a similar level of funding, we would anticipate an additional 12 adults with I/DD would participate in the Daivergent program in year two for up to 9 months. However, we may find that 9 months of Daivergent services are not required for every individual with I/DD. If individuals with I/DD can achieve desired outcomes in less than 9 months, then we could expand the program to serve more than 12 adults with I/DD in year two. We would anticipate completing a similar evaluation process. However, the evaluation methods may be modified based on lessons learned from year one.

There is potential to add additional collaborators on the project in year two as well. In 2020, Northern Arizona University's Institute for Human Development received a five-year Department of Education grant under *The Model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* (TPSID) program. The program (Grant # P407A200082) is titled *Supporting Inclusive Practices in Colleges* (SIP-C) and is working to support students with I/DD in their transition to postsecondary education in Arizona. SIP-C plans to support up to 80 individuals with I/DD in Arizona and there is potential to embed Daivergent's program as one of the many post-secondary educational opportunities in which they can participate while being supported in the SIP-C program. A representative from Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation program is already involved as a member of the CAB during the first year of the project. Over the course of the first year, opportunities for leveraging the vocational rehabilitation program as a partner in year two will be explored. Some of the options available for exploration include Daivergent becoming a contracted Vocational Rehabilitation provider or Vocational Rehabilitation being used to support Daivergent as a post-secondary educational program offering. Another collaborative partner in year two could be Arizona's Career and Technical Education Districts (CTED). The CTEDs are educational districts that offer high school career and technical education programs to partner school districts in their region. There are currently 14 CTEDs across the state [20].

**7. Describe other sources of funds that are committed to support the project. Could this project continue without ADDPC funding?**

The Institute for Human Development at Northern Arizona University also received a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The grant funded program, *Arizona Coalition for Transition Success (AzCTS)*, is convening stakeholders to develop a plan for making Arizona a "No Wrong Door" state for youth with I/DD transitioning out of high school. The goal is to create more seamless processes to promote the successful transition of youth with I/DD into their desired post-secondary education and/or employment opportunities. As part of the planning process, Daivergent could be included under the umbrella of the Vocational Rehabilitation or CTED programs in the state. There is a possibility that the Daivergent program could continue in Arizona without ADDPC funding if it could become an approved Vocational Rehabilitation vendor, partner with



CTEDs, and/or be supported through Vocational Rehabilitation as a post-secondary education program. The Daivergent program aligns with job training services provided by Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation vendors. Currently, Vocational Rehabilitation offers open and continuous contracts to vendors interested in providing job training services.

In addition, private funding from foundation or corporate sources may be solicited by the project partners to broaden both the scope of this project and the availability of Daivergent's resources for individuals with I/DD seeking technological training. Through the initial year of project activities, potential funders will be identified and funding relationships explored, as appropriate. Finally, individuals with I/DD in Arizona could also self-select and pay out-of-pocket to enroll in the Daivergent program. Since Daivergent services and supports are provided remotely and they place individuals with I/DD in work-from-home technology-based positions, their services are readily available to individuals with I/DD throughout Arizona.

### References

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8. **Attachment 1:** Provide an Implementation Plan that lists out sequentially the key activities to undertake in the next year. At a minimum, the implementation plan shall list the key task, the party that is responsible, when it will be completed (date) and by what method you will know completion is met (measurement). **[See attached]**

9. **Attachment 2:** Provide a 12-month Budget Request and Match. Use the Budget Summary Form and provide a detail budget narrative for both requested dollars and match. **[See attached]**

10. **Attachment 3:** Provide a list of key staff and briefly summarize the job responsibilities for this grant. List any training or certification required for staff in the upcoming year. Ensure personnel costs are appropriately allocated for in the Budget. Do not attach resumes. **[See attached]**

11. **Attachment 4:** Provide at least one current Letter of Support from collaborators that are on their company letterhead. **[See attached]**

Williamson et al. application (Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment)

8. **Attachment 1:** Provide an Implementation Plan that lists out sequentially the key activities to undertake in the next year. At a minimum, the implementation plan shall list the key task, the party that is responsible, when it will be completed (date) and by what method you will know completion is met (measurement).

Key Task	Person/People Responsible	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Outcome Expected for Completion Status
Formation of CAB	Dai, Meyers, Randall, Williamson	X				CAB established, monthly meeting minutes
CAB Meetings	Dai, Meyers, Randall, Williamson	X	X	X	X	Monthly CAB meeting minutes and action items.
Recruitment	Meyers, Randall, Williamson	X				12 adults with I/DD recruited
Daivergent Services Provided	Dai		X	X	X	9 months of receiving individualized Daivergent programming
Daivergent Data Collection	Dai		X	X	X	Case study report of each adult with I/DD
CAB design evaluation instruments	Williamson, NAU OTD students	X				Evaluation instrument completed
Obtain NAU IRB approval for interviews	Williamson, NAU OTD students	X				Documentation of NAU IRB approval
Complete Interview data collection and analysis	Williamson, NAU OTD students				X	12 adults with I/DD, 12 support people, 6 Daivergent coaches interviews documented
Create	Dai,				X	Summary report of

Williamson et al. application (Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment)

evaluation summary report	Meyers, Randall, Williamson					Daivergent and qualitative data for dissemination
CAB Review Evaluation Results and Plan for Future Implementation	Dai, Meyers, Randall, Williamson				X	Future Implementation Plan

## 9. Attachment 2: Budget Request Form

Contractor Name: ABOR for and on behalf of Northern Arizona University

Contractor Address: 525 S. Beaver St PO Box #4130 Flagstaff AZ 86011  
Street Address City State Zip

Project Name: Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment

Budget Category	Requested ADDPC Funds	Non-Federal Cash Match	Non-Federal In-Kind Match	Total Program Cost
Personnel/Salaries	3,150			3,150
Fringe Benefits	1,011			1,011
Supplies / Operating Expenses	37,242			37,242
Travel	-			-
Rent or Cost of Space	-			-
Contracted Services / Professional Services	3,000			3,000
Administrative / Indirect Costs	4,440		16,281	20,721
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>48,843</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,281</b>	<b>65,124</b>

It is understood that Non-Federal Funds identified in this budget will be used to match only ADDPC Federal Funds, and will not be used to match any other Federal Funds during the period of the ADDPC funded Project.

Additional description and background information shall be included as a budget narrative, including for match. The contractor agrees to submit additional background information to the ADDPC upon request.

Samaneh Moeini Sedeh  
Name of Certifying Official

Pre-Award Research Admin, Lead  
Title of Certifying Official

928-523-4880 NAU-OSP@nau.edu  
Phone Email

## Budget Justification

**Project Title:** Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment

**Funding Agency:** Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

### Personnel Salaries

**Heather J. Williamson, DrPH (0.36 person calendar months)**, as a 12-month appointed faculty member will serve as PI on the project. Dr. Williamson will oversee all project activities including the project planning, implementation and evaluation activities. Total salary: \$3,150

### **Fringe Benefits also known as Employee-Related Expenses (ERE)**

*Employee related expenses (ERE) are rounded estimates based on the projected cost of health, dental, life, disability, FICA and Medicare, unemployment, and retirement benefits relative to the employee's salary and/or wages, FTE, and election of benefits. The ERE rate is calculated by dividing the employee's salary by the total cost of his/her/their benefit package. Dr. Williamson's ERE rate is 32.1%. Total fringe: \$1,011*

Total Personnel Costs: \$4,161

### Supplies/Operating Expenses

**Daivergent Services.** The project will require access to Daivergent resources and will purchase standard software licenses for up to 12 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The Daivergent per person license includes individualized support for: accessing remote work opportunities, job development and match, skills tests and screenings, organizational-level reporting, individual-level reporting, vocational coaching support, Daivergent proprietary trainings, and professional development trainings. These licenses are inclusive of sixty minutes of individualized virtual in-person support plus sixty minutes of text support per week. Cost is \$198 per month per user. Twelve adults with I/DD will have individualized supports and services through Daivergent for up to 9 months each. Total cost: \$21,384

**Daivergent Hardware Package.** Daivergent will provide their hardware bundles, which includes a laptop, mouse, headset with microphone, and wrist guard for \$919 per person. All 12 adults with I/DD will receive the hardware package. Total cost: \$11,028

**Other Software.** Individual licenses for Microsoft 365 will be provided for all 12 adults with I/DD for one year. Each license has a yearly cost of \$69.99. Total cost: \$840

**Hotspots & Data.** Data usage estimates include 10 GB/month plan for each adult with I/DD enrolled in the program. Given the typical Zoom usage of 500MB - 1 GB per hour, along with the reliance on video streaming for much of the Daivergent online coursework, this amount of data and hotspot access will be required per person. We plan to use Hotspot and data packages from MetroPCS in partnership with T-Mobile; however, alternative, equivalent devices/systems may be used based upon project needs, as determined jointly by the PI and funder. Anticipated per month cost per user is \$30 for up to 12 adults with I/DD for 9 months. Total cost: \$3,240

**Incentives.** In order to evaluate the program experience and outcomes, individual interviews will be completed with 12 adults with I/DD enrolled in the program, 12 support individuals for the adults with I/DD enrolled in the program, and 6 Daivergent coaches facilitating the program. Each person will get a \$25 gift card for their time to complete the interview. Total cost: \$750

Total Supplies/Operating Expenses: \$37,242

### Contracted Services/Professional Services

**Consultant.** Jon Meyers, Executive Director of The Arc of Arizona, will serve as a consultant on the project assisting with project planning, implementation and evaluation activities. Forty work hours of Mr. Meyers time are requested at an hourly rate of \$75. Total cost: \$3,000

Total Contracted Services/Professional Services: \$3,000

**Administrative/Indirect Costs**

ADDPC maximum allowable indirect rate is 10% of total direct costs, and this amount is requested.

Total Direct Costs: \$44,403

Total Administrative/Indirect Costs: \$4,440

Total Funds Requested: \$48,843

**In-Kind Match.**

Funder requires match of 25% of total project costs, permitting the use of unrecovered indirect as a form of match.

Typically, project indirect costs would be requested at 52% Modified TDC for the on-campus Organized Research rate in accordance with Northern Arizona University's approved Colleges and Universities Rate Agreement (March 16, 2017) (Cognizant Agency: Department of Health and Human Services). However, due to the required ADDPC indirect rate cap of 10% TDC, only 10% TDC are claimed above.

Thus, \$16,281 portion of the unrecovered indirect costs is hereby claimed as project match, equating to 25% of total project costs.

Total Project Cost: \$65,124

Total Unrecovered Indirect Claimed as In-Kind Match: \$16,281

Williamson et al. application (Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment)

10. **Attachment 3:** Provide a list of key staff and briefly summarize the job responsibilities for this grant. List any training or certification required for staff in the upcoming year. Ensure personnel costs are appropriately allocated for in the Budget. Do not attach resumes.

Dr. Heather Williamson is an Assistant Professor at Northern Arizona University in the Department of Occupational Therapy, the Center for Health Equity Research and an affiliate faculty member of the Institute for Human Development. For this project Dr. Williamson will:

- Oversee the entire project from project design, implementation and evaluation stages.
- Be responsible for managing the project budget.
- Be the project's main point of contact for the ADDPC.
- Lead the evaluation processes including any required approval from the Northern Arizona University institutional review board.
- Mentor up to three entry-level occupational therapy doctoral (OTD) students who will assist with data collection and analysis activities. Dr. Williamson and the OTD students will have all required NAU institutional review board training and required certificates up to date over the course of the project. Dr. Williamson has expertise in qualitative methods, inclusive research and community-engaged research [1-4]. Italics in reference list below indicates a student co-author.

1. **Williamson, H.J., Brennan, A., Tress, S., Joseph, D., & Baldwin, J.A.** (2019). Exploring health and wellness among Native American adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their family caregivers. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. 00:1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12664>
2. **Williamson, H.J., Armin, J., Stakely, E., Nasimi, B., Joseph, D.H., Meyer, J., & Baldwin, J.A.** (2020). Community-engaged research to address health disparities of Indigenous women with disabilities, *Annals of International Occupational Therapy*. <https://doi.org/10.3928/24761222-20201202-02>
3. **Williamson, H.J., Chief, C., Jiménez, D., Begay, A., Milner, T.F., Sullivan, S., Torres, E., Remiker, M., Longorio, A.E.S., Sabo, S. & Tufel-Shone, N.I.** (2020). Voices of community partners: Perspectives gained from conversations of community-based participatory research experiences. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17, 5245. doi:10.3390/ijerph17145245
4. **Williamson, H. J., van Heumen, L., & Schwartz, A. E.** (2020). Photovoice with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities: Lessons learned from inclusive research efforts. *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice*, 3(1): 8, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.33596/coll.45>



Williamson et al. application (Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment)

12. **Attachment 4:** Provide at least one current Letter of Support from collaborators that are on their company letterhead.

Letters of support are attached from the following:

- Kelly Arnold, NACoPTT & Quality Connections
- Leon Cambell, self-advocate experienced with and employed at Daivergent
- Kristen Mackey, Program Administrator, Arizona Department of Economic Security Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Jon Meyers, The Arc of Arizona
- Joseph Spence, NACoPTT & self-advocate



1/19/2021

Dear Dr. Heather Williamson,

As the Chair of the Northern Arizona Community of Practice Transition Team (NACoPTT), I am enthusiastically writing this letter of support to demonstrate our commitment to your Arizona Developmental Disability Planning Council grant titled, *Technology-Based Employment for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities In Arizona*.


The NACoPTT includes representatives from the following groups/organizations:

- Arizona Department of Education
- Coconino Community College
- Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Elite Community Services, LLC
- Flagstaff Unified School District Transition to Work Programs
- Hozhoni Foundation employment services
- Northern Arizona University
- Over the Rainbow Butterfly Garden
- Quality Connections
- Vocational Rehabilitation

The NACoPTT will assist with the following activities to support your project:

- Assist with recruitment by sharing information about the project through our membership organizations
- Provide oversight on program evaluation

We look forward to assisting with this project's success.

Sincerely,  
DocuSigned by:  
  
99032E4B53B64C2...  
Kelly Arnold



<https://daivergent.com/>

01-28-2021

Dear Dr. Heather Williamson,

As a self-advocate and employee of Daivergent, I am gladly writing this letter of support to demonstrate my commitment to your Arizona Developmental Disability Planning Council grant titled, *Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology Enabled Employment*.

I understand that the goal of the project would be to have 12 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities enroll in Daivergent's personalized technology-enabled job training program for 9 months. Ultimately, the project would like to have all 12 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities working from home in tech-based jobs.

In my role, I understand that I can assist the project in the following ways:

- Provide oversight on program implementation and evaluation by serving on the advisory board for the project, which will meet monthly over the duration of the one year project

I look forward to hearing the great news that this project is awarded funding and with assisting with this project's success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leon Campbell".

Leon Campbell  
Daivergent



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY  
*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

Douglas A. Ducey  
Governor

Michael Wisehart  
Director

January 25, 2021

Dr. Heather J. Williamson  
Assistant Professor  
Occupational Therapy Program  
Center for Health Equity Research  
Northern Arizona University  
Post Office Box 4065  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86011

Dear Dr. Williamson,

As the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration's (AZ RSA) Administrator, I am gladly writing this letter of support to demonstrate the RSA – Vocational Rehabilitation program's support for your Arizona Developmental Disability Planning Council grant titled, *Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment*.

We understand that the goal of the project would be to have 12 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities enroll in Daivergent's personalized technology-enabled job training program for nine months. Ultimately, the project would like to have all 12 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities working from home in tech-based jobs.

I understand that AZ RSA can assist the project in the following ways:

- Sharing information about the project with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to assist with recruitment of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Provide oversight on program implementation and evaluation by assigning staff to serve on the advisory board for the project, which will meet monthly over the duration of the one-year project.

I look forward to hearing the positive news that this project is awarded funding and aiding with this project's success.

Sincerely,

*Kristen Mackey*

Kristen Mackey  
Program Administrator  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

26 January 2021

Heather Williamson, DrPH  
Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator  
Occupational Therapy Program  
Northern Arizona University  
PO Box 4065  
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear Dr. Williamson:

Thank you for inviting The Arc of Arizona to collaborate with Northern Arizona University on your proposal, *Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment*, to the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. The Arc is committed to creative, integrated approaches to increasing competitive employment and positive post-secondary outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Your proposal, with its focus on teaching valuable technology skills to individuals in underserved geographic areas and from underserved populations – skills that in today's world can be utilized by anyone regardless of location – clearly seeks to establish an innovative and effective pilot, a worthy objective.

The Arc of Arizona promotes and protects the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community. We are the only community-based non-profit working for people with I/DD throughout their lifetimes and across all diagnoses – from autism to Down syndrome to Fragile X and more than 100 other developmental disabilities. Since 1958, The Arc of Arizona has been at the forefront of the movement to build greater opportunity and greater inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities statewide – including the movement that supports and encourages people with I/DD to make their voices heard, to influence policies that affect them, and to determine the course of their own lives.

We are confident the experience and expertise of our organization make us a good fit to collaborate on, and commit to, your proposal. The Arc of Arizona will be pleased to play a role in this partnership, if funded, and we agree to sign the Memorandum of Understanding as well as to participate in the working group with other collaborators throughout the project year and beyond. We believe that the project will be strengthened by the knowledge and capabilities our organization will bring to this enterprise.

Further, as Executive Director of The Arc of Arizona, I also commit to the role of project consultant, and will take the lead on aspects of this endeavor detailed in the project proposal and budget. These tasks will best align our skills and expertise to the needs of the project. We are interested in bringing The Arc's collective experience and wisdom to the group and the project, to work collaboratively in implementing activities and meeting objectives in an efficient, knowledgeable, and culturally responsive manner.



We wish you the best of success with the funding of this proposal. Please keep me informed if there are further developments, and thank you again for the opportunity to collaborate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Meyers'.

Jon Meyers Executive  
Director

January 27, 2021

Dear Dr. Heather Williamson,

As the Vice-Chair of the Northern Arizona Community of Practice Transition Team (NACoPTT), and as a potential participant in Daivergent's training program if the grant were to be funded by the ADDPC, I am writing this letter of support to demonstrate my support for your Arizona Developmental Disability Planning Council grant titled, *Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment*.

As a differently-abled person, I know first-hand the tremendous need for technical training programs such as Daivergent's in the state of Arizona. As we have seen during the current pandemic, differently-abled persons often achieve employment at worksites that put them at physical risk or lay them off when business slows down or ends. I myself have been unable to work at my place of employment (Continental Country Club) since March. Technical training designed to be accessible to differently-abled persons, training that will increase our employability, is desperately needed in our state.

The NACoPTT (and I as an individual) will assist with the following activities to support your project:

- Assist with recruitment by sharing information about the project through our membership organizations
- Provide oversight on program implementation and evaluation by serving on the advisory board for the project, which will meet monthly over the duration of the one-year project

I look forward to assisting with this project's success.

Thank you,

**Joseph Spence**

Joseph Spence  
NACoPTT Vice-Chair  
Coconino HS Senior

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions regarding our ADDPC proposal titled, *Bridging the Employment Gap for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through Technology-Enabled Employment*.

The ADDPC questions and our responses are addressed below:

**1. Who will be targeted for enrollment in Daivergent? Are they all coming from N. Arizona or tribal communities? What age range are you considering? Is this program only for adults with autism or other I/DD?**

Adults, ages 18+ with I/DD in northern Arizona are the primary target group. This could include individuals who identify as Native American. Our outreach efforts will be intentionally broad, designed to engage diverse communities across the region. We will place particular emphasis on attracting applicants from communities typically underserved and underrepresented, such as Native Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. We don't have an upper limit to our age range, but we expect our participants to be younger (18-30 years of age). The program is for adults with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, which includes adults with autism spectrum disorder.

**2. What are the eligibility criteria that will be used to determine if the participant that is recruited is a good fit for this program? How much education does a participant need to have to be recruited?**

We do not plan on requiring active Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) enrollment to be able to join this pilot program. We will develop a screening process with our Community Advisory Board which will work to ensure the Daivergent program is a good match for the skills and employment interests of individuals with I/DD who are potential participants.

Daivergent is using its longstanding experience with multiple I/DD serving groups, including 11 chapters of The Arc, The Arc of the U.S., Autism Society (Inland Empire/Ozarks), and Goodwill (Silicon Valley), as the basis for eligibility criteria for this project. The proposed eligibility criteria include: an interest from the participant in remote/online work; basic computer literacy defined as ability to log into common websites like YouTube and being able to search on Google; and very basic reading/writing comprehension skills. Daivergent's platform provides education on its platform to upskill participants with I/DD to become proficient in the skills defined in the program, and does not expect participants to have prior experience in remote work.

**3. Will there be a control group to compare the outcomes of these 12 individuals to? For example, can VR pull those with I/DD who are not undergoing this program but working on IT jobs to compare to?**

In this small pilot project, we are not planning on having a control group in our evaluation. At this stage of an intervention evaluation, pilot data is needed to plan for a larger project that could then include a control group.



We have representation from the state of Arizona's VR agency on our project team and will look to our VR-affiliated partners for insights on information technology (IT) based work for individuals with I/DD. If possible, the project team would be willing to review cases of those individuals in VR services who are in technology based jobs now in Arizona and make comparisons to those who participate in Daivergent services.

The main outcome we hope to achieve with this project is 12 adults with I/DD successfully trained through the Daivergent platform, and then those adults obtaining technology based work. Our project is intended to identify first steps required to implement strategies for promoting these types of work opportunities for adults with I/DD, addressing gaps in employment for Arizonans with I/DD.

**4. It's not clear what the deliverables are. How will the outcomes be used to inform change? Will there be a document to be produced and disseminated?**

A summary report will provide outcome data regarding improvements in vocational skills, work opportunities explored, and job attainment. A case study of each program participant's experience with Daivergent program will be completed using their Daivergent data and results of their relative qualitative interviews. We will create plain language versions of all dissemination products. We will work with ADDPC to distribute these resources to stakeholder groups across Arizona and those interested in employment among adults with I/DD throughout the United States. Daivergent will also be able to use results of the process evaluation as a form of program improvement or enhancement.

We will also plan to submit abstracts to present at the following conferences: Institute for Human Development's annual Evidence for Success conference, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Conference, the annual Arizona State Transition Conference, and The Arc's Summer Leadership Institute and National Convention.

Our outcome will be to share lessons learned from this project to encourage successful technology-enabled employment among adults with I/DD.

**5. It is very clear that VR needs to be very much involved in the enrollment. Is it possible for someone from VR to commit to be part of the core team? I see there is a letter of support, however what specific role will VR have in this project?**

This project is hoping to fill a gap in employment for adults with I/DD in Arizona. As such, while VR is a critical partner, VR enrollment is not required for someone to participate in Daivergent's services through this project. This pilot project is intended to be a complementary and/or supplementary service to VR.

Since this project is community-engaged, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) plays a critical role in decision making, planning, and implementation of the project. As such, the CAB members are acting as core members of the project team alongside the Project

Core Staff. Project Core Staff will work to carry out the program as designed and informed by the CAB members. Our CAB and Project Core Staff includes VR representation from the following people:

- CAB Member: Ms. Kelly Arnold, who is Chair of the Northern Arizona Community of Practice Transition Team (NACoPTT). Ms. Arnold is also the Employment Services Director for Quality Connections, a Flagstaff based employment VR vendor for adults with I/DD. NACoPTT includes northern Arizona based VR counselors as well as other VR vendors from the region.
- CAB Member: Mr. Abel Young, who is the Statewide Transition Coordinator for the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- Core Staff Member: Mr. Russ Randall, who runs a Transition from School to Work program for Flagstaff Unified School District which is in collaboration with the Arizona Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation program.

**6. It seems that with the program being up to 9 months, there won't be much time to determine employment and retention outcomes for those who need more training. The first quarter is for recruitment. The design of the program, as presented, doesn't get into the intervention until the second quarter, and then the participants will be out of time. What is the plan to address this? Or are there already individuals with I/DD who have recently done the program that can be evaluated?**

We don't have individuals with I/DD in Arizona who have engaged in Daivergent's programming to evaluate. It is possible that our project planning and recruitment will not take the full first three months and that people could be enrolled in the Daivergent program prior to the fourth month. We are planning for an ongoing open enrollment in recruitment, and we plan to continue our services and reporting as needed (even after the twelfth month) depending on when someone enrolls in the program. This is an option we proposed in the original grant application regarding funding for Daivergent services past the 12 month project timeline: "If an individual is recruited later in the project timeline, the project team will consult with the Council requesting an extension of the budget timeline to ensure the ability of the individual to access Daivergent's services for the full nine months" (pg. 4, responding to question #2). We are hoping there would be some flexibility for a no-cost extension in that budget line item to allow all participants to have access to the program for a full 9 months.

Also, a full nine-month enrollment may or may not be required. The Daivergent program is very individualized, and it may be possible that some individuals would not require a full nine months to obtain employment. The Daivergent program may recommend participants to internships/jobs as soon as 30 days after beginning the training, based on their progress, allowing for more extensive tracking of employment and retention outcomes for some participants.

## **7. What is the program plan if the participants drop out of the program?**

If someone enrolls in the program but decides to leave prior to the full nine months and/or prior to completing the training or obtaining a job, we will still follow up to collect information as to why they were unable to, or not interested in, completing the program. If a participant drops out very early (i.e. after 1-2 months), we will work to fill their spot with another participant. Once the initial 12 participants are enrolled, any additional interested candidates who are eligible and a good fit for the program will be immediately offered the opportunity to enroll as someone drops out. We may need to adjust budget line items with approval from the Council to accommodate for situations where someone drops out of the program. In addition, Daivergent will extend additional free or "open source" resources to those who drop out. These "open source" resources do not include the weekly one-on-one personal Virtual Support Professional access, but do allow users to access Daivergent self-guided resources for resume development, interview tips, and online discussion forums.

## **8. Will NAU collect the technology equipment purchased for that participant or does each participant keep all of that equipment?**

We would like for the hardware and software to stay with participants in order for them to achieve and maintain employment in the field of technology. We anticipate that the collection of hardware may have negative impacts on the employment goals of participants. With the Council's blessing, our team is open to the consideration of various grant management strategies to ensure that technology can remain and continue to support the participants on their employment journey.

## **9. What is current collaboration with the technological and business community to support this program? How will there be ongoing engagement for participants to be considered for employment?**

The purpose of the grant is to develop collaboration with companies offering technology based jobs, in order to grow that area of opportunity for Arizonans with I/DD. Technology is a large and growing player in the Arizona economy, primarily in urban areas. This program may open doors for Arizonans with I/DD who do not live in urban areas to obtain employment with these urban-based Arizona employers.

Currently, in Flagstaff, individuals with I/DD work at local businesses including Quality Connections, Over the Rainbow Office, United States Geological Survey, Warner's Nursery, Killip School FACTS program, Coconino Humane Association, Safeway, Little America Hotel, etc., and in some cases, these jobs require technology skills. More individuals with I/DD may be able to obtain technology based work with these (and other) companies, but they require more technology based skill building, which Daivergent could provide.

Daivergent is already an active participant in business and technology communities via its startup network. Collaborations with companies including Fortune 500 (e.g. SAP) and startups across the U.S. have been established over the past three years, and

Daivergent integrates into remote job boards to allow for new employment opportunities to be recommended to Daivergent participants in real-time. Through these collaborations, Daivergent is able to showcase 3-5 new remote job opportunities each day, and participants are assessed and matched to appropriate roles on an ongoing, daily basis, with twice-a-week follow-ups with their Virtual Support Professional to ensure engagement. Daivergent has also begun discussions with Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation program to ensure that learning from this program may be deployed across Arizona.

**10. What is the program process in place to address if after going through the program, participants are not hired?**

Throughout the program, Daivergent will provide additional outcome measures on technology/remote job understanding and specific technology skills to accompany participants in their ongoing job search. Following the program, Daivergent will provide an additional one year of job exploration, job placement, and support under its "Open-Source" license, which is designed to further bolster any areas where participants are identified as needing improvement. Daivergent will also extend reporting functionality to any Arizona provider that continues job training with the candidate. These services are inclusive of: interview practice guides and video-based instruction for best practice; resume formatting and editing support; peer job club hosted through online discussion forums; and parent/caregiver/support person curriculums for families/support professionals to provide further assistance to the participant.

**11. Does NAU expect any concerns or delay in receiving approval for this project, since it's centered on participant research?**

We do not expect a delay or concerns regarding NAU IRB approval. Dr. Williamson regularly obtains NAU IRB approval for I/DD research and has been able to do so without any delays to projects.

**12. Does the Daivergent program require the use of specific equipment or if they allow participants to use their own if they have it, as they have budgeted in for laptops, software licenses, and hotspots.**

We will allow participants to use their own home computers, which are only required to meet very minimal specifications (e.g. 8 GB RAM, Windows/Mac operating system, web cam, English keyboard) for Daivergent. The Daivergent hardware package includes standard hardware, mouse, headset with mic, and wrist guard. Daivergent does not require special equipment. We budgeted for the hardware and software, in anticipation that individuals with I/DD may not have these resources at their personal disposal. If an individual enrolls and has a laptop or desktop they can use, then we can arrange to send them the remaining items as they prefer (i.e. headset with mic, wrist guard). We did not want an inclusion criterion for the project to include an individual already having access to a personal computer at home, as we know that may not be the reality for many individuals with I/DD.

**13. Provide the current letter from the federal cognizant agency that approves NAU's indirect cost rate.**

See NAU's indirect cost rate paperwork attached to the email.