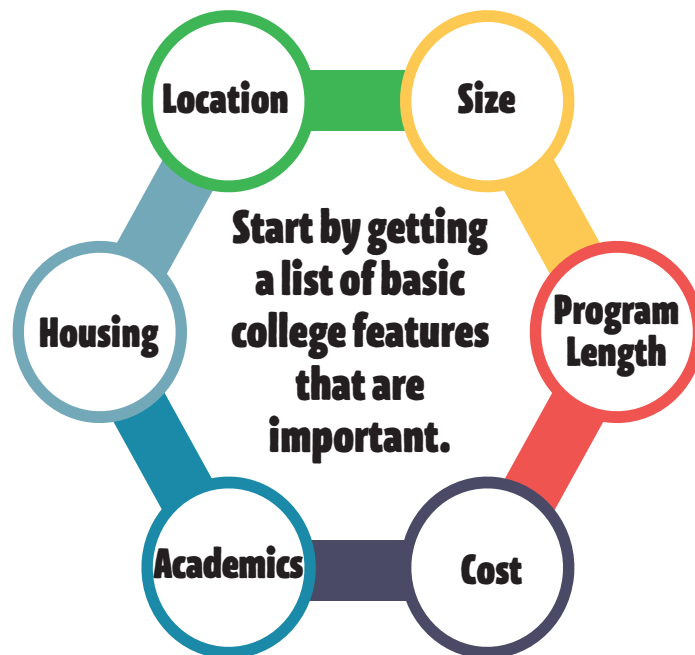


Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home (see Figure 1).

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.

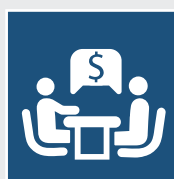
Figure 1. Sample College Features



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.



Admission



Fees, Tuition, & Financial Aid



Inclusion with the Campus Community



Academics



Housing



Supports



Program Administration



Communication with Parents



Career Development



Program Outcomes

Think College SEARCH

Use Think College Search to create a list of colleges that offer what you want. Think College Search is an online listing of postsecondary education programs for students with ID that are affiliated with an accredited institute of higher education.

ADVANCED SEARCH AND FILTERS

Search by program, keyword, location and program features. Filter by disability, type of school, and length of program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Find answers to common questions about Think College Search features and tools.

CREATE A LIST OF FAVORITES

Click Save on any program you're interested in.

DOWNLOADABLE DATA

The listing that is generated can be emailed or downloaded as an Excel file.



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

- University of Missouri - Columbia
- Queensborough Community College
- North Dakota State University
- Texas State University

SEARCH CLEAR

Program or Keyword SHOW ALL

LOCATION

☐ Alabama (8)

☐ Alaska (1)

☐ Arizona (3)

☒ Show more states

PROGRAM FEATURES

☐ Serves Students in High School *

☐ Offers Financial Aid (CTP)

☐ Offers Housing

☐ Program not limited by students' school districts

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

College Search

The only directory of its kind

The only directory of its kind, Think College Search features information on 315 postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability.

Frequently Asked Questions

The most commonly asked questions about college options for students with intellectual disability and how to use this directory.

Conducting a College Search

Questions to ask College Programs: A downloadable guide, featuring over 50 different questions to ask colleges during your college search.

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS

0 1-3 4-6 7-9 10+

CHOICES/ Opportunities for Postsecondary Success (OPS)

Colorado State University

FORT COLLINS, CO

The multi-faceted CHOICES/Opportunities for Postsecondary Success (OPS) is a program at the Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) at Colorado State University (CSU). The CCP has contracts with the CO Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (CO DVR) and the CO Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CO DIDD), with both of these agencies partnering with the CHOICES program to provide long-term support for young adults with... [Read more](#)

Address CHOICES/ Opportunities for Postsecondary Success (OPS)
320 Occupational Therapy
Department Colorado State University
Campus Delivery 1573
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1573

Phone 970.491.3469

Web [Program website](#)

Contact Julia Kothe

Email julia.kothe@colostate.edu

State*	College/university	Program name	Program Contact Person	Program Contact Email	Program contact phone	Program website	Program length	Housing available?	Is program a CTP?	Admission application deadline	Average student tuition and fees for the year	Accept out of state students?
Alabama	Alabama A & M University	Bulldog LIFE	Sharon Brown	sharon.brown@aamu.edu	256-372-8002	Program website	Program website	No	Yes		\$5,500.00	No
Colorado	University of Colorado Colorado Springs	Office of Inclusive Services	Julie Harmon	jharmon@uccs.edu	719.255.4214	Program website	4 years	Yes	Yes	January 31st for admission in the fall	\$9,000.00	Yes
South Carolina	University of South Carolina	CarolinaLIFE	Maggie Baker	mfbaker@mailbox.sc.edu	803.576-7846	Program website	4 years	Yes	Yes	09/15/2023	\$15,360.00	Yes
Washington	Highline College	Achieve	Julie Pollard	jpollard@highline.edu	206.592.3526	Program website	2 years	Yes	Yes	March 15, 2023	\$4,600.00	Yes

UP-TO-DATE LISTINGS

315 college programs listed*. More are added as they open.

*As of March 2023

COMPREHENSIVE

Find detailed program information, including deadlines, acceptance rates, career development activities, and more.

QUICK LOOK

Find basic information fast with the click of a button.

COLLEGE COMPARISON

Compare your favorite programs on 6 key features:

- Program length
- Housing availability
- Accepts out of state students
- Financial Aid availability (CTP)
- Application Due Date
- Cost

www.thinkcollege.net/college-search

ADMISSION



Admission requirements and deadlines for these programs vary widely – be sure to note these as you review the program information.

- » How many students apply each year? How many are accepted? How many students are you interviewing?
- » Do you accept out of state students? Do you have any out of state students currently?
- » What are your admission criteria? What testing is required, if any?
- » Are students who are under guardianship accepted?
- » What are the timelines/deadlines for the application process? When will students be notified of your admission decision?
- » What do you suggest admitted students do over the summer to prepare for a successful transition to campus life in the fall?
- » My questions regarding admission:



FEES, TUITION, AND FINANCIAL AID

Look for this icon in College Search to find the programs that offer access to federal student aid.



If college programs become an approved Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP), students have access to federal student aid, even if they don't have a regular high school diploma and are not seeking a degree.

- » **What is the total cost to attend your program, per year?**
- » **Is your program an approved CTP and able to offer access to federal student aid for your students?**
- » **How do students pay to attend? Do students use vocational rehabilitation funds, community agency funds, personal funds, federal financial aid, scholarships, or other resources?**
- » **If a student is accepted, when will payment be due? Is there a payment plan available?**
- » **My questions regarding fees, tuition, and financial aid:**

INCLUSION WITH THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY



Although students may enter these programs through an alternate admission process, once on campus they should have a very typical experience.



- » **Aside from program faculty and staff, who is your program's biggest advocate on campus?**
- » **What are some campus activities that your students have participated in? Are Greek life, intramural or club sports, and other student activities open to students in your program? Are there any campus services or activities that students in the program are not allowed to access?**
- » **How, if at all, is your program included in the university's overall diversity and inclusion efforts?**
- » **How important is full inclusion to your program?**
- » **How do you support students to be fully included in college life?**
- » **Do the students participate in a typical college graduation?**
- » **Are students in your program considered enrolled students in the university? Do they have alumni benefits when they complete the certificate program?**
- » **My questions regarding inclusion with the campus community:**

ACADEMICS

Participation in typical college courses should be a key element of any inclusive college program.



- » What are the required courses and learning activities (i.e. internships, community service, etc.) that students must do to earn a certificate?
- » How many special or separate classes are there for students with ID? Who teaches the separate classes?
- » How many typical college courses do students take per semester?
- » How much choice do students have in the courses they take each semester?
- » Are students from the program able to take a wide range of typical college courses?
- » What supports does the program provide to the professors of typical college courses that students take?
- » Do students have the option of taking courses for credit?
- » Do students get a transcript?
- » How are accommodations and modifications set-up?
- » My questions regarding academics:

HOUSING

Look for this icon in College Search to find the programs that offer access to student housing.



Even at residential colleges, housing may not yet be available for students in these programs.



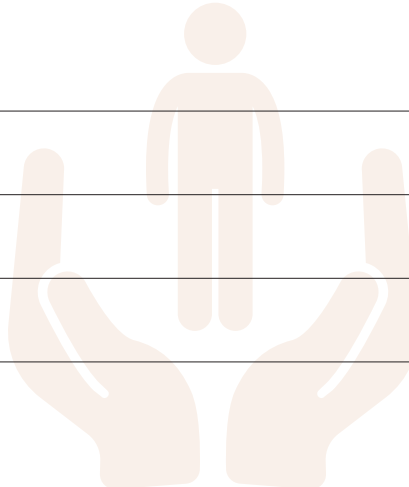
- » **Where do students live? Is it all in one house or dorm, or all over campus? Are there different arrangements for first year students?**
- » **How are roommates selected?**
- » **Can students in the program choose a roommate?**
- » **Do students with and without disabilities live together?**
- » **What supports does the program provide students living on-campus?**
- » **Is support always available? If not, is there a plan for emergencies?**
- » **How are the Resident Assistants (RAs) and other Residence Life staff trained and supported by the program?**
- » **Are there special rules for students with ID that do not apply to other students, for example, a curfew?**
- » **How is safety and security for the students in campus housing balanced with freedom?**
- » **Are there rules that only apply to students in the program?**
- » **Do students have access to additional program staff or RAs, or just the Residence Life staff who work with all students living on campus?**
- » **Is there a summer orientation or other strategy to teach skills needed on campus to be safe?**
- » **Are students held to the same Code of Conduct as other students on campus?**
- » **My questions regarding housing:**

SUPPORTS



Types of support and hours of availability can vary quite a bit from program to program.

- » **What supports are provided to students to help them attend classes, take part in activities, and become more independent?**
- » **Do you provide peer mentors? How are they trained and supervised?**
- » **How are students matched with peer mentors and support staff?**
- » **Can you provide examples of natural supports on campus available to students?**
- » **Is there always access to support as needed, or are there times of the day/week when students do not have access to support?**
- » **Are students required to have a support person or mentor with them at all times?**
- » **My questions regarding support services:**



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Knowing what kinds of staff the program employs can help you assess the priorities of the program as well as the level and kinds of support the student can expect.



- » How many full-time and part-time employees are there?
- » What kind of experience and training do the program administrators and staff have?
- » Are program staff employed by the college? If not, who do they work for?
- » What hours are program staff available?
- » Who is the best contact person when family members have questions or concerns?
- » My questions regarding program administration:

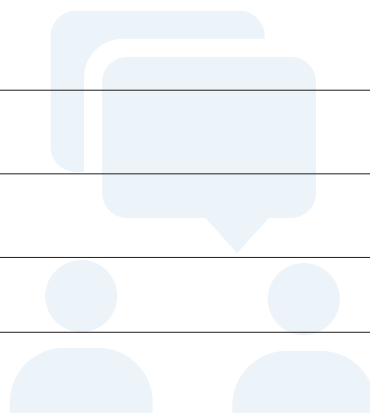


COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS



Colleges must follow the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

- » How do you handle FERPA requirements while communicating important information with families?
- » What role, if any, do the parents have in the development of the student's individualized program and support?
- » Are there any limitations on which college staff parents can communicate with?
- » What communication strategies are used with parents?
- » My questions regarding communicating with families:



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- » What types of part-time work do students in the program have?
 - » What are the qualifications of the staff working with students on career development?
 - » What supports do you have to help students find a paid job while attending college?
 - » What supports do you have for supporting students to find employment once they graduate?
 - » My questions regarding career development:
-
-

Data show that paid work in college leads to better employment outcomes after college.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES



As of 2022, college programs for students with ID are reporting close to 60% employment rate for students upon graduation.



- » What certificate or credential do students earn when they graduate from the program? Has it been approved by your college or university?
 - » What are the graduation rates?
 - » What types of careers have your graduates gone on to?
 - » What are employment rates for your graduates?
 - » Where do your graduates typically live after they graduate?
 - » My questions regarding program outcomes:
-
-

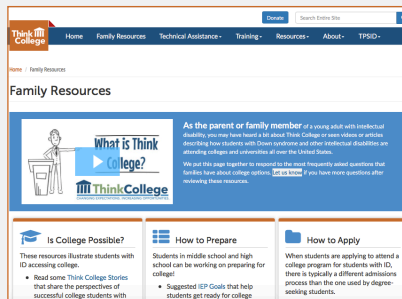


Explore these additional resources on the Think College website to get more information about the college search process.



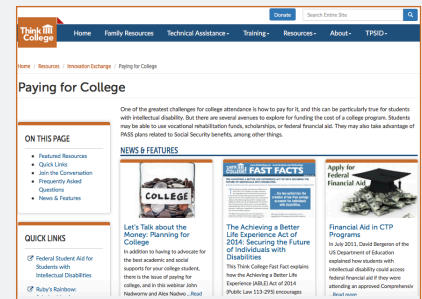
Connect with Other Families

The Families Think College Facebook page is a closed group designed for families to communicate easily with one another about preparing for college.



Family Resources

The Family Resources page includes answers to some frequently asked questions and guidance to different areas of the Think College website that families might find useful.



Paying for College

[Learn more about how to pay for college.](#)

Find recorded webinars from financial experts, information on scholarship opportunities, and helpful ways to save for college without jeopardizing disability benefits.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CATE WEIR is the Project Coordinator for the Think College National Coordinating Center and has worked in the field of inclusive postsecondary education for over 20 years. One of the most rewarding aspects of her work is supporting parents and students to make informed choices about college options.



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ThinkCollege
NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER
INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

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