



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES

THE LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH NETWORK

**Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) Model Demonstrations & TPSID National Coordinating Center (NCC), Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)**

FY 2018	FY 2019	FY2020	FY 2021	FY 2022 Requested
\$11.8 million	\$11.8 million	\$11.8 million	\$13.8 million	<b>\$14 million</b>

**Recommendation:** Appropriate at least \$14 million under the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) program for the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) Model Demonstrations and TPSID National Coordinating Center (NCC). This program is authorized under Title VII, Part D of the Higher Education Act (P.L.110-315). This funding in FY 2022 would allow the Department of Education to continue to fund the 22 TPSID grantees as well as fund the national coordinating center that provides technical assistance and training to the TPSID and other inclusive postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) across the nation.

**Impact of COVID:** College programs for students with ID are not immune to the significant impact of COVID-19 on higher education. The NCC responded to this crisis by creating a dedicated webpage of resources and establishing a Facebook group for college program staff to share strategies and resources that could be used to best support college students with ID as they transitioned into a fully virtually learning environment. Students with ID also rose to the occasion, learning the ins and outs of Zoom and adapting themselves to the new normal as they completed their Spring 2020 semester. Strategies to deal with issues that arose were implemented in the spring and have carried over to the 2020-2021 year since many Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) continued distance or hybrid learning.

**Background:** Limited access to higher education has led to prolific poverty and bleak employment and community living outcomes for individuals with ID in our country. Without the education and training needed to start a career, these individuals are trapped in a pattern of perpetual poverty and dependence upon state and federal benefits. Only 19% of adults with developmental disabilities in the general population had a paid job in the community in 2018–2019, the most recent year for which data are available (National Core Indicators, 2019). However, new postsecondary opportunities for students with ID created by the TPSIDs are leading to increased employment and community living.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) contained provisions to increase access to higher education for students with ID, including model demonstration programs via the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE). In 2010 and again in 2015 and in 2020, grants were awarded to institutes of higher education (IHEs) to fund Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSIDs) to create, expand, or enhance high-quality, inclusive higher education experiences to support positive outcomes for individuals with ID. These model programs created access to inclusive college level coursework, supported student independent living and campus membership, and cultivated pathways to paid employment for students with ID. Research has shown that these postsecondary programs for students with ID have a positive impact on student rates of employment and wages, social networks, self-determination skills, and community living. OPE also awarded a TPSID National Coordinating Center (NCC) grant to the Institute for Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts Boston. The TPSID NCC provides technical assistance and training to the TPSIDs and to other colleges and universities throughout the nation that provide inclusive postsecondary education, and provides information and support to local education agencies, families, and students with ID. The NCC has also developed and implemented a comprehensive evaluation system to

capture student activities and outcomes achieved by youth and adults with ID attending TPSID programs.

**Justification:** Since its inception in 2010, the TPSID program has supported the creation or expansion of replicable model programs at 119 colleges and universities serving almost 4,500 students with ID in 34 states. These students are being supported to take inclusive college classes, improve their ability to live more independently, obtain career experiences through internships, and obtain integrated competitive employment. A majority of employed students with ID had never held a paid job until being enrolled in the TPSID program. Almost all students (93%) participate in at least one employment or career development activity (employment, work-based learning, career awareness and exploration, or job seeking). The vast majority of students enrolled at TPSIDs complete their program earning one or more credentials. Continued funding of these innovative programs ensures the rhetoric of “high expectations” is met with real opportunity for students with ID and supports the continued development of meaningful credentials that align with current higher education certificates and build toward recognition by employers and other IHEs.

TPSID program graduates demonstrate much higher employment rates than the general population of adults with ID. For example, in 2019-2020, 59% of students held a paid job one-year after exiting a TPSID program. The percent of TPSID program graduates with a paid job increases over time: in 2019-2020, 66% of respondents to a 2-year outcome survey had a paid job two years after completing a TPSID program, and 67% of respondents to the three-year outcome survey had a paid job three years after exit. By comparison, 19% of adults with developmental disabilities in the general population had a paid job in the community in 2018–2019, the most recent year for which data are available (National Core Indicators, 2019). Furthermore, students who obtained a paid job while enrolled in a TPSID were almost 15 times more likely to have a paid job at exit as those that did not. **A program that shows this much potential to reduce poverty and increase employment for people with intellectual disabilities is worthy of continued investment and study.**

Critical to the TPSID initiative is continued funding of the National Coordinating Center which provides technical assistance and training nationwide to both TPSID and non TPSID inclusive postsecondary programs, K-12 local education agencies, adult and community service partners, and to families and students interested in expanding inclusive higher education options for students with ID. The NCC has created a national clearinghouse of publicly available information including over a hundred publications that have been downloaded 22,000 times by stakeholders, has disseminated information via 245 national conference presentations, has hosted 48 webinars and facilitated capacity building events in 18 states. The NCC’s website has approximately 96,000 users each year and its online help desk has responded to almost 3000 requests for assistance. Additionally, the NCC has collected, analyzed and reported on data on 4,000+ students from cohort 1 and cohort 2 TPSID sites and has produced 10 annual reports on TPSID data.

The NCC will continue to collect program and student data and conduct comprehensive evaluation and research on program activities and outcomes of the TPSIDs through the National Coordinating Center to develop and field test Model Program Accreditation Standards for Inclusive Higher Education Programs. These model standards now offer critical guidance on program staffing, oversight, inclusive access to courses, employment, and achievement of learning outcomes. Continued funding would be used to create the structures and tools needed to implement these new model standards. The requested funding would also enable the NCC to support non-TPSID funded inclusive postsecondary education programs and institutions of higher education interested in starting a new initiative for students with intellectual disability.

**Recommended Report Language:** Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities - The Committee provides \$14 million for the Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) Model Demonstrations & TPSID National Coordinating Center (NCC) to provide grants to institutions of higher education or consortia of institutions of higher education to enable them to create or expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities, and to fund the research, evaluation and technical assistance work of the NCC serving funded demonstrations and the broader community of postsecondary institutions. Funds will be used by the Department of Education to build on the important work that has been done to develop postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities that lead to positive employment and independent living outcomes.