

Funding Alert!!

Funding for TPSIDs is in Jeopardy

In October 2010, 27 Model Demonstration Projects called **Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education**, or TPSIDs, were funded in 23 states by the U.S. Department of Education. The projects fulfill Congress's intent to develop inclusive college options for students with intellectual disabilities as stipulated in the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008.

The University of Delaware received one of these 5-year grant awards (\$2.3 million over 5 years) to develop, implement and evaluate new statewide options for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) to attain their goals for postsecondary education.

There is now debate in Congress about whether the 27 TPSID programs and a national coordinating center should continue to receive funding. The TPSID projects have been included in the most recent Continuing Resolution proposal, but the federal budget situation is evolving. Ongoing funding is not guaranteed.

To ensure Congress is aware of the importance of this program to you or people you know who have intellectual disabilities, please contact your members of Congress (<http://www.contactingthecongress.org/>).

In your statement (letter, email or telephone call) include the following:

- Your name, address, affiliation
- A general statement of the importance of this funding (*see sample points below*)
- A statement of what is at stake for your family, students, university or state in the retention of this funding

The purpose of your statement is to educate your legislators about this issue. On the next page are some sample points you might include in your statement. You should also explain why postsecondary education programs for people with intellectual disabilities are important to you!

Sample Support Statement Ideas for TPSID Funding

- Students with intellectual disability are the *least* likely to access college or become employed after leaving high school. However youth with intellectual disability who participate in postsecondary education are 26% more likely to exit their vocational rehabilitation program with employment and earned a 73% higher weekly income (Migliore, Butterworth, & Hart 2008).
- 27 TPSID programs demonstrate new models of promising practices in 23 states for students with intellectual disabilities. The TPSID program also funded a National Coordinating Center charged with conducting a rigorous longitudinal evaluation of the TPSID projects to identify and disseminate evidence based practices to institutes of higher education via a broad national network.
- The first goal of the University of Delaware's project is to establish a Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program. There is already a growing waiting list of more than 40 interested families and individuals, and potential students will be applying to the program in March and April. Customized programs of study for 15 students will start in the fall semester. Removing grant funding now would put these plans in jeopardy.
- Each year the program will admit 15 students to the 2-year certificate program. Students who complete the program will receive a meaningful credential that will prepare them for their chosen career or further academic and technical training. By 2015 60 students will have graduated.
- Over the next few years, Delaware state agencies anticipate that the number of students with ID aging out or graduating with a diploma from Delaware high schools will increase by more than 400%; from 117 in 2010 to 492 in 2014. Some of these students will move directly into the workforce and others will be served by community disability agencies. However, many will be interested in the opportunity to pursue further education—an opportunity that is now a real possibility through the TPSID project. Thus, the UD TPSID grant's second goal is to partner with higher education institutions in other parts of the state to create other postsecondary education model programs for people with intellectual disabilities on their campuses. The third goal of the project is to ensure sustainability of the new programs through reasonable fee structures, collaboration with other programs, and pursuing new provisions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act that, for the first time in history, will permit people with intellectual disabilities to apply for federal financial aid to attend postsecondary education programs.
- The Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education (TPSID) and the National Coordinating Center by the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education provide crucial services needed to ensure that students with intellectual disabilities have access to a college education and increase employment outcomes. These programs should remain at level funding in the 2011 budget.
- *[Remember to explain why postsecondary education opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities is important to you!]*