Importance of Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Presented by Cate Weir
Think College National Coordinating Center

Cate Weir, M.Ed.

Cate has spent her career working toward the **inclusion and full participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities.**

She has spent the last decade working to assure that students with intellectual disability have **the opportunity to attend college** in states throughout the U.S.

She is currently the project director for **Think College**, where she coordinates all project activities, including technical assistance, training, dissemination, and data collection.

In today's session, you'll learn…

How college is possible for students with intellectual disabilities

Specific pathways to college and the characteristics of different programs

What the student experience in college may be like for your child
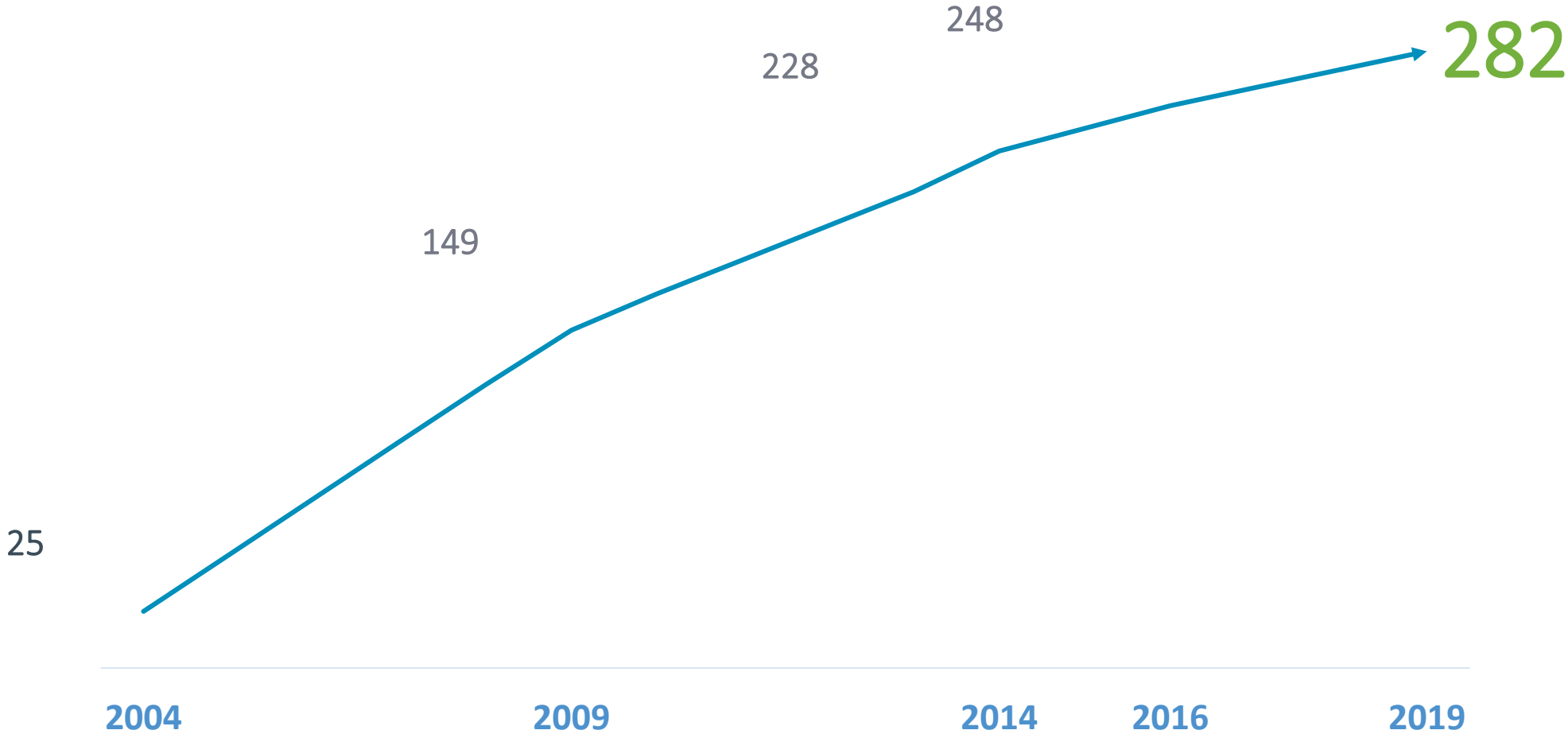
Strategies for paying for college

Finding a college

College Is Possible
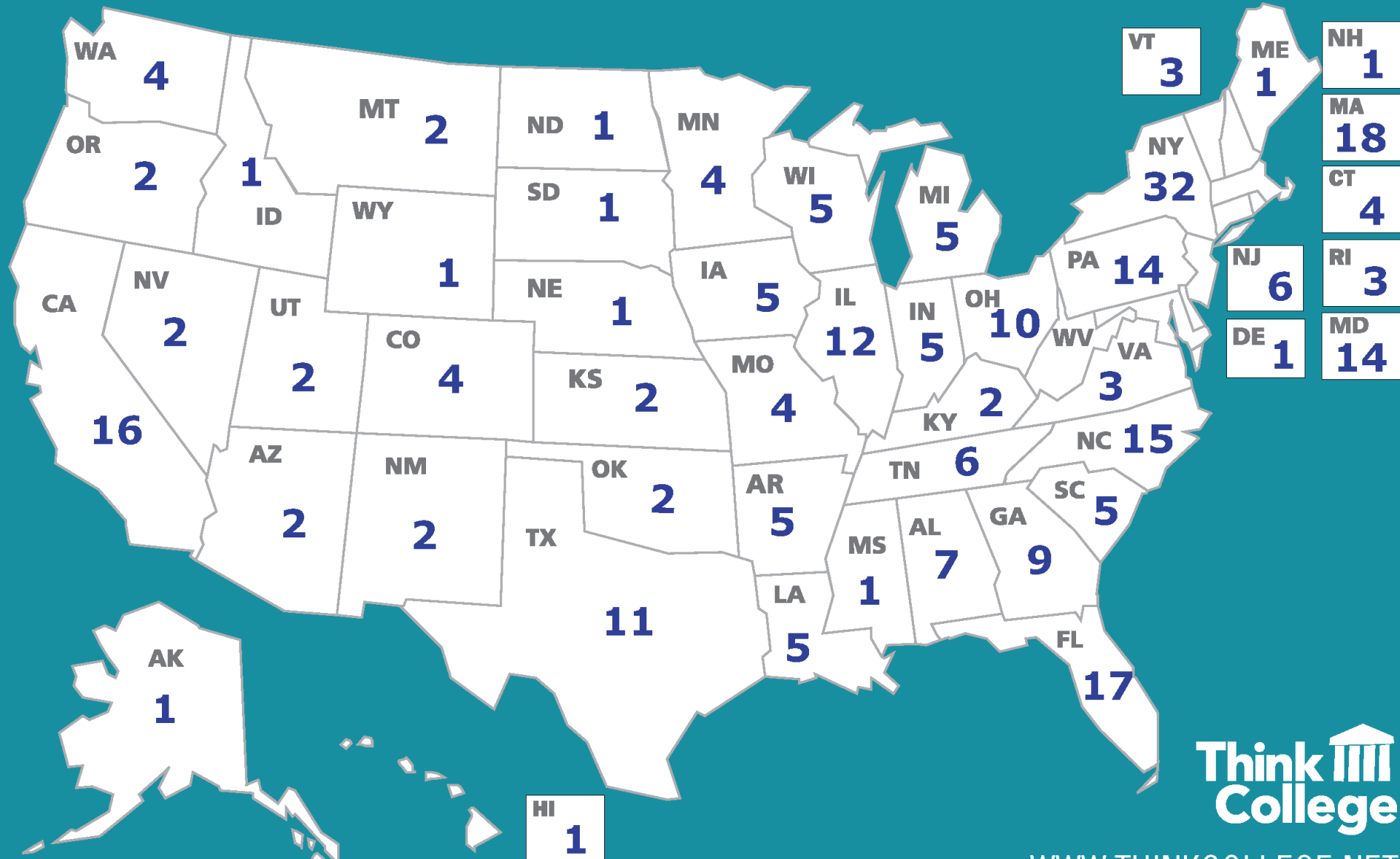
Higher Education Programs
for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in the U.S. 2004-2019

282

248

228

149

25

2004   2009   2014   2016   2019

COLLEGE OPTIONS for STUDENTS with INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, November 2019

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS: **280**

WA 4
OR 2
MT 2
ND 1
MN 4
VT 3
ME 1
NH 1
ID 1
WY 1
SD 1
WI 5
MI 5
NY 32
MA 18
NV 2
UT 2
CO 4
NE 1
IA 5
IL 12
IN 5
OH 10
PA 14
CT 4
CA 16
KS 2
MO 4
KY 6
WV
VA 3
NJ 6
RI 3
AZ 2
NM 2
OK 2
AR 5
TN 6
NC 15
DE 1
MD 14
TX 11
MS 1
AL 7
GA 9
SC 5
LA 5
FL 17
AK 1
HI 1

last updated 11-05-2019

Think College

WWW.THINKCOLLEGE.NET

Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008

Creates the Comprehensive Transition Program

Provides access to Federal Financial Aid

Provides funding for model demonstration projects and a coordinating center

Requires development of model accreditation standards
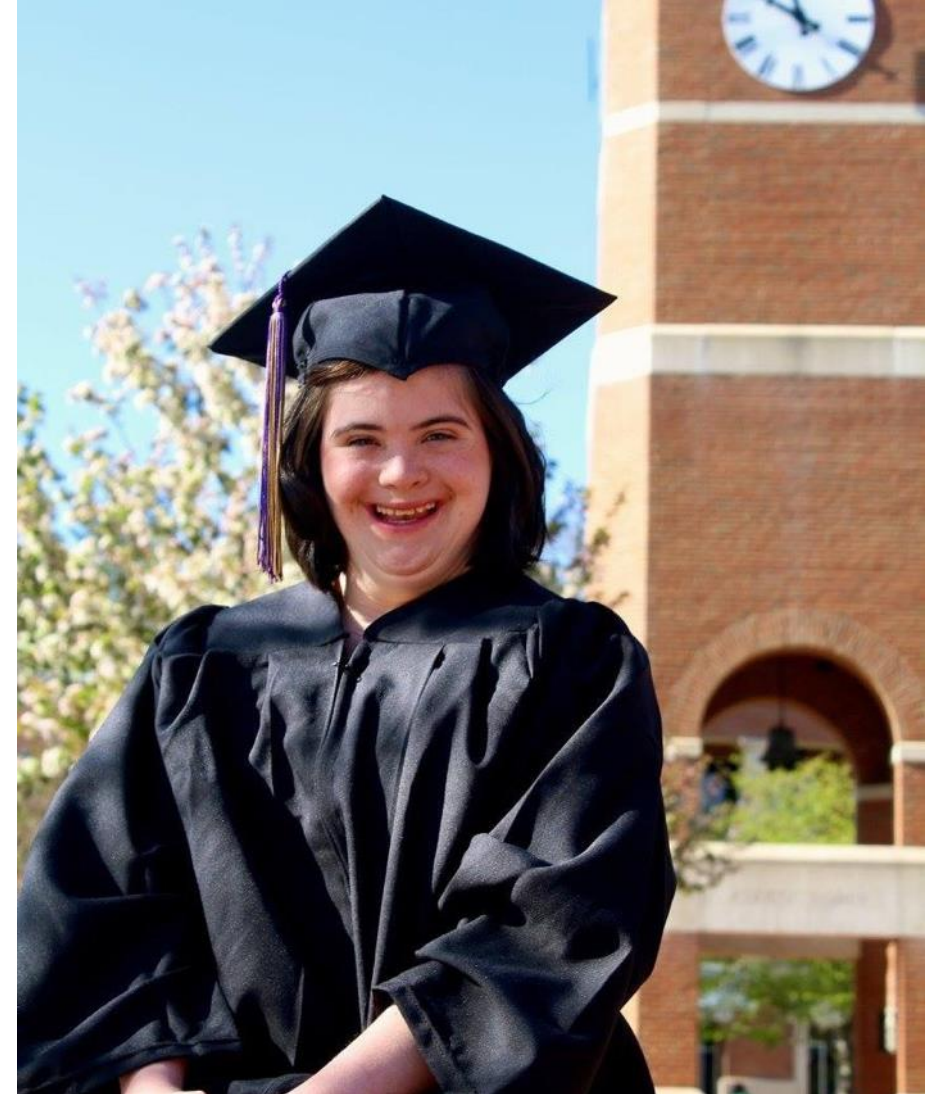
Supports data collection

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Understanding College Programs

Similarities and Differences

Key Features of College Programs

- **Support students** with a documented intellectual disability

- Provide an **alternative admissions** process & requirements

- Offer **additional supports** above and beyond reasonable accommodations

- Confer a **certificate** (not a degree)

Students with Documented Intellectual Disability

When a student has an intellectual disability, it means that s/he:

- Has a **cognitive impairment** characterized by significant limitations in:
    - Intellectual and cognitive functioning; and
    - Adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and,

- Is currently, or was formerly, eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1401), including a student who was determined eligible for special education or related services under the IDEA but was home-schooled or attended private school.

An Alternate Pathway to College

Traditional Matriculated

- Placement tests, essays
- Pursuing a degree
- Reasonable accommodations

Alternate Non-Matriculated

- Person-centered planning
- Individual support plan
- Focus on employment goals
- May not pursue degree/credit

Additional Supports

- Peer mentors
- Employment support (job coaches, job developers)
- Tutoring
- Academic modifications (if student is auditing)
- Residence hall supports
- Availability of support may vary – but should be designed around the needs of the student.

Student Credentials

Students in these programs do not earn a college degree.

Sample certificate titles offered:

- Business Office Assistant Certificate

- Certified Dietary Aide

- Certificate of Program Completion

- Early Childhood Aide Certificate

- Fast Track to Employment

- Certificate of Integrated Studies

- Certificate in Career Studies
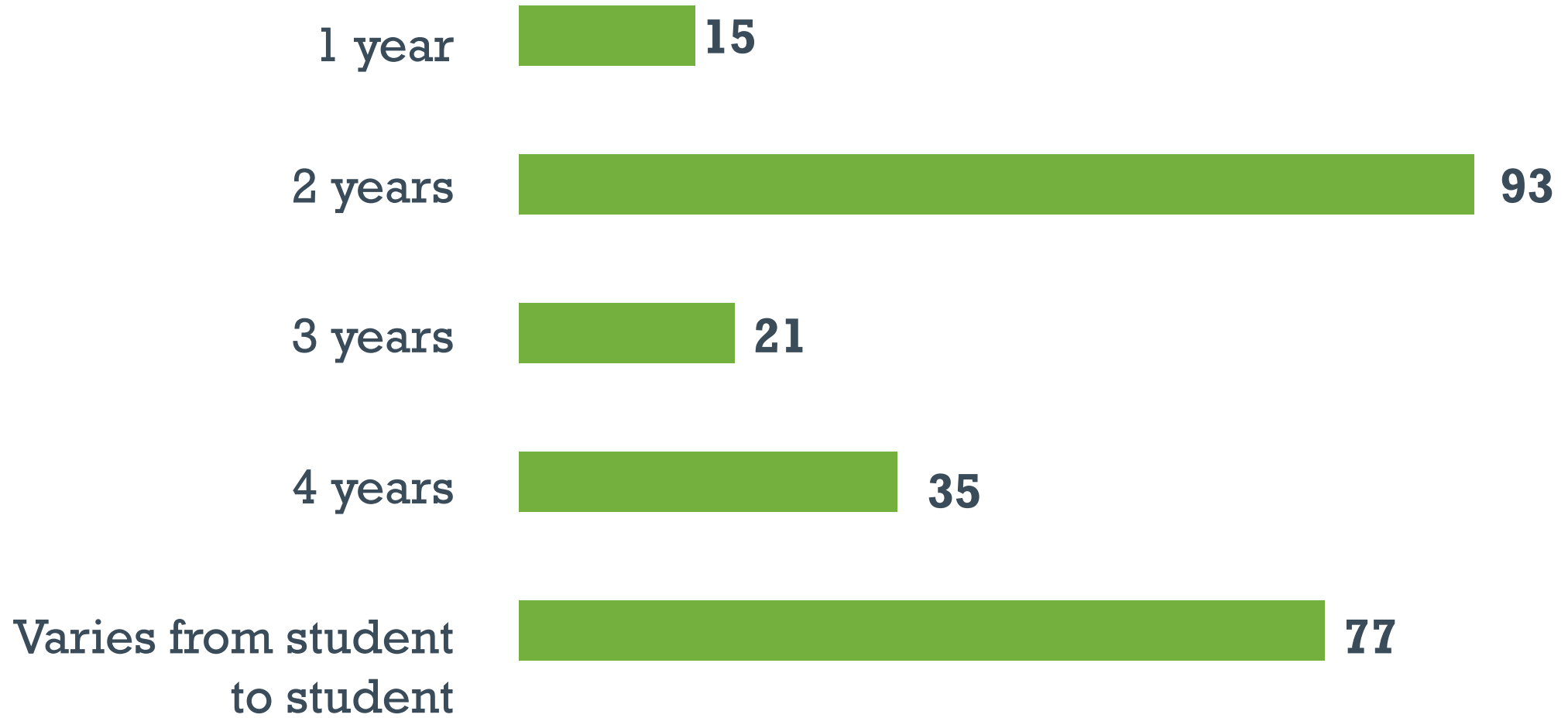
- Integrated College and Community Studies

Variations in College Programs

- Length of program
- Type of institute of higher education (IHE)
- Residential and financial aid availability
- Types of students supported
- Academic experiences
- Employment experiences
- Degree of inclusion

Length of Programs

1 year	15
2 years	93
3 years	21
4 years	35
Varies from student to student	77

Type of Institutions

- 101 at 2-year IHEs
- 149 at 4-year IHEs
- 6 at technical schools
- 12 at other types of programs

89
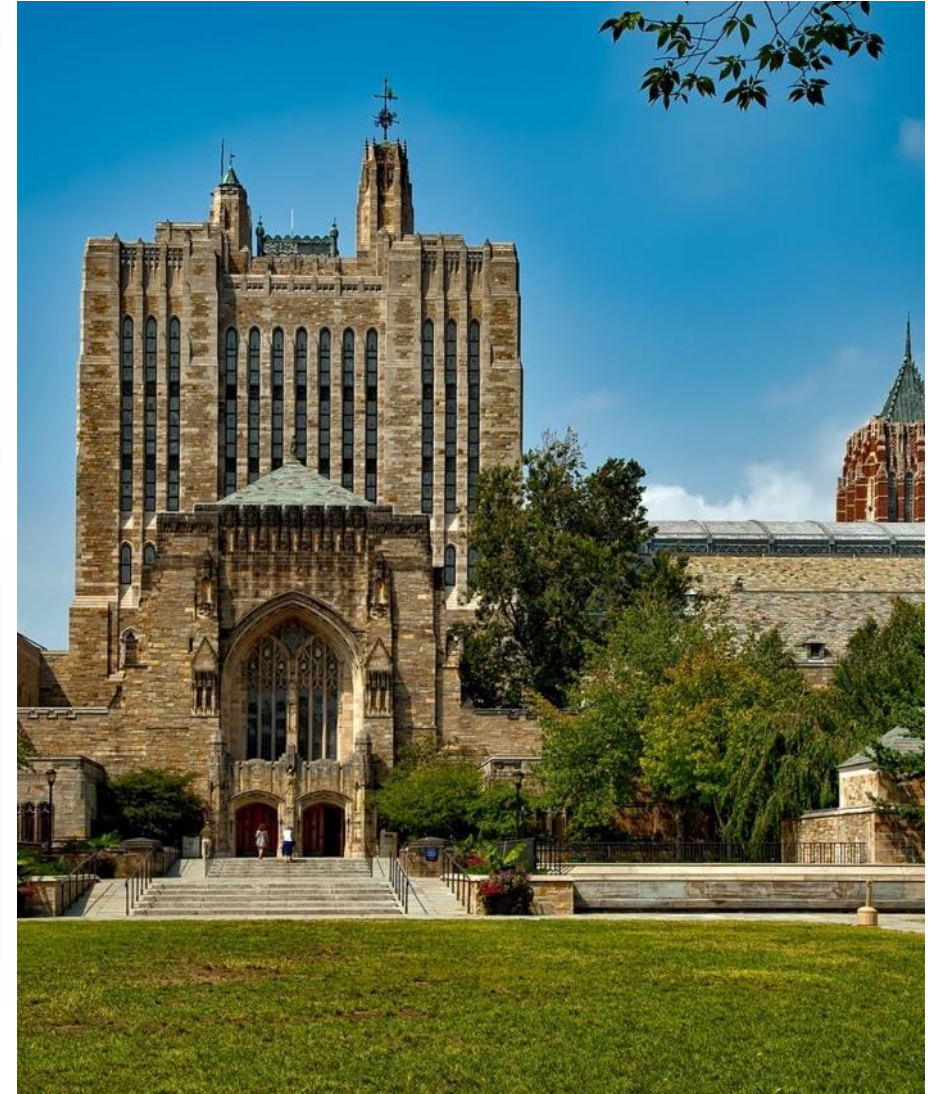(33%) offer federal financial aid

95
(35%) offer housing

Type of Institutions (continued)

Number of students in program

- Mean = 29
- Median = 17

Acceptance rate

- Mean = 68%

Disability

- All enroll students with ID.
- 225 enroll students with ID and autism.

Type of students served

- 45 serve only high school students.
- 165 serve only students who have exited high school.
- 57 serve both.

Source: Think College Programs Directory, June 1, 2019

Academics

At **138** programs, students take inclusive classes for credit.

At **177** programs, students take inclusive classes for audit.

At **107** programs, students take continuing education classes.

168 programs offer special classes.

158 programs award a credential.

Source: Think College Programs Directory, June 1, 2019

Employment

In 2018-2019:

43% of students had paid, integrated employment while attending the program.

56% of students who completed the program the previous year had paid, integrated employment within 90 days of exit.

Programs Vary by Degree of Inclusion

Inclusive

- **All** experiences are fully integrated with students without disabilities.

- **No** separate classes are offered.

- Students have **full access** to all campus activities, with support as needed.

Mixed

- **Some** experiences occur as a group.

- Classes are a **mix** of typical college classes and separate classes just for students with ID.

- Access to campus may be **limited** in some ways.

Substantially Separate

- Students have no or **extremely limited** access to typical college classes.

- Instruction happens exclusively or primarily in **separate classes**.

- Students may have **socially inclusive** experiences on campus, but often in a group.

What Is the Student Experience Like?

Student Experience: Academics

- Students may enroll in **college courses** for credit or audit.

- If auditing, **modifications** are allowed.

- **Tutoring** services are made available.

- Students may have **specialized classes** just for students in the program.
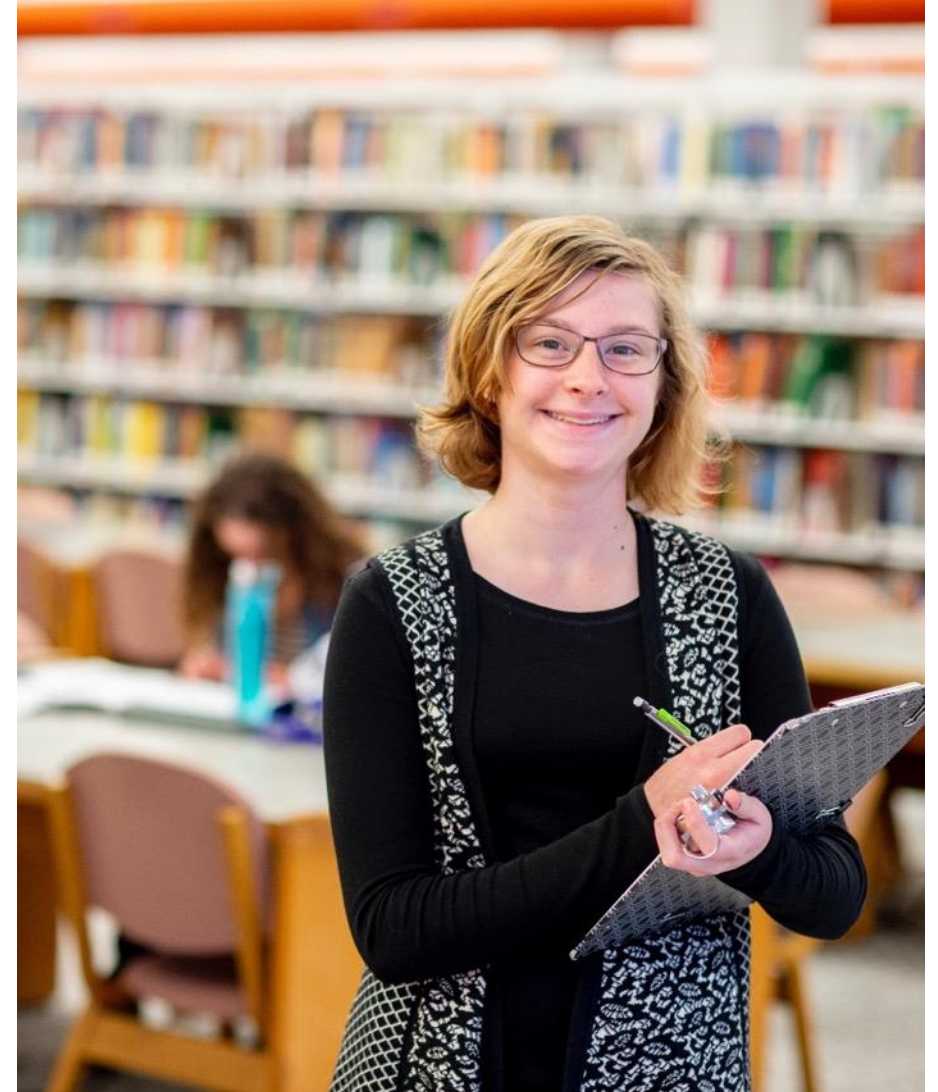
Student Experience: Extracurricular Activities

Enriching experiences may include:

- **Social support** from peer mentors

- **Participating in campus** organizations

- **Student** government

- **Greek life**

- **Sports**

- **Developing independence** on campus

Student Experience: Employment

- **Career development** activities

- **Internships/work** study

- **Paid jobs** on and off campus

- **Support** to find paid work after graduation

Student Experience: Housing

Dorms/On-Campus Housing

- Sometimes with another student in the program
- Sometimes with a student outside of the program
- Supports based on the needs of students
- Some expectation of independent skills is typical

Off-Campus Housing

- A house or apartment complex with other students in the program

Paying for College

Paying for College

- **ABLE Accounts**

- **Scholarships**

- **Federal and state support programs**, such as Vocational Rehabilitation or Community Services

- **Federal Financial Aid** (grants, but not loans)

Finding a College

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

- Gwynedd Mercy University (PA)

Find the College that is right for you!

This directory includes information on 272 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.
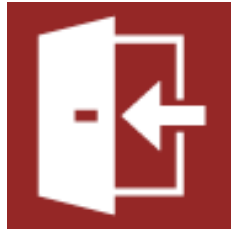
Review these Frequently Asked Questions for answers to some general questions on college programs, how we gather the information in the directory, and how to use the features of College Search.

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.

https://thinkcollege.net/college-search

Conducting A College Search – A resource by Think College

https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/Conducting_College_Search_HTTC1v2.pdf

Admission

Fees, Tuition & Financial Aid

Inclusion with the Campus Community

Academics

Housing

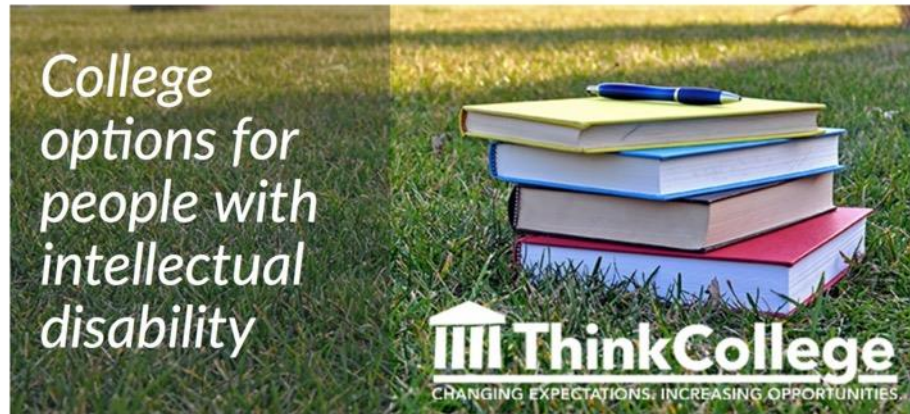Supports

Program Administration

Communication with Parents

Career Development / Employment

Program Outcomes

Think College National Coordinating Center

College options for people with intellectual disability

- 🔍 COLLEGE SEARCH
- 📖 RESOURCE LIBRARY
- ⇄ INNOVATION EXCHANGE
- 📖 WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE

Federally funded since 2010 to provide coordination, training and technical assistance to any college or university who wants to establish or improve postsecondary education opportunities to students with intellectual disability on their campus.

www.thinkcollege.net

Families *Think College* on Facebook

A closed group for families that are engaged with planning for and selecting a college program for their sons and daughters with intellectual disability.

Questions?

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Thank You!

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