

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION STATE PROFILE

Colorado

How Colorado VR Partners with Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

By Darby Remley, MEd

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a critical partner in supporting students with intellectual disability to access higher education, sometimes referred to as inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE). Through collaboration, VR and higher education programs can increase access, opportunities, and success for college students with intellectual disability. Building strong VR partnerships can be challenging for some programs. In this resource, we share how Colorado's state VR agency has successfully partnered with its state higher education programs for students with intellectual disability.

Current State of Higher Education Partnerships

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has a great collaborative partnership with our institutes of higher education in Colorado that have programs for students with intellectual disability. Colorado DVR staff also work very closely with IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education (IN!). IN! is an organization focused on the expansion of higher education for students with intellectual disability in Colorado.

We currently support four Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs. One program receives funding through the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) model demonstration program, and one program was developed through previous TPSID funding. We also can support other higher education programs outside Colorado if we find that doing so is appropriate for the person we are serving. DVR support encompasses financial assistance and collaborative engagement with the student

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and program, focusing on academic success and career development and planning activities.

Currently, multiple institutes of higher education are applying for the Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities Grant to develop more higher education programs for students with intellectual disability within Colorado. The grant program was established through [Colorado's House Bill 22-1107](#), which focuses on creating more higher education opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. IN! is the state entity overseeing the grant's applications and awards. [Check out IN!'s website for more information.](#)

Strategies Used to Implement or Improve Higher Education Partnerships

Colorado has worked closely with our institutes of higher education offering programs for students with intellectual disability and IN! to identify best practices for working together and supporting individuals enrolling in higher education programs. We have achieved this by implementing an **Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Skills Training fee** into our DVR fee schedule. This fee covers the services intended to prepare students for success within competitive integrated



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employment and greater independence after completing the program. This fee does not include tuition or other institution-based fees and is just in place to support the program. Students can receive support for tuition and other fees separately through their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DVR counselors are trained continuously on how to support an individual going through a higher education program to allow for a seamless process. The individual, DVR counselor, and program staff work closely while the student is enrolled to ensure the student has all supports they need for academic success and to ensure the student has other supports they may need as they finish their program and pursue competitive integrated employment.

We **disseminate information regarding higher education for students with intellectual disability in our state** through events like our quarterly Supported Employment Steering Committee meeting. We invite staff from all higher education programs to attend and provide updates on their programs, share success stories, and collaborate directly with DVR counselors.

Innovative Practices Implemented in Colorado to Support Higher Education Programs

A workgroup of DVR staff developed the Inclusive Higher Education Tip Sheet (**see page 3**) that includes a list of services needed on an Individualized Plan for Employment to support an individual with intellectual disability in a higher education program, information about how to develop an authorization, and frequently asked questions. This group also developed a DVR & Inclusive Higher Ed Checklist (**see page 5**). This tool walks the DVR counselor and the college or university through supporting a person with intellectual disability pursuing a program from start to finish. This checklist starts with the person applying to DVR and moves through the process of being accepted into the program, developing a plan, applying for financial aid, tracking progress through the program, and moving from the higher education program to job preparation and development.

These tools have benefited our DVR staff when supporting individuals through a program. They have also helped with the collaboration between the DVR counselor and the program to ensure everyone is on the same page and knows what is required.

Advice for Effective Collaboration Between VR and Higher Education Programs

Communication! Through strong communication, we can all be on the same page about expectations and continued support. VR agencies should ensure higher education programs have a point of contact for VR related questions. Knowing who to contact with questions or training requests facilitates communication and builds relationships. Program staff should work collaboratively with VR agencies to understand the agency's expectations of the program and students who are enrolled and receive VR services. This type of clarifying communication enables the program and the DVR counselor to meet expectations and provide high-level supports to students attending higher education programs.

We could not support as many people as we do without our partnerships and intentional communication with our higher education programs.

For more VR state profiles and resources on building collaborative relationships between higher education programs and VR, visit [Think College's Vocational Rehabilitation Resource page](#) and [Think College Network's Employment Partnerships page](#).

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Inclusive Higher Education Tip Sheet

1. IPE should list:
 - a. Tuition
 - i. Provider: the College or University
 - ii. FNA required (billed by semester)
 - iii. Service & Procedure Category:
 1. Training, Post Secondary Schools: College/University, Non-Degree if the student is not earning credit toward an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree; or
 2. Training, Post Secondary Schools: College/University, Degree or Certificate if the student is earning credit toward an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree (infrequent, but some schools may provide this option for students)
 - b. Inclusive Higher Education
 - i. Provider: the Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)
 - ii. FNA **not** required (billed by semester)
 - iii. Service & Procedure Category:
 1. Training, Adjustment: Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training
2. 2 Authorizations needed
 - a. Tuition to the university (if FNA allows)
 - i. Program Fee is the responsibility of the family. Per DVR fee schedule we do not pay the program fee that is listed within the tuition items on the tuition statement.
 - b. Inclusive Higher Education Fee (FNA not required)
 - i. \$3000 prior authorized per semester

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **Q-** Can I authorize the Inclusive Higher Education Fee by semester or do I have to break it up monthly?
A- The Inclusive Higher Education Fee is authorized prior to or at the beginning of each semester, for the semester's services.
2. **Q-** Do I authorize tuition and the inclusive higher education fee on the same auth to the school?



A- No. Tuition less the program fee will be authorized to the school. Inclusive Higher Education Fee is authorized to the Inclusive Higher education program e.g. Goal or Elevate.

3. Q- Is the Program Fee listed on the Tuition Statement the same thing as the Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training fee?

A- No. The Program Fees are fees from the University that DVR does not pay per fee schedule. These fees are per semester for other administrative, daily living, and social support for students. The Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training fee is not listed on the tuition statement and is payable directly to the inclusive higher education program. typically at \$3000 per semester with a max of 8 semesters. Some institutions have different titles for this fee. UCCS lists their program fee on tuition as “Inclusive Services Charge.”

4. Q- Why is the Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training fee not listed on the tuition statement?

A- The Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training fee is not paid to the Bursar’s/Finance Office as a tuition or enrollment cost. Rather the fee will be paid to the Inclusive Higher Education (CTP or TPSID) program (e.g. Elevate or GOAL) to support the vocational skills training services they are providing to students who are enrolled. You must send the Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training authorization to the program and the program will send an invoice to you for payment thereafter. This process is separate from the tuition and school process. Programs will provide monthly progress reports documenting services provided and outcomes.

UCCS operates differently. The Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training fee will be listed on the tuition statement and both tuition and this fee are paid directly to UCCS on one authorization.

Last Updated: 8/28/2020



DVR & Inclusive Higher Ed Checklist

Last Updated 7/20/2021

Purpose: The intention of this form is to provide guidance and things to be aware of for both DVR and the Inclusive Higher Education partner.

- The intention is not to require completion of the form by the person that is being served, rather staff to utilize and complete the form for internal use.
- The goal here is to work cohesively together to minimize barriers and streamline a complicated process where we can.
- This form will include potentially needed documentation and information as well as general information that may be helpful to be aware of as you are working with an individual who is interested in Inclusive Higher Education.

Student Name:

School ID Number:

College:

IPE Employment Goal:

Area of Focus:

DVR Counselor & email address:

College Contact & email address:



The Process- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Side:

Action	Date	By	Follow-up required?
Applied to DVR			
Acceptance Letter from the School, *preferred, if available*			
Eligibility Determination Complete			
JFT Form or documentation the comprehensive assessment, including justifying the need for training (with the JFT as a helpful tool) submitted- Contact Darby.Remley@state.co.us if you have questions about justifying Inclusive Higher Education			
Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) Including SSA verification if applicable			
Completed IPE- Sup Approval should be completed when appropriate.			
At graduation- Copy of Certificate of Completion			

The Process- College side:

Action	Date	By	Follow-up required?
College Application Complete			
Acceptance Letter			
Enrollment			
Resource Needs Analysis?? (SSA, etc.,)			

Before the start of each semester:

Action	Date	By	Follow-up required?
Applied to FAFSA (annually)			
Financial aid award letter sent to DVR, as applicable			
Tuition/fees sent to DVR			
Booklist and cost sent to DVR			

	Class schedule sent to DVR			
	Academic Plan copy to DVR			

End of each semester:

Action	Date	By	Follow-up required?
Final grades and advising sheet sent to DVR			
Progress reports from the college side (minimum 3 per semester, Required to pay the In Ed skills training invoice) Fee Schedule Language: Service Providers are required to provide monthly progress reports demonstrating student progress in developing skills necessary for success in competitive integrated employment. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W1sqT8jFDOOgzW8glyX2KxuxvhHTQoQR/view?usp=sharing			

DVR Authorization/Codes:

Goods and services are authorized as necessary, appropriate, least possible cost, and in accordance with the IPE, since not everyone will receive each service.

Tuition/Fees	Service Category: Training, Post Secondary Schools Procedure Code: 23100-01 - College/University Training, Public, In-State, Tuition/Fees, Non-Degree
Books/Supplies	Service Category: Training, Miscellaneous Procedure Category: 26001-01 - Books, Supplies and Required Training Materials, Purchase
Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training (\$3,000)	Service Category: Training, Adjustment Procedure Code: 21090-01 - Inclusive Higher Education, Skills Training (does not include tuition for academic coursework).Do not combine with WAT, PAT, or site set-up
Maintenance	Service Category: Maintenance Procedure Code: 35000-01 - Maintenance- Maintenance is monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food and shelter, that are in excess of the normal expenses . Dictated by student FNA.

Contacts:

- Program Due dates, costs, and details may change from year to year. DVR counselors are encouraged to reach out to Inclusive Higher Education Partners to get updated information and timelines.

Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)

University of Northern Colorado; Go On And Leard (GOAL)-Greeley

Director- Christina Ruffatti christina.ruffatti@unco.edu

3rd party billing contact-Rachel.Buller@unco.edu

Arapahoe Community College (ACC) in Aurora

Director- Jennifer Woegens jennifer.woegens@arapahoe.edu

3rd party billing contact- Billie.Thais@arapahoe.edu

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Office of Inclusive Services

Director- Christi Kasa ckasa@uccs.edu

Regis University Global Inclusive Program

Director- Jeanine Coleman, PhD jcoleman009@regis.edu

Transition and Post-Secondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)

Colorado State University: Opportunities for Postsecondary Success

Front Range Community College: Success

Process Reminders:

- **DVR authorizations-** DVR authorizations need to be issued prior to the schools Add/Drop date- if a student drops a course after this date DVR would not cover the cost of that specific course in subsequent semesters.
- **Class schedules-** DVR can only support courses that are required to complete the area of focus and needed to support the identified vocational goal on the Individualized Plan for Employment.