

Start-Up Grant to Spur New Inclusive Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

Overview

Through a recent *Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)* award from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education, we (Next Steps at Vanderbilt University) received funding to both grow our own program *and* support other campuses in Tennessee to launch their own program. The purpose of this start-up grant is to increase the number of inclusive higher education programs serving students with intellectual disability in Tennessee. We will be awarding two grants (up to \$20,000 each) to two- or four-year colleges or universities in the state that are committed to launching new programs on their campuses. These grants are intended to support the strategic planning and partnerships that will lead to the inclusion of students with intellectual disability in classrooms and campus life. We are excited about coming alongside other campuses in this way to expand opportunities for young people with disabilities.

About Inclusive Higher Education in Tennessee

Across the country, two- and four-year colleges and universities are developing programs to support students with intellectual disability (including autism) to access the myriad benefits of higher education. Almost 250 such programs now exist in the United States, including five in Tennessee:

- EDGE at Union University
- FUTURE at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville
- IDEAL at Lipscomb University
- Next Steps at Vanderbilt University
- TigerLIFE at the University of Memphis

With more than 17,000 students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in Tennessee, we see great need for new and high-quality options for students living in all corners of the state. To learn more about college options for students with intellectual disability, visit the Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance website at <http://tnihealliance.org>.

The Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008 included provisions to (a) provide access to financial aid for students with intellectual disability and (b) establish of a set of model demonstration programs across the country. The Act defines the "student with an intellectual disability" to mean a student with 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 who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Compelling programs address inclusion in the academic, social, employment, and/or residential aspects of campus life.

Who Can Apply?

The lead applicant must be a two- and four-year higher education institution in Tennessee that is interested in developing a new, inclusive post-secondary program for students with intellectual disability. Although applicants can partner with local school districts and other organizations, the primary applicant should be a postsecondary institution.

What is Your Commitment?

Recipients of a mini-grant must commit to the following activities:

- Develop a core planning team comprised of both campus and community stakeholders.
- Have at least one team member attend quarterly meetings of the *Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance*
- Hold an initial launch meeting with project staff from Next Steps within the first month.
- Meet at least monthly by phone or Skype to discuss progress and access technical assistance.
- Submit a final project report to us by September 15, 2018.
- Undertake activities that will set the stage for—or lead to—the development of an inclusive program in the near future.

What Supports Will You Receive?

We will provide mini-grant recipients with the following supports:

- A grant of up to \$20,000 to cover expenses related to program planning and exploration (e.g., personnel, meeting expenses, travel, supplies, equipment, other).
- Technical assistance as you carry out these activities.
- Support from members of the Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance.
- Positive publicity as we share what your campus is doing throughout the state.

Critical Dates and Selection Process

- Applications are due by **July 15, 2017 (midnight, central time)**.
- Next Steps will convene a team to evaluate and prioritize applications. Preference may be given to applications submitted by campuses (a) in areas of Tennessee without an inclusive higher education program and/or (b) that have already taken preliminary steps to explore inclusive programming on their campus.
- Recipients will be announced by **August 1, 2017**. Vanderbilt University will prepare and forward to selected grantees an agreement for execution addressing, among other things, the elements set forth in this RFP. To be eligible for participation, awardees must agree to all terms and conditions prior to program implementation.

Submit Application Electronically or by Mail To:

Felicia Johnson, Program Coordinator
felicia.p.johnson@vanderbilt.edu
Next Steps at Vanderbilt
Hobbs 414
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203

Feel free to contact Tammy Day (tammy.l.day@vanderbilt.edu; 615-322-4999) or Elise McMillan (elise.mcmillan@vanderbilt.edu; 615-343-2540) at with questions about the application process.

Application Instructions

Your proposal should address each of the following questions. Do not exceed 10 double-spaced pages (12 point font, Times New Roman, 1" margins) for items 1-10.

1. Which postsecondary institution will be the focus of this mini-grant?
2. Describe your vision for an inclusive college experience on your campus.
3. Describe any steps your campus has already been taken toward developing a postsecondary program for students with intellectual disability (if applicable).
4. Provide a list of your goals this project, along with a rationale for each goal.
5. Describe the activities and timelines you are proposing for achieving these goals.
6. Describe the on-campus and external stakeholders with whom you will partner on these activities.
7. Describe the key personnel who will contribute to this work.
8. Describe any existing institutional resources you will draw upon to support your plans.
9. Describe your plans for sustaining your efforts after the conclusion of this mini-grant.
10. What types of support do you anticipate needing from us if you were awarded this mini-grant?

In addition, include the following items in your application. Items A-C are not counted in your page limits.

- A. Provide a 12-month budget with a brief justification for each line item.
[The maximum amount of funding is \$20,000. Matching or in-kind funds are not required, but encouraged. The indirect rate for this competition is capped at 8%.]
- B. Include at least two letters of support: one from a campus administrator and one from a local disability organization or school district.
[Each letter should demonstrate commitment to and enthusiasm for the project.]
- C. Include a brief CV/resume (2-4 pages) for each key personnel identified above.
- D. Include contact information for your project.