

ThinkCollege National Coordinating Center

Strategic Capacity Building Project Proposal by Maryland

Project Abstract

Maryland has invested significant time in discussing the need for improvements in the access to and quality of postsecondary education for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD). There is also strong commitment toward developing and improving postsecondary programming for students with ID/DD that is inclusive, high quality, and focused on career development to prepare our youth to work and live independently in their communities. Where Maryland has been unable to make forward progress is in the availability of funding, both to invest in the development of programs as well as to be able to provide strong technical assistance and support to institutions of higher education (IHEs) in order to develop programs in alignment with national best practices. For the upcoming fiscal year, the Maryland state Developmental Disabilities Administration has created a line item in their budget to support development of such programs, with an emphasis on 4-year programs. In addition, Maryland's State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services under the Secondary Transition Specialist has committed discretionary funds and staffing time to oversee 2-year Community College dual enrollment programs to improve inclusive education and employment outcomes for its students with disabilities, including ID/DD. Knowledge and understanding among colleges and universities regarding best practices and how to develop quality inclusive programming is the second biggest barrier identified in Maryland, even among institutions who are interested—therefore, Maryland is proposing to use money from the ThinkCollege Strategic Capacity Building Project to develop two Capacity Building Institutes – one for 4-year IHEs and one for 2-year Community Colleges – to both share best practice information and guidance from experts as well as gather statewide needs. Based on feedback from these events, we will provide three outputs: (1) develop guidelines to assist DDA in the most effective dissemination of their funds to a 4-year IHE for the purpose of starting an inclusive PSE program for students with ID/DD; (2) create a plan for MSDE to help outline their oversight of inclusive, career-focused dual enrollment programs in 2-year Community Colleges, and (3) assist interested 4-year IHE's create marketing plans to gain buy-in from their college leadership in preparation for applying for the DDA funding. Our proposal includes Phases 1 and 2 of an overall 5-Phase plan for Maryland.