

THINKing about COLLEGE:

Deciphering Post Secondary Education Options
in Texas and Nationwide.

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Think College

Institute of Community Inclusion,
University of Massachusetts Boston

Presented to:

A Look Ahead 8/10/24



 ThinkCollege
INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK
INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

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Think Higher. Think College.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9btye>



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Agenda



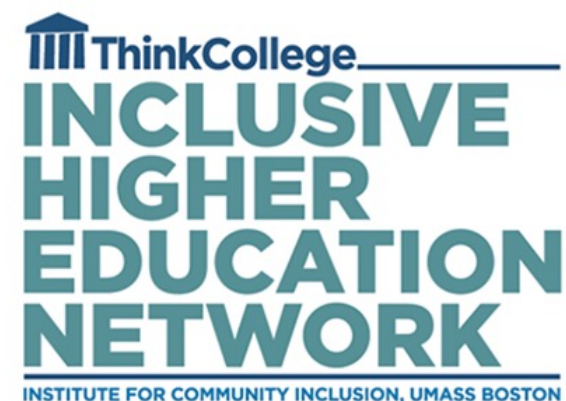
- ① What is Think College?
- ② Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)
- ③ Texas & US options
- ④ Getting Started!



What is **THINK COLLEGE?**



Think College is a national technical assistance, research, and evaluation center dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving higher education options for students with intellectual disability.



We help:

- Develop college options for students with intellectual disability
- Improve existing college programs
- Assist students and families prepare for college

Postsecondary Education for

Students with Intellectual

Disability = PSE

What Is Postsecondary Education?

PSE is ...

College for students with intellectual disability.

It is attending college with other peers with or without disabilities.

When they have completed their coursework, they graduate from their program and go on to more learning opportunities or to live and work in the community.



Why Go To College?

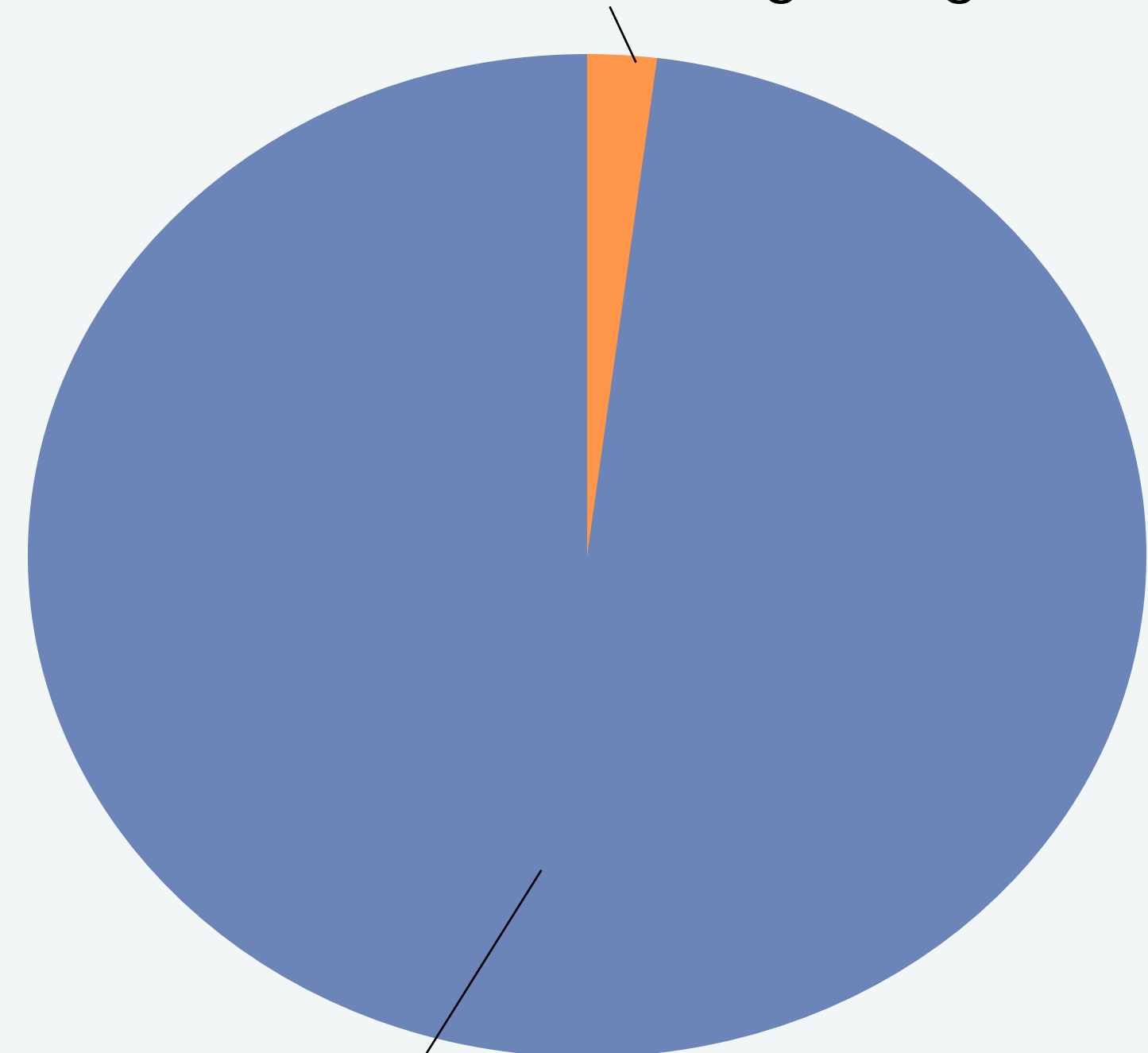
In 2022...

There were more than 420,000 school age students with intellectual disability in the United States¹

Fewer than 2% were likely to attend college after high school.

1. National Core Indicators, 2022

Students with ID attending college, 2%



Students with ID who do not attend college, 98%

The Current Reality

For the 98% of adults with intellectual disability who don't go to college ...

- Only 15% have **paid employment** in the community²
- 42% attend a **day program or sheltered workshop**²
- 44% report they often or sometimes **feel lonely**²
- 29.3% live **below the poverty line**³

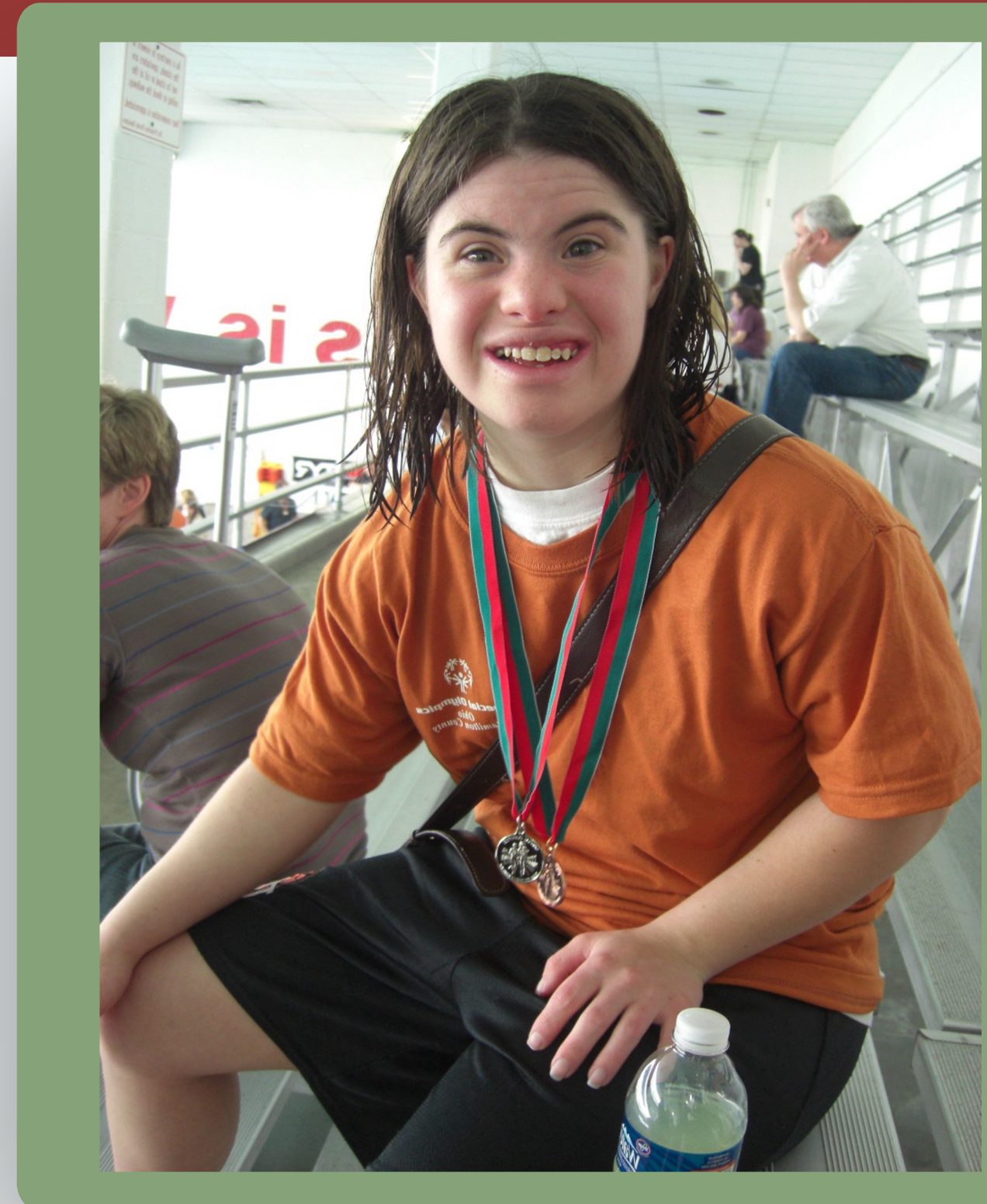
2. National Core Indicators, 2022

3. Winsor et al., 2022

Outcomes are Promising

For the 2% who attend postsecondary education ...

- 59% find **competitive, integrated employment** 1 year after exit⁴
- 51% **earned higher wages** than those who did not access postsecondary education⁵
- 87% of students were enrolled in a **credential program**^{4*}
- 100% of programs provided **peer mentor support** to students^{4*}

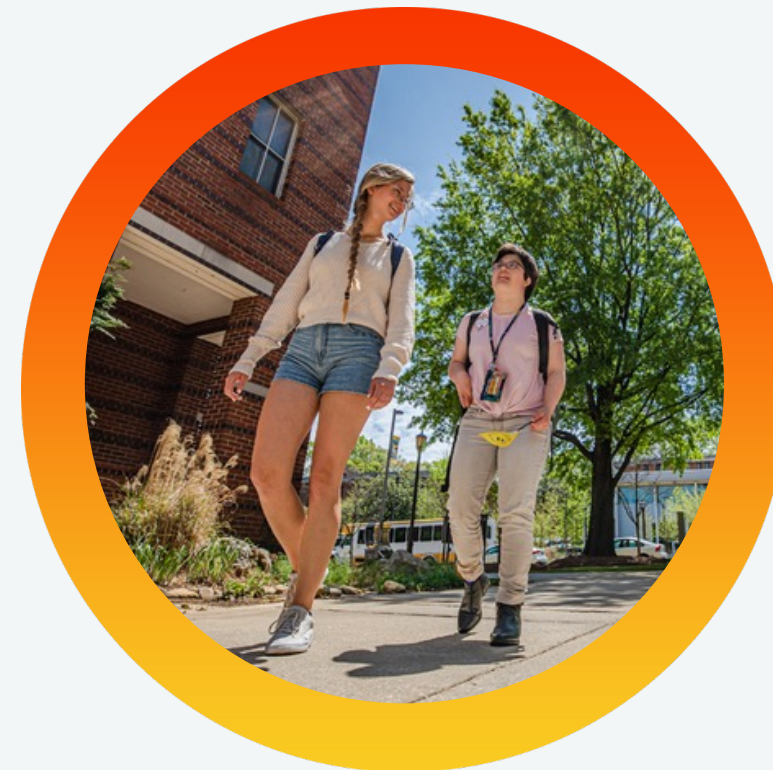
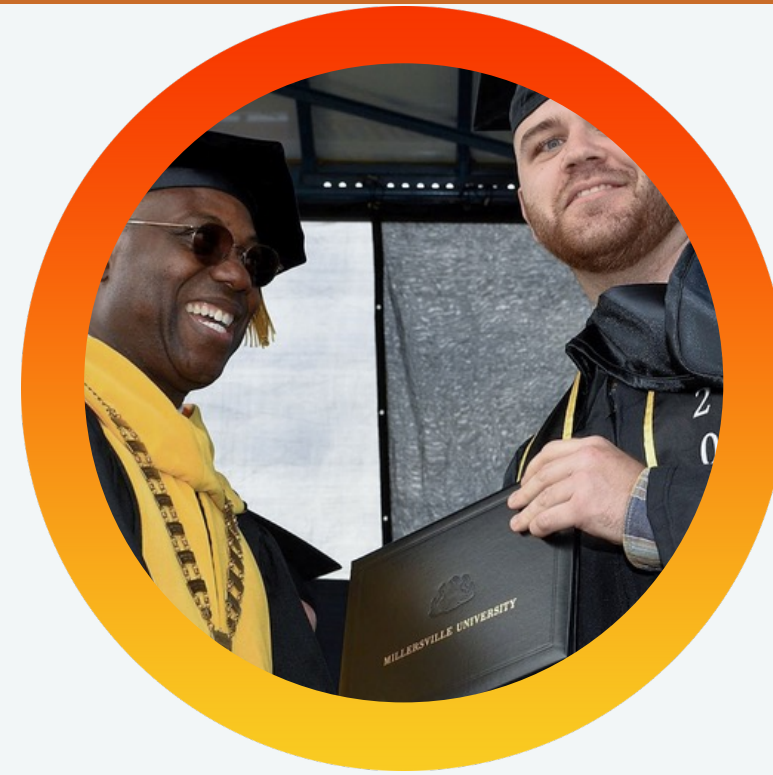


4. Grigal et al., 2022, 5. Smith et al., 2018

*based on TPSID model demonstration sites, not representative of all programs in US.

WHO Can Go To Postsecondary Programs?

Postsecondary programs (PSE) for students with intellectual disability are designed for people who would not typically be accepted to college because of their diploma status or not meeting other traditional entrance requirements, such as having a certain ACT/SAT scores or grade point average.



College students with intellectual disability are...

Enrolling in college courses for credit or audit

Earning credentials

Working in paid jobs on or off campus

Participating in campus life

Learning to live in(ter)dependently



Key Features of PSE College Programs

Alternate admissions process & requirements

Accept students who are non-degree seeking

Vary in length from 1 to 4+ years

Vary in level of inclusion

Vary in housing options

May offer federal student aid (but not student loans)

ABOUT
8000
STUDENTS

are currently
attending
IPSE
programs
across the
country.





Postsecondary Education Programs are **NOT**

Continued special education located
on a college campus

Life skills instruction

Vocational training program

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

High School	Area of Difference	College
Less freedom; living at home	PERSONAL FREEDOM	More freedom; hanging out or living on campus
Family make decisions	DECISION-MAKING	Students make decisions
See teachers each day; they remind you when things are due	TEACHER CONTACT	See teachers less often; less reminders about due dates and grades
Few tests and little homework; graded based upon completion	TESTS AND GRADES	More tests and homework; based upon quality of work.
Predictable schedule in the same classrooms	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Varying schedule in classrooms all across campus
Responsibility of the teacher; determined by the IEP process	ACCOMMODATIONS	Responsibility of the student; must register and communicate with the Office of Disability Services
Family members and teachers advocate on students' behalf	ADVOCATING	Student is responsible for advocating for what they need
Teachers communicate directly with families	COMMUNICATION	Teachers do not communicate with families, only with students
Decision-maker; must provide permission for educational decisions	PARENT'S ROLE	Support team member; a valuable and trusted sounding board with no authority to make educational decisions

See the full resource:

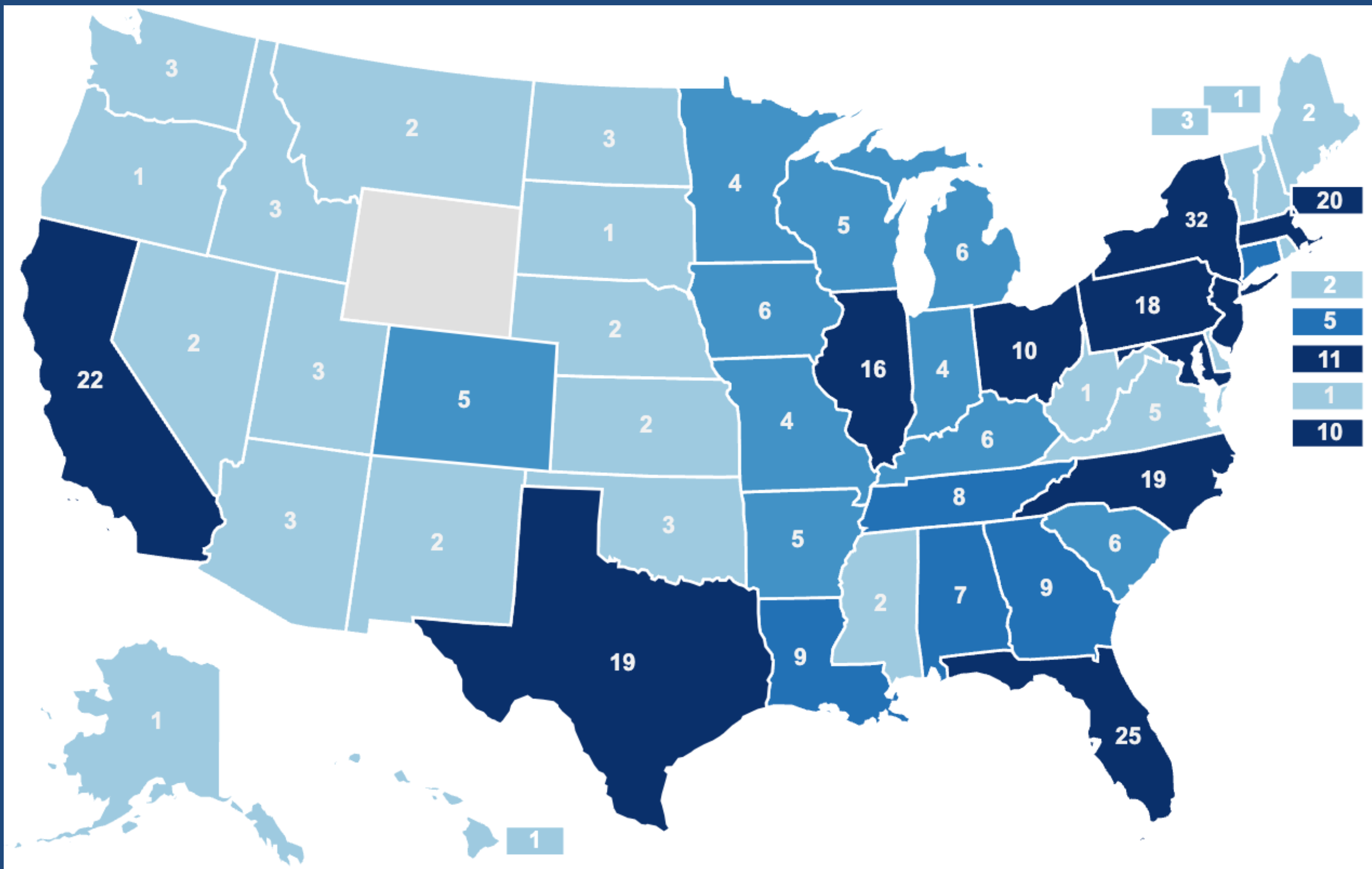


<https://tinyurl.com/mv56jcpw>

College Options:

Texas & US

In the U.S.
there are
340
PSE
programs



NUMBER OF PROGRAMS



As of 8/5/24

Categories of PSE Programs



Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)

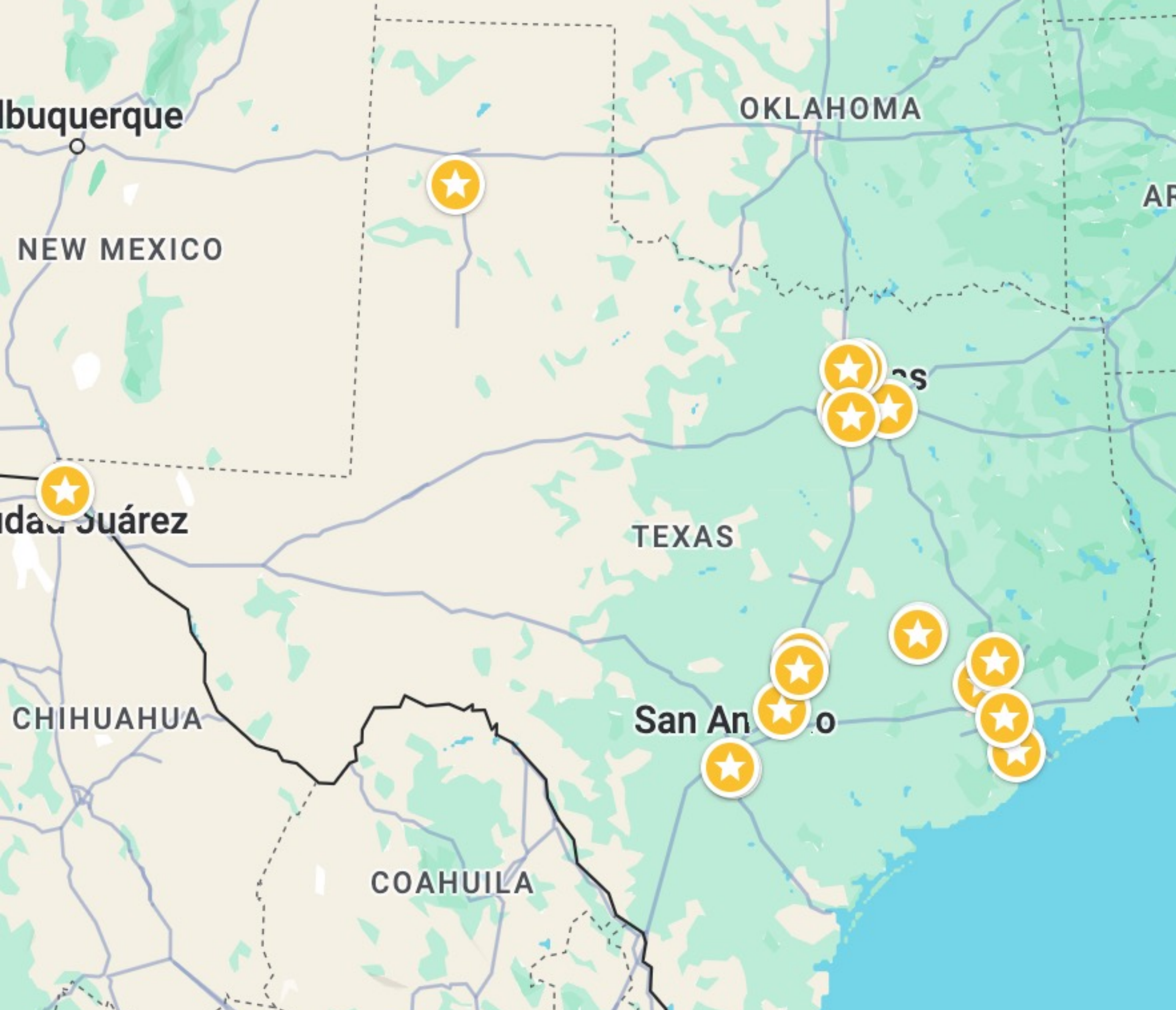
Model Demonstration projects funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (total of 121 since funding began)

Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTP)

Programs that have been through an approval process and can offer access to federal financial aid (currently a total of 154 approved CTP)

College-Based Transition Services (CBTS)

Programs that are partnerships between one or more school districts and a local college, for transition-aged students in those districts only (currently 49 in our directory)



**In Texas,
there are
19
PSE
programs**

Overview of Texas PSE Programs

Length of Program:

- One Year - 4
- Two years - 7
- Three years - 1
- Four year - 4
- Varies - 3

Offer Housing:

- Yes – 8

CTP (financial aid eligible):

- Yes – 5
- ***A few are pending

Texas Programs



29 Acres Transition Academy - Texas Woman's University



ACC Steps – Austin Community College



Aggie ACHIEVE – Texas A&M



Bobcate RISE – Texas State University



E4 Texas – University of Texas Austin



Green Oaks Life Prep – Arlington Baptist University



Lifelong Learning with Friends – The University of Texas Austin



LifePATH (2) – Lone Star Colleges @ Montgomery & Tomball



PATHS – Texas A&M



Project Access – Palo Alto College



Project Aspire – Dallas College



Project HIGHER – El Paso Community College



STRIVE - Alvin Community College



Tarrant County College Transitional Skills – Tarrant Community College



TU CASA– Texas A&M San Antonio



UNT ELEVAR – University of North Texas



VAST Academy – Houston Community College



Where the Learning Continues – West Texas A&M University



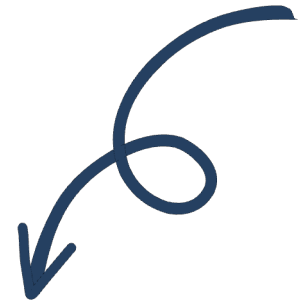
Offers Housing

Bold = CTP (Financial Aid)



To learn more about each program, go to:

<https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

The logo features the word "COLLEGE" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters with an orange outline. The letter "O" is replaced by a magnifying glass icon. Inside the lens of the magnifying glass is the "Think III College" logo, which consists of three vertical bars above the text "Think III College". Below "COLLEGE" is the word "SEARCH" in the same white, sans-serif capital letters with an orange outline. A white horizontal line is positioned below "SEARCH".

The only directory of programs for
students with intellectual disability



Visit Website Together

from the previous slide

<https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

FAVORITES

Click "♥ save" to add programs to your favorites. You can then save, compare and download basic information for each one. See FAQ: [How do I save and compare programs?](#)

RECENTLY ADDED

- [Alabama A&M University](#)
- [Arkansas State University](#)
- [Bridgewater State University \(MA\)](#)
- [Gwynedd Mercy University \(PA\)](#)
- [University of Oklahoma](#)
- [Texas A&M University](#)

SEARCH

CLEAR

Program or Keyword

SHOW ALL

LOCATION

- Alabama (7)
- Alaska (1)
- Arizona (2)
- ▼ Show more states

PROGRAM FEATURES

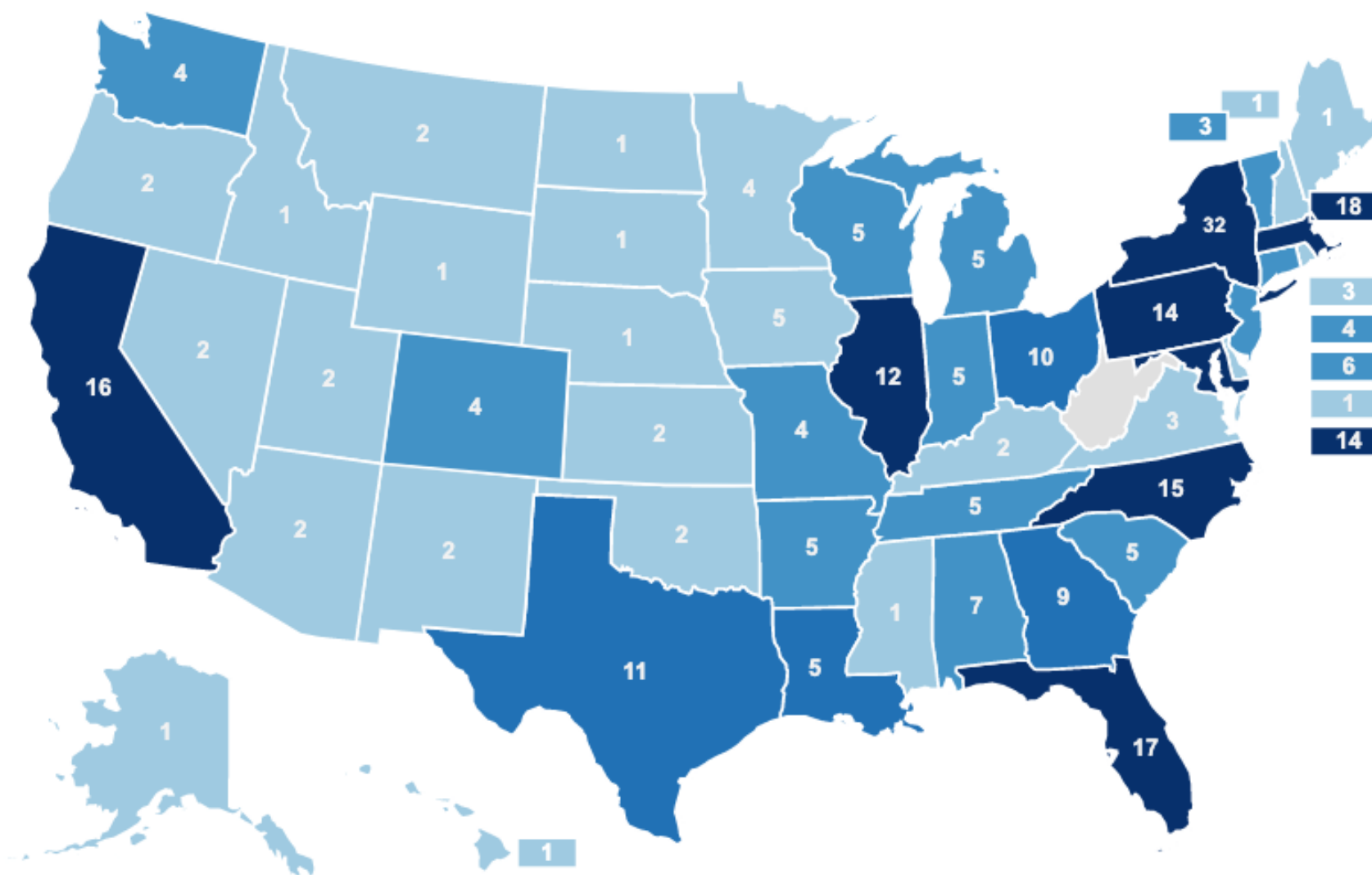
- Serves Students in High School *
- Offers Financial Aid
- Offers Housing
- Program not limited by student school districts

Find the College that is right for you!

This directory includes information on [279](#) college programs for students with intellectual disability. You can search by program name, location, and other keywords. "Advanced Filters" offer more options to narrow your search.

Review these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for answers to some general questions on college programs, how we gather the information in the directory, and how to use the features of College Search.

Once you have located colleges you are interested in, download the [How To Think College Guide to Conducting a College Search \[PDF\]](#). It provides you with the right questions to ask in order to get the answers you need about each program on your list. The How To guide is also [available in Spanish](#).



NUMBER OF PROGRAMS



Basic Filters

- Location (State)
- Program features
 - Serves Students in High School
 - Offers Financial Aid
 - Offers Housing
 - Not limited by school district

*Note that students who are dually enrolled might not be eligible for financial aid or housing

SEARCH CLEAR

SHOW ALL

LOCATION

- Alabama (7)
- Alaska (1)
- Arizona (2)
- ▼ Show more states

PROGRAM FEATURES

- Serves Students in High School *
- Offers Financial Aid
- Offers Housing
- Program not limited by students' school districts

Advanced Filters

- Type of Disability
- Type of Institution
 - Public/Private
 - 2 year, 4 year, tech/trade school
- Length of Program
- TPSID (federally-funded model demonstration program)

ADVANCED FILTERS

DISABILITY

- Intellectual disability
- Autism
- Other disabilities

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

- Private
- Public

TYPE OF SCHOOL

- 2-year community college or junior college
- 4-year college or university
- Technical or vocational/trade school
- Other

PLANNED LENGTH OF PROGRAM

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- Varies from student to student
- Program is a federally funded TPSID program



**Transition
Resources to
Prepare for College**

Top Resources



A Checklist of tips for IEP Teams

- Explore Options
- Promoting Independence
- Laws, Rights, & Responsibilities
- Academic, Functional, and Social Skills



IEP Goals in a variety of domains:

- Academic
- Career & Employment
- Community Engagement & Services
- Independence



Charts that list typical college expectations & offer suggestions for secondary preparation

- Campus Resources
- Academics
- Social



Helps students and families negotiate the change from HS to college

- Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act for College Students
- IDEA vs. ADA

Prepare

Prepare

Prepare

Prepare

Prepare

Prepare

Preparing for College

Resources on this page include ways to create an IEP that will best prepare students for college, information on important decisions such as guardianship, information on how college differs from high school, and more



<http://tinyurl.com/ya7kne77>



Visit Website Together

from the previous slide

<http://tinyurl.com/ya7kne77>

Resources

Resources

Resources

Resources

Resources

Resources

Transition Resources Flyer

Access to a reproducible flyer with links to about a dozen great resources related to transition to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability.



tinyurl.com/TransitionTC



**Family Resources
to Explore &
Prepare for College**

Explore

Prepare

Explore

Prepare

Explore

Prepare

Family - Exploring & Preparing for College

Resources on this page respond to families' most frequently asked questions when first exploring and learning about college options.

This page offers both English and Spanish versions of our Think College Resources for families.



<https://tinyurl.com/ymp9752f>



Visit Website Together

from the previous slide

<https://tinyurl.com/ymp9752f>



**Getting
Started!**

Paying For College



Students and families will want to consider how to pay for college long before the application process.

Because opportunities for student loans for students with intellectual disability attending PSE programs are rare, families often have to pay for tuition and room and board, as well as other college/university and program fees out of pocket.

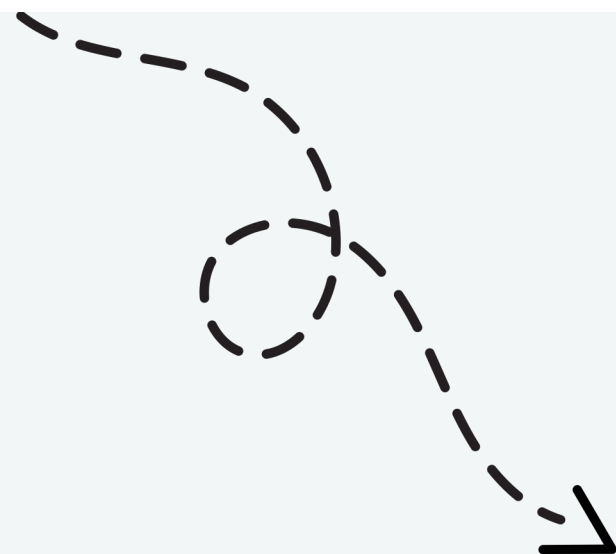


FOR MORE IDEAS...

[Read this resource on paying for college](#)

or

[View our Paying for College page](#)



<https://tinyurl.com/3zfs594p>



<https://tinyurl.com/3wuu2w9d>

3

Easy Steps

Read/Learn

- Read carefully through the program's website

Reach Out

- Set up a phone call to ask questions.

Attend

- Attend an open house or informational session

Starter Questions to Help Find The Right College:

- 1 How far away from home do they want to be?
- 2 Do they want to live on campus?
- 3 What type of credential will they receive, and will it help them get the job they want?
- 4 How much support do they need to be successful?
- 5 Does the program provide employment experiences in the area they're interested in?
- 6 Can the student and their family afford to attend?

Do Your Research!

Programs are different in many ways. It is important to consider several factors when deciding which programs to apply to.

Use this handy guide to start the search and find the program that best fits the student, their support needs, and their goals.



<https://tinyurl.com/3akhem7z>



Admission

Fees, Tuition, & Financial Aid

Inclusion with the Campus Community

Academics

Housing



Supports

Program Administration

Communication with Parents

Career Development

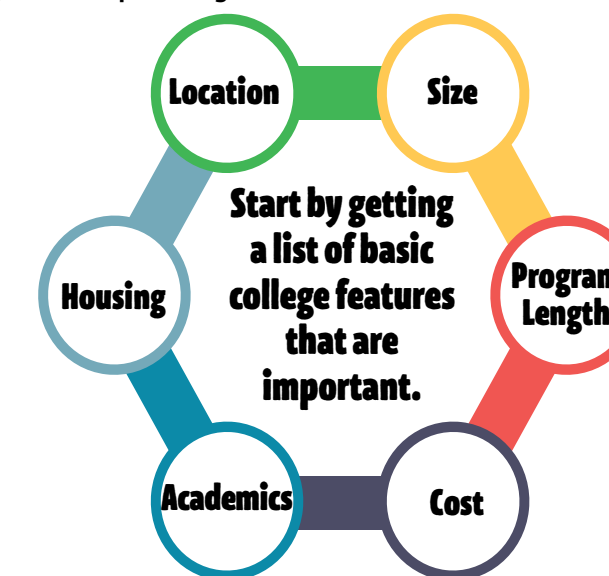
Program Outcomes

Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home (see Figure 1).

For students with intellectual disability (ID), there are some additional aspects to consider beyond the details you can learn in Think College Search. This resource provides questions, suggested by parents and students who have been through the college search process.

These questions may be answered by closely reviewing the college program websites, attending an Open House, or calling the program director. A great place to identify possible options is Think College Search, a searchable database of college programs on the Think College website. There you will find basic information on over 270 college programs for students with intellectual disability. Learn more about it on page 2.

Figure 1. Sample College Features



This guide shares questions about important aspects of the college program, and are offered to help students and families learn as much as they can about program operations so they can make an informed choice about which college is best for them. Several questions are suggested in each of the ten areas below.



BLOG POST

[College Search 101–
Considerations and
Resources for Finding
the Best Fit](#)



<https://tinyurl.com/2uzpzvb4>

Visit & Apply

Visit your top choices to see the campus and meet the staff, faculty, and students.

Visit the disability services office to see how involved that office is with the program.

Connect with alumni and their families to learn about their experiences at college and what they're doing now.

Apply!

Applying To College

PSE programs do not require students to take entrance exams like the SAT/ACT. They usually don't require a certain grade point average. **When applying to an IPSE program, students will likely need the following:**



Documentation of intellectual disability



Letter(s) of recommendation



Education & work history



Rational for WHY the student would like to attend and HOW it would them reach their goals.

WEBINAR

Hear from a student's family how it really does "take a village" to ensure students have everything they need to apply.



<https://tinyurl.com/48ut4tk4>



<https://tinyurl.com/v9jeadf9>

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT!
Read about the experience of applying for college directly from students!



Share our Think College Families Facebook Group

This is a closed group for families with a child with intellectual disability or autism, who is or may be interested in going to college. This group was created to be a forum where family members can feel comfortable asking questions, sharing concerns, and joining in celebrations



<http://tinyurl.com/yc6349bd>

Ask Our Help Desk!

Send your questions to one of our
technical assistance providers:

ThinkCollegeTA@umb.edu



Help spread the word!



Think Higher.
Think College.

The “Think Higher. Think College.” site is dedicated to helping anyone learn more about IPSEs!



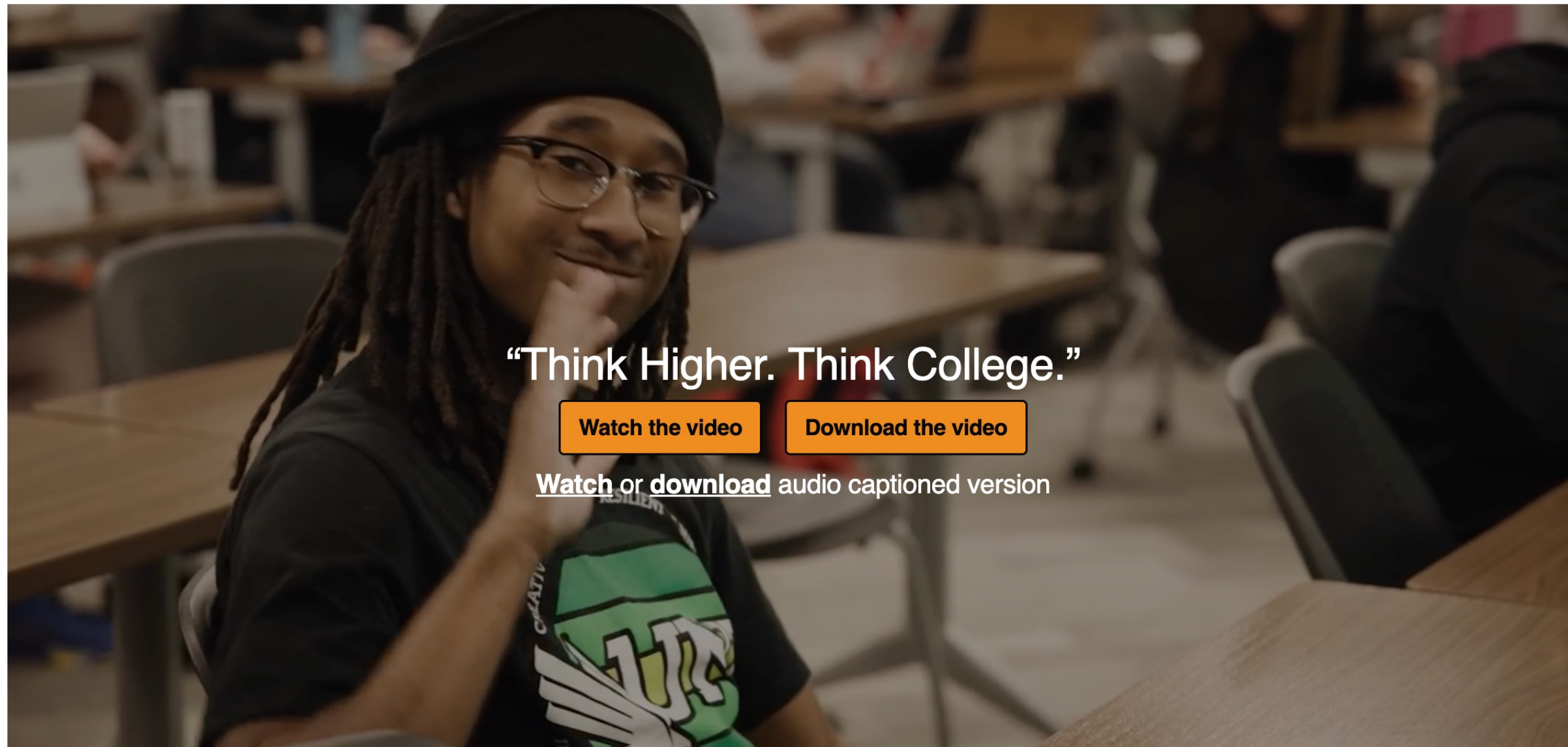
www.ThinkHigherEd.net

Watch & share the campaign video, find new resources, view recordings & learn more at www.thinkhighered.net



Think Higher. Think College.

[Home](#) [About](#) [Resources](#) [Events](#) [Partners](#) [Contact](#)



“Think Higher. Think College.”

[Watch the video](#)

[Download the video](#)

[Watch or download](#) audio captioned version

Join our Think College Transitions Professionals Facebook Group

It's all about interaction here! Ask questions, share valuable resources, and let's have insightful discussions together.



<http://tinyurl.com/mscmsv4v>



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