

Think College **REPORTS**

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COHORT 3 TPSID MODEL DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS (YEAR 1, 2020–2021)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 ThinkCollege

NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER

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BACKGROUND ON HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

In 2020, the Office of Postsecondary Education in the US Department of Education funded 22 model demonstration projects called Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs). These grantees are charged with creating or expanding inclusive higher education programs for students with intellectual disability (ID). This Executive Summary provides an overview of the findings shared in the Annual Report of the Cohort 3 TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (Year 1, 2020–2021).

CURRENT STATUS OF TPSIDS

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

In 2020–2021, 22 TPSID grantees implemented 38 programs at 36 college and university campuses in 16 states. Of the 38 programs, 10 were located at two-year colleges and 28 were located at four-year colleges and universities. Twenty-seven programs enrolled students in 2020–2021 and the remaining 11 programs were in a planning year. Eleven TPSID programs (29%) were approved as Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs, meaning they could offer eligible students access to certain forms of federal student aid.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

On average, programs enrolled 14 students per site (N = 378 total students). Ninety-six percent of enrolled students had an intellectual disability and/or autism. Forty-one students were high school students receiving college-based transition services (11% of enrolled students). Most students (92%) were between the ages of 18 and 25, with more male students (56%) than female students.

ACADEMICS

Students enrolled in both inclusive (typical) college courses and in specialized courses designed for and offered only to students with ID. In 2020–2021, students enrolled in 3,222 courses for an average of eight inclusive or specialized courses per student per year. Thirty-eight percent of all enrollments were in academically inclusive courses.

A closer look at the data on percentage of inclusive course enrollments by program showed three programs with substantial use of specialized courses. These three programs represented 34% of all course enrollments (n = 1,095) of which 92% were specialized courses. The percentage of inclusive course enrollments at these programs was 0%, 5%, and 13%. When data from these three programs are framed as outliers and removed from calculations, students enrolled in the remaining 24 TPSID programs had 2,127 course enrollments of which 53% were inclusive.

Three-quarters of programs serving students (n = 20, 74%) had at least 50% of their course enrollments in inclusive courses, and 15 programs (56%) enrolled students only in inclusive classes.

Forty percent of course enrollments were in courses offering credits that could only be used toward a TPSID credential. Thirty-two percent of course enrollments were in not-for-credit or non-credit courses, 15% were for standard institutes of higher education (IHE) credit, 13% of enrollments were for audit, and <1% were courses in which students unofficially attended/sat in.

20 programs (56%) had at least 50% of their course enrollments in inclusive courses.



15 programs (56%) had 100% of their course enrollments in inclusive courses.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Two-thirds of students (67%) received academic supports or accommodations from the disability services office on their campus. Academic advising was provided in various combinations by the IHE's typical advising staff and by TPSID program staff. Peer mentors provided support to students in 93% of programs.

EMPLOYMENT

All 27 TPSID programs enrolling students provided employment services and work-related direct support. The majority of students (93%) participated in at least one employment or career development activity, such as work-based learning, job-seeking, and career awareness/exploration. Forty-seven percent of students (n = 176) had at least one paid position (paid employment or a paid work-based learning experience). Twenty-four percent of students (n = 109) had an individual paid job earning at or above minimum wage while enrolled. Fifty-nine (50%) of the students who were employed while enrolled in a TPSID had never held a paid job before.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

In 2020–2021, seven (26%) TPSID programs were located at commuter IHEs not offering housing for any student. Of the 20 TPSID programs located at residential schools, 14 (70%) offered housing to students in the TPSID program, and six did not offer housing. Most students enrolled in TPSID programs (59%) lived with their family. Thirty-seven percent of students lived in IHE housing, and 3% of students lived in non-IHE housing, not with family.

PROGRAM COMPLETION AND CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Of the 69 students who exited their program during the reporting period, 84% completed their program. Though credentialing options varied, students were able to earn credentials at all TPSID programs. Exiting students earned a total of 75 credentials. Of the 74 credentials earned, 97% (n = 74) were certificates. One credential was an associate degree and one

47% of students had a paid job or paid work-based learning experience.



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In 2020–2021, 107 students (28%) received services provided by vocational rehabilitation (VR). The most common services provided by VR to students were benefits counseling, self-advocacy instruction, job coaching, and work-based learning. Eighty-five percent of the TPSIDs partnering with VR (n = 23 of 27 programs enrolling students) reported collaborating to provide pre-employment transition services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014).

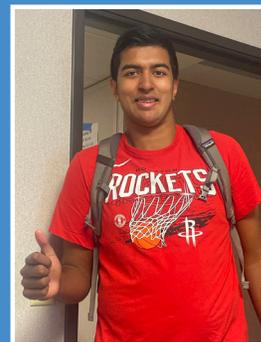
28% of students received services from a VR program.



Students from Texas A&M University Share What College Means to Them

“College has helped me be confident and be successful. I am thankful for this opportunity!”

Matthew Phillips, Sophomore



“College has helped me grow in my confidence and has helped me make lifelong friends.”

Rida Fasih, Freshman, 20 years old

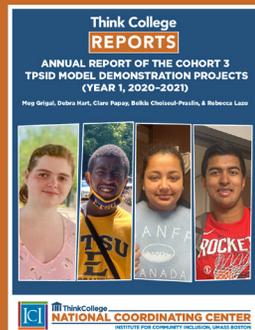


credential was an industry certification. Of the credentials earned, 57 (77%) were approved by the IHE governance structure.

CONCLUSION

The Cohort 3 TPSID programs build on the infrastructure of knowledge and practice developed by the two previous cohorts. This cohort begins with significant experience, as 50% of the programs have received TPSID funding in the past. Data reported by TPSID grantees here from the first year of FY 2020–2025 suggest most of these programs are beginning with a solid base of effective practices. We can expect growth from these programs in the next four years. We anticipate college course access, competitive integrated employment, and access to housing will expand with each year, and will result in enhanced student academic, employment, and independent living outcomes.

**Read the full report:
the Annual Report of
the Cohort 3 TPSID
Model Demonstration
Projects (Year One
2020–2021)**



RECOMMENDED CITATION

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DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The research team for this report consists of key staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The organizations and the key staff members do not have financial interests that could be affected by findings from the evaluation.

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A New TPSID Program Means New Life for Students

Andrew Strzykalski is a first-year student at a new inclusive postsecondary program and TPSID at University of New Hampshire. His mom, Barbara says *“He just loves it there so much. He’s more outgoing, he’s more confident. He has really just come into his own.”*



Such is the precise goal of the UNH-4U program, which has been more than five years in the making. It came to fruition thanks in part to individual donations and grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation John Vance A.C.C.E.S.S. Fund, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities, the area agency system and the New Hampshire Department of Education–Vocational Rehabilitation. The program opens doors to a mostly traditional college experience that was previously closed to students with intellectual disabilities.

Students in the two-year program go through a nontraditional admissions process and don’t earn a traditional degree but enroll in classes matched to their academic interests with the intent of starting them on a path to gainful employment after college. Along the way, they gain experience and life skills that are difficult to replicate in other scenarios.

“Now that we have launched and the students are actually here, it’s truly transformative,” says Tobey Partch–Davies, project director at the UNH Institute on Disability. *“What’s going on with these students, it’s life-changing. They are experiencing a level of independence and academic success that many never dreamed possible.”*