



## The TPSID Model Demonstration Projects: Making College Accessible for Students with Intellectual Disability

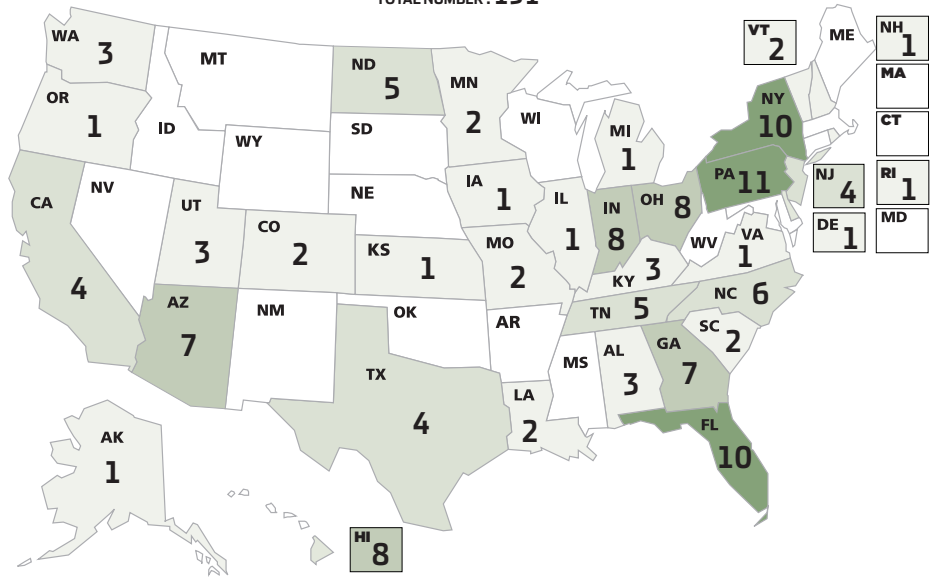
The Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) model demonstration project was established by the Higher Education Opportunities Act and is funded and overseen by the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) in the US Department of Education as part of the federal TPSID initiative. Many TPSID-funded programs are approved as Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs to offer federal financial aid in the form of Pell grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants and work-study. The highly successful TPSID initiative expands and enhances high-quality, inclusive higher education options leading to positive outcomes for individuals with intellectual disability.

### MORE HIGHER EDUCATION OPTIONS

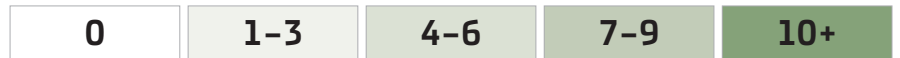
Since 2010, the TPSID initiative has supported the development and expansion of programs for students with intellectual disability at 129 institutions of higher education in 34 states. Many grantees have worked to establish programs not only at their own college or university, but have also assisted in establishing programs at other institutions of higher education in their states. By increasing the available options, the TPSID initiative allows more choice for students and families looking for higher education experiences which lead to employment. As of August 2024, these efforts have supported enrollment of over 5,200 college students with intellectual disability. The programs partner with local education agencies, state agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, employers, and community providers.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITIES WITH TPSID GRANTS OR PROGRAMS BY STATE (2010-2025)

TOTAL NUMBER: 131



NUMBER OF PROGRAMS



### POSITIVE IMPACT ON COLLEGES, FACULTY, AND STUDENTS

TPSID programs are highly valued on their campuses and have had positive impacts on administrators and leadership, faculty and staff, and college peers. Administrators say these programs make their campus communities stronger and more connected. Faculty say these programs help them become better instructors and more confident in their capacity to respond to the needs of diverse learners. Other college students have shared that their experiences with TPSID program staff and students have impacted their approach to disability as well as their understanding of what college is all about. Many college students involved with TPSID programs have reported changing their career paths to pursue future work in the field of education or disability.

**By creating viable paths to and through higher education and coupling these experiences with a continued focus on employment, TPSID programs support increased independence as well as personal and professional growth for students with intellectual disability.**

## **INCLUSIVE LEARNING, WORKING, AND LIVING**

TPSID programs address critical areas of need in higher education. Students take college courses aligned with their personal and career goals and are guided through a course of study to achieve a credential. Programs prioritize employment preparation and engaging students in work-based learning. Often students secure paid jobs while enrolled. Students attending TPSID programs are an active part of the campus community—learning, working, and often living with their college peers.

## **CHANGING LIVES**

- Students who graduate from TPSID programs show significantly higher employment rates than the general population of adults with intellectual disability. One year after graduation, 65% of TPSID program graduates are employed, far higher than the 17% employment rate of individuals with IDD in general (Grigal et al., 2025; National Core Indicators, 2024).
- Retention and completion rates of students attending TPSID programs are high. The first-year retention rate for the 2023–2024 academic year was 84%. Of students who began at a Cohort 2 TPSID program in 2015-16, 74% had completed a program by 2019-2020, the final year of funding for this cohort. Of students who attended a Cohort 2 TPSID program, 72% had completed a program by August 2023 (Bukaty & Papay, 2023).
- TPSID programs support continued development of meaningful credentials (e.g., certificate, associate degree, or industry certification) which align with current higher education certificates and are recognized by employers and other colleges and universities. Of the 151 students who completed their program in the 2023-2024 academic year, 99% earned at least one credential (Grigal et al., 2025).

By creating viable paths to and through higher education, and coupling these experiences with a continued focus on employment, TPSID programs support increased independence as well as personal and professional growth for students with intellectual disability.

## **References**

Bukaty, C. A. & Papay, C. (2023). Completion rates of students attending colleges and universities via a TPSID program. Think College Fast Facts, Issue No. 35. University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.

Grigal, M., Papay, C., Bukaty, C., Choiseul-Praslin, B., Weir, C. & Lazo, R. (2025). Annual report of the Cohort 3 TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (Year 4, 2023–2024). University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.

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