



Florida
Developmental
Disabilities
Council, Inc.

SECTION 2:

Launching a Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program for Students with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability in Florida's Technical College System: **Program Developers Guide**



2020 Replication Guide Based on Project TOPS at
Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help collaborations around Florida to replicate the Project TOPS model in their local technical college.

Project TOPS (Project Transitions to Postsecondary Institutions) is based at Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College, part of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It is supported by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) to serve as a model program enrolling and supporting students with an intellectual and developmental disability in postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) in Florida's technical college system.

This guide provides information on key aspects of the program and insight into how Project TOPS has addressed the challenges and decisions that will confront any similar program.

This guide is available for download from the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) at:
fcsua.org

This guide has five main sections:

Introduction—discusses issues related to employment of people with an intellectual and developmental disability from both national and state perspectives, introduces inclusive postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual and developmental disability in Florida, and introduces Project TOPS.

Know More—reviews information about career and technical education and exceptional student education in Florida, lists key resources available to those seeking to build an inclusive CTE program in Florida, and presents guiding questions and considerations for teams working to develop a program.

Getting It Done—includes important tips on planning, program development, and other aspects of establishing a program.

Financial and Other Resources for Program Development—outlines the resources that Project TOPS and its students have accessed to support their enrollment in their CTE programs and the individualized supports they receive from Project TOPS, as well as other resources available for program development.

Keeping It Going: Sustainability—briefly reviews the progress Project TOPS has made to build the sustainability of its model.

INTRODUCTION

In Florida and around the nation, rates of unemployment and underemployment for people with a disability are high. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019, the national unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 7.3 percent—more than double the unemployment rate for persons without a disability (3.5 percent).

For people with an intellectual and developmental disability, unemployment rates are even higher.

The causes of this disparity vary—and the strategies employed to attack the problem must be just as varied.

One important angle of attack involves CTE programs, which prepare individuals with the specific skills they need to obtain a job and build a career in a particular field. These are typically postsecondary programs that focus on traditional trades such as carpentry or cosmetology, along with emerging fields such as solar energy and digital design.

Postsecondary CTE makes sense as a program option for students with an intellectual and developmental disability for a number of reasons:

- Such programs typically take one or two years—or less—to complete.
- They take advantage of a wide variety of learning styles and strengths instead of strictly academic skills such as reading and writing.
- They are often in high-interest fields.
- They are often focused on in-demand fields that offer a good chance for employment and a decent wage.
- They often lead to specific industry credentials that provide credibility for new job seekers.
- Because of the short time frame, students' financial investment may be relatively manageable.

However, in order to be successful in CTE programs, individuals who have an intellectual and developmental disability need comprehensive, well-planned, and strategically implemented supports to help them enroll in a program, benefit from instruction, master required skills, and find a job.

Numerous postsecondary programs in the U.S. are now providing specialized supports for students with an intellectual and developmental disability, but only a handful of programs provide CTE training.

Depending on what type of institution they are based in, postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual and developmental disability have distinctive features and face unique challenges to providing the greatest opportunity for student success. However, successful programs share several common features:

- They rely on effective collaboration among numerous stakeholders.
- They provide comprehensive supports for students.
- They use multiple funding sources to help students access programs.
- They are developed with sustainability in mind.

These themes will be explored throughout this guide.



RESOURCES

EMPLOYMENT DATA

Bureau of Labor Statistics:
[bls.gov/data](https://www.bls.gov/data)

Office of Disability Employment Policy:
[dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/
statistics](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/statistics)

THE REAL EMPLOYMENT PICTURE FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

“Unemployed persons” are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) as those who did not have a job, were available for work, and were actively looking for a job in the four weeks preceding the survey. The unemployment rate does not take into account people who have dropped out of the labor force for any reason.

In contrast, the employment-population ratio reflects the percentage of the population that is employed, regardless of whether or not they are actively seeking work. According to the BLS, in 2019 the employment-population ratio for persons with a disability between ages 16 to 64 was 30.9 percent, compared with 74.6 percent for persons without a disability in the same age group.

February 2020:
[bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm)

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Think College, as of July 2020, there were 295 college programs for students with an intellectual disability nationwide, an increase from 149 programs ten years earlier. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 created momentum for building these programs by providing:

- Grants to institutions of higher education or consortia of institutions of higher education to enable them to create or expand high-quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability, referred to as Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)
- Scholarships for students enrolled in programs approved as Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTPs)
- A national center that supports the development of these programs (which became Think College at the University of Massachusetts-Boston)

Think College provides a map that indicates where these programs are located. According to the site, very few postsecondary programs outside Florida are inclusive CTE programs.

A Think College Fast Facts document provides an executive summary of the year-four annual report of TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (2018-19). It shows that inclusive postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability can achieve notable outcomes for students, as reflected in these data:

78% of students who exited were program completers, comparing favorably to all first-time degree-seeking U.S. undergraduates.

64% of students who completed a program in the prior two years had a paid job one year later, compared to an 18% national rate for adults with an intellectual and developmental disability.

RESOURCES

INCLUSIVE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

From the Florida Consortium for Inclusive Higher Education, *IPSE Credential Guidance Brief: #1 Background on Inclusive Postsecondary Education*:

fcihe.com/resources/programdevelopment/credential-guidance

Think College - College Search:

ThinkCollege.net/college-search

From Think College, *Year Four Annual Report of the TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (2018–2019)*:

ThinkCollege.net

FLORIDA PERSPECTIVE

There is still much to learn about how to effectively provide postsecondary CTE to students with an intellectual and developmental disability. That is why the FDDC supported a pilot project to do just that from 2011 to 2016. Project Achieve was a postsecondary CTE program for students with an intellectual and developmental disability based at Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ), a member of the Florida College System. During that pilot period, Project Achieve students completed their career certificate CTE programs at a 72% rate (49 of 68 students).

Project Achieve's success led FDDC to fund a similar pilot of inclusive postsecondary CTE, but this time at a Florida technical college. In Florida, state colleges such as FSCJ are part of a system of education called the Florida College System. Their governing structure, applicable rules, and other characteristics are significantly different from those of public technical colleges, which operate as part of local school districts. The FDDC issued a request for proposals for a pilot program in 2015, and the School Board of Miami-Dade County was awarded the funding.

The new program was established at Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College in Miami and was called Project Transitions to Postsecondary Institutions (Project TOPS). The FDDC contract provided funding to hire a program director and for other program-related support.

The 2019-20 academic cycle was the fifth year of FDDC funding. Project TOPS has developed a variation on inclusive postsecondary CTE for students with an intellectual and developmental disability that has shown early promise.

PROJECT TOPS TODAY

In its first five years, Project TOPS enrolled 63 unduplicated students. Of those, 57 students earned at least one occupational completion point (an indicator of having demonstrated specific skills in their chosen career field).

Twenty-eight students (of 57 students) were full program completers, earning all occupational completion points in their career certificate programs (including two students who completed two programs). Ten remaining students are on track to become full program completers in year six. All eight students who took industry certification exams passed them.

In year five, 18 of 19 students earned at least one occupational completion point, and six other students were program completers.

On the next page is an outline of some of the key features of Project TOPS. Each feature reflects a set of decisions that TOPS staff had to make about the students it would serve, the services and supports it would offer, the funding models that would be accessed, and more. These features are discussed in further detail later in this document in order to acquaint programs with the choices and considerations they must make to best match their own institutional and community needs and resources.



KEY FEATURES OF PROJECT TOPS

1. STUDENTS

Project TOPS uses the following eligibility guidelines for prospective students:

- The student has an intellectual or other developmental disability that has been disclosed and documented.
- The student has an identified interest or connection to a CTE program whose students receive Project TOPS supports.
- The student is a client of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or is willing to be referred to VR.
- The student is age 18-26.
- The student is a high school graduate (including students who obtained a standard diploma through access points instruction).
- The student can independently perform classroom tasks, access transportation, and provide self-care.

2. PROGRAMS

Project TOPS supports students with an intellectual and developmental disability in three career certificate programs:

- Baking and Pastry Arts, within the Hospitality and Tourism cluster
- Commercial Art Technology, within the Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication cluster
- 3D Animation Technology, within the Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication cluster

3. SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

- Academic supports
- Support for CTE instructors
- “Pro sessions” in which students receive additional instruction from facilitators who are certified and experienced teachers of exceptional student education and/or CTE (This includes tutoring, group work, and assistance preparing for and obtaining accommodations for their industry certification exams.)
- Assistance in learning to navigate their transportation to and from the technical college
- Accommodations, including support to become effective self-advocates in ensuring that they receive these accommodations
- Peer mentors
- Case management
- Support for parent and family involvement
- Preparation for and participation in career and technical student organization competitions
- Supports for transitioning to employment

4. FUNDING

The model uses multiple funding options to help its students access programs and supports, including the following:

- State grant and scholarship funding from the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA)
- Needs-based financial aid available to eligible students enrolled in an approved Comprehensive Transition Program
- Individual support for students through the Florida Department of Education (i.e., FLDOE) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- School district and technical college funds

KNOW MORE

Below is information about inclusive postsecondary programs, CTE, and Exceptional Student Education in Florida—followed by a roundup of resources to support developing programs.

ESTABLISHED FLORIDA PROGRAMS

Florida is a national leader in developing inclusive postsecondary CTE programs for students who have an intellectual disability. Some programs serve only students with an intellectual disability, while others serve a broader population of students with an intellectual and developmental disability. These established programs may help new programs as they develop and refine their plans.

According to the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, at this writing, there were seven approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTPs) in Florida technical colleges:

Robert Morgan Educational Center
and Technical College

Sheridan Technical College

McFatter Technical College

Orange Technical College

Ft. Myers Technical College and Cape Coral
Technical College (two technical colleges
representing one approved FPTCP for the Lee
County School District)

Lively Technical College

Okaloosa Technical College

Two state colleges, College of the Florida Keys and Indian River State College, have FPTCP-approved programs. Five approved CTE FPCTPs are also federally approved Comprehensive Transition Programs, where students with an intellectual disability can receive federal scholarships. (See page 41 for more explanation.)

RESOURCES

INCLUSIVE POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS

From FCSUA, a current list of postsecondary career programs for students with an intellectual disability in Florida, including those that are approved CTP programs and those that are not: fcsua.org/E_postsecondary.php

From FCSUA, a webinar on the Florida Keys and Indian River State College inclusive CTE postsecondary programs (November 6, 2018): fcsua.org/events.php

From USDOE, a current list of postsecondary institutions that are CTP approved, along with other CTP information: studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities

From FCIHE, credential guidance briefs, including Brief #2 on the range of Florida programs of study, which describes credential options: fcihe.com/resources/programdevelopment/credential-guidance/

In addition to the inclusive postsecondary career programs referred to above, there are other inclusive postsecondary programs in Florida universities and state colleges that lead to other credentials. There is much that inclusive postsecondary CTE programs can learn from these other programs, especially in regard to using the resources of FCSUA, the Florida Consortium for Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE), and Think College. Technical colleges, however, have a clearer path when figuring out which credentials a student may earn, as the CTE options are more closely prescribed: career certificates, applied technology diplomas (ATDs), and occupational completion points (OCPs) that a student can earn.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This section provides background information that can smooth the process of designing, developing, and implementing an inclusive program for students with an intellectual and developmental disability in a technical college.

Definitions of Developmental and Intellectual Disability

The mission of FCSUA, FCIHE, and Think College is to support the development of inclusive postsecondary education for students with an intellectual disability. As such, most of their resources focus on this subset of students within the broader population of students with an intellectual and developmental disability. However, the broader population is the focus of this guide.

RESOURCES

DISABILITY DEFINITIONS

For a fuller explanation of the disabilities listed in Florida state law and the federal definition of developmental disability, see chapters 4 and 5 of the FDDC publication *First Steps: A Guide to Your Child's Development* at fddc.org

The term “developmental disabilities” is defined at section 393.063 (12), *Florida Statutes*, as persons having the following disabilities: Spina Bifida, intellectual disability, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Phelan-McDermid, Prader-Willi syndrome, and Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD). A broader federal definition of “developmental disability” exists in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (Developmental Disabilities Act), section 102(8):

The term ‘developmental disability’ means a severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:

1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
2. Is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
3. Is likely to continue indefinitely;
4. Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;
 - Self-care;
 - Receptive and expressive language;
 - Learning;
 - Mobility;
 - Self-direction;
 - Capacity for independent living; and
 - Economic self-sufficiency.
5. Reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated.

The definition also states that children are considered to have a developmental disability, when infants and young children from birth to age 5, inclusive, have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in a developmental disability if services are not provided.

To be considered a person with an intellectual disability, the standard definition is a person who has limitations in adaptive skills, such as conceptual, social, and practical skills, and in intellectual functioning, typically an intelligence quotient (IQ) of 70 or below.

Florida Public Education Systems That Affect Inclusive CTE Programs

There are two systems within the Florida public education system that need to be understood by those seeking to develop an inclusive postsecondary program such as Project TOPS: exceptional student education (ESE) and career and technical education.

Secondary Transition and Exceptional Student Education in Florida

Exceptional student education for K-12 students and beyond includes services relating to the transition of students with disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education, commonly referred to as “secondary transition.”

Transition preparation for students and their families is one of the keys to success for students with an intellectual and developmental disability in postsecondary education, and educators and other partners need to assist in facilitating a successful transition. Each school district has a secondary transition specialist or other designated staff whose job is to facilitate successful transitions for students with a disability from secondary education to post-school life, including postsecondary education and employment. The transition specialist should be an active partner with postsecondary programs in facilitating a seamless passage to postsecondary education.

RESOURCES

ESE AND POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION

Project 10, funded by Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (FLDOE BEESS): project10.info

Family Guide to Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities includes a separate comprehensive toolkit and the *Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families*: project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138

FLDOE BEESS has specialists in the areas of secondary transition and students with an intellectual disability, autism, and other disabilities who can assist within their area of specialization. Contact information for specialists, as well as district ESE directors, transition specialists, and ASD contacts: fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/staff/directory.shtml

Florida Council on Exceptional Children, Division on Career Development and Transition, the Florida organization that supports career development for persons with disabilities and hosts an annual Florida VISIONS Conference: floridadcdt.org

View presentations from past Florida VISIONS Conferences: floridadcdt.org/past-conferences.html

NTACT Postsecondary Education and Training Toolkit explains education and training options for young adults with a disability after they complete high school: transitionta.org/toolkitpet

Career and Technical Education in Florida

The Florida DOE Division of Career and Adult Education oversees CTE and adult education in Florida. Their site at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu identifies 17 career clusters and provides infographics for each cluster that give additional information about CTE programs within the cluster. Middle school, secondary school, and postsecondary CTE programs are organized under these clusters. By clicking on the cluster, users can access the curriculum frameworks for CTE programs at the middle school, high school, and postsecondary levels. For example, some Project TOPS students are enrolled in the Baking and Pastry Arts career certificate program that is located under the Hospitality and Tourism cluster.

Career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) available to students enrolled in courses within that cluster are also identified in the curriculum frameworks, as are other resources.

Technical colleges can offer career certificate programs and applied technology diploma (ATD) programs. ATD programs are part of a CTE Associate in Science (AS) or Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree in the state college system and are identified as such under the “Degree and Certificate Programs” heading. For example, Pharmacy Technician is an ATD Program in the Health Sciences Cluster. Technical colleges can offer career certificate programs and ATD programs that train for specific jobs.

As is true for Project TOPS, students with an intellectual and developmental disability in inclusive CTE programs are typically enrolled in career certificate programs.

Curriculum Options for Students with a Significant Cognitive Disability

CTE programs and courses, including Instructional Support Services, are listed after the 17 career clusters. Instructional Support Services lists programs for students with a disability, including three programs (Specialized Career Education Basic, Specialized Career Education Advanced, and Specialized Career Instruction Comprehensive) at the postsecondary level for students with a significant cognitive/learning disability. These postsecondary program options are also available for students enrolled in inclusive postsecondary education. The purpose of the Basic program as explained in the curriculum frameworks is:

...to provide specialized career education for students with significant cognitive/learning disabilities who, in addition to instructional accommodations, require modifications to the CTE program in order to meet individual interests, abilities, and learning needs. The goal is integrated competitive employment in the student’s chosen occupation. The program is individualized for each student and documented in an individualized plan of study (IPS). Instruction is competency-based with integrated academic, technical, and problem-solving skills. The IPS consists of standards and benchmarks selected from one or more CTE programs to create an individualized plan of study for each student.

Specialized Career Instruction - Comprehensive is a new CTE postsecondary program beginning in the 2020-21 school year. All three Instructional Support Services programs are intended to result in integrated competitive employment through an IPS that integrates academic, technical, and problem-solving skills for students with a significant cognitive/learning disability. The IPS individualizes the standards that each student will meet. Because students enrolled in the new program, Specialized Career Instruction – Comprehensive, have the option of enrolling in a specific CTE preparatory program of their choice after they complete this program, this gives an additional option for these students that is not available for students who complete Specialized Career Education Advanced. Consult the current curriculum frameworks for these programs for specifics.

The table below explains similarities and differences:

Additional CTE Program Options for Students with a Significant Cognitive Disability		
Characteristics	Specialized Career Education Basic and Advanced	Specialized Career Instruction - Comprehensive
Intended Student Outcome	Integrated competitive employment	Same
Modifications and accommodations	An Individual Plan of Study (IPS) with standards and benchmarks from one or more CTE programs and accommodations	Same
Integrated skills	Academic, technical, and problem-solving skills	Same
Program structure	Basic and Advanced are separate 450-hour programs; Advanced has a 150-hour internship	Basic and Advanced are part of one 900-hour program; Advanced has a 150-hour internship
Course/program completion options	Students may move to employment after a course is completed or take a new course with new IPS standards; they may move from Basic to Advanced once Basic is completed; once the internship in Advanced is completed, the student must transition to employment	Students may move to employment after a course is completed or take a new course with new IPS standards; they may move from Basic to Advanced once Basic is completed; once the internship is completed as the last course in Advanced, the student may enroll in a CTE program of his or her choice or transition to employment
Number of OCPs	Two OCPs, one for Basic and another for Advanced	Same

Both Specialized Career Education Advanced and Specialized Career Instruction - Comprehensive have internships as part of the program. Florida is a national leader with Project SEARCH, an internship program for secondary school students with a significant intellectual and developmental disability that is showing good results for students enrolled in these programs, with a high percentage of students obtaining competitive integrated employment. Project SEARCH is a resource to learn more about how to set up an internship. For more information, contact Project 10 at usfsp-project10@usf.edu.

Other program strategies for students with a significant disability include using Discovery as a career assessment tool and supported employment to assist the student with obtaining and retaining employment. For more information on these strategies, go to the employment section of this guide.

School district technical colleges enroll students with an intellectual and developmental disability in career certificate programs with the expectation that they will be able to earn at least one occupational completion point (OCP) with accommodations rather than modifications to their CTE program.

Career Certificates, Occupational Completion Points, and Industry Certification

The CTE curriculum frameworks are available at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/curriculum-frameworks. Students who are part of Project TOPS are working toward completing their career certificate programs. In each of their CTE programs, students can earn multiple OCPs for mastering specific competencies within their CTE programs; they can earn career certificates as full program completers.

This differs from Specialized Career Education for Students with Disabilities Basic and Advanced, where the competencies in the curriculum frameworks are modified as appropriate for each student and the student will acquire additional soft skills (e.g., problem-solving skills). Each OCP earned in a career certificate program means that the student has mastered the competencies required for a job.

Industry certification and licensure are additional credentials that students can earn in these programs, such as Adobe Certified Associate Photoshop or Automotive Service Excellence certification.

Basic Skills Exit Requirements for Career Certificate Programs

Career certificate programs of 450 clock hours or more require students to meet certain basic skills exit requirements. As explained in the *CTE Basic Skills Assessment Requirements Technical Assistance Paper* (i.e., *CTE Basic Skills Assessment TA Paper*) at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-adult-edu-technical-assistance-.stml, students must be assessed within the first six weeks of entry into these programs (unless the program is exempted or waived from this requirement) using one of the approved assessment instruments in Rule 6A-10.040, *Florida Administrative Code*, that are listed and described in the *Basic Skills Assessment TA Paper*. This document also spells out allowable assessment accommodations.

EXEMPTIONS TO BASIC SKILLS EXIT REQUIREMENTS

The *CTE Basic Skills Assessment TA Paper* lists exemptions to the basic skills exit requirements, including when the student earns industry certification or licensure associated with their CTE program. According to section 1004.91, *Florida Statutes*, and 6A-10.040, *Florida Administrative Code (FAC)*, each school district (and Florida College System institution) must develop a policy for exempting students with a disability from the basic skills exit requirements. This exemption requirement applies to technical colleges.

TIP: Make students and families aware of the technical college parameters related to obtaining a waiver of the basic skills exit requirements as early as possible. This will help them be prepared in the event they need to pursue a waiver after they have completed all courses and earned all OCPs in their CTE program but do not meet the basic skills exit standards.

Here are some key points relating to basic skills exit requirements in Florida:

- In career certificate programs of 450 hours or more, students must be assessed in reading, language, and math — unless otherwise exempt — using one of the approved standardized assessments within the first six weeks of entry to determine if they meet the established exit standards.
- The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is the most frequently used assessment instrument.
- If a student does not meet the exit standards for their CTE program after assessment, the student should be given the opportunity to remediate his or her basic skills to improve the likelihood of meeting the exit standards and becoming a program completer.
- The exit standards for each career certificate program can be found in the *Basic Skills List* at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/program-resources.stml.
- Students in programs that require them to take a basic skills assessment will not obtain a career certificate for program completion after passing all courses and completing the related OCPs within their CTE program until they meet the exit standards for their CTE program—unless they qualify for an exemption (most likely by earning industry certification or licensure for their program), or if they are waived from meeting this requirement under school district waiver procedures that are required by state law

WHO YOU NEED TO KNOW

A rich array of resources is available to those seeking to build an inclusive CTE program in Florida. These resources are referred to throughout this document.

- Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA): **fcsua.org**. This site provides resources for students and families, postsecondary providers, K-12 transition planning, community planning/collaboration, and events (webinars, institutes, and presentations). FCSUA also administers the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program.
- The Florida Consortium for Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE): **fcihe.com**. The Consortium is a federally funded Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) site. It provides information about Florida inclusive postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability and includes program development and other resources for educators, students, and family members.

Federal funding for FCIHE is expected to end in 2021, when this Consortium and its services will end. The FCIHE website is expected to remain live for a limited period of time. If FCIHE online resources are no longer available at fcihe.com, they may be available on the Project 10 website at **project10.info**.
- Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education (FLDOE DCAE): **fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu**. This division oversees CTE and adult education in Florida. Resources include CTE curriculum frameworks, *CTE Basic Skills Assessment Requirements Technical Assistance Paper*, and college and career planning resources.
- Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (FLDOE BEESS): **fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu**. BEESS oversees exceptional student education for Florida. Resources include information for educators and families, including information on secondary transition to postsecondary education.
- Project 10: Transition Education Network: **project10.info**. Project 10 is an FLDOE BEESS discretionary project that supports secondary transition. Online resources include independent living, postsecondary planning, employment, and resources by location.
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC): **fddc.org**. The mission of FDDC is “To advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with an intellectual and developmental disability.” The site contains numerous resources.
- Think College: **thinkcollege.net**. Think College is the national support center for the development of inclusive postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability. Visitors may search the Think College Resource Library at **thinkcollege.net/resource-search?sort=field_resourc_publication_date&order=desc**. The site also includes the Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education (Think College Standards) at **thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/standardsbriefinsert_F2.pdf** and the Think College learning modules at **thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn**.
- Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARDs): Florida has seven CARDs. UCF-CARD at **cfl.ucf-card.org/PSE** has numerous resources that support inclusive postsecondary education for students who identify as ASD and Hispanic-Latino, including a marketing flyer, listing of online resources, and webinars for educators.

KNOWING WHERE YOU'RE GOING

Detailed information on planning and program development follows in the next section. However, the outline below provides an overview of the questions every team must address in order to build a successful program.

Each team will answer these questions in different ways for their own programs/institutions/communities, but all programs will find that they must at least consider these issues.

Guiding Questions and Considerations for Teams

1. What research is needed before developing an inclusive CTE postsecondary model?

- Research on postsecondary CTE opportunities
- Research on employment rates for adults with an intellectual and developmental disability
- Options for young adult students with an intellectual and developmental disability in the local community
- Learning needs for adult students with an intellectual and developmental disability

2. How does one begin the process?

- Administrative vision
- On-site administrative support
- Faculty awareness and building capacity
- Identification and selection of CTE programs
- Student enrollment and interest from teachers of CTE
- One-on-one communication with teachers of CTE
- Professional development for selected CTE teachers
- Professional development for student services (counselors)
- Professional development for faculty and all staff members
- Florida Department of Education Division of Career and Adult Education postsecondary CTE curriculum frameworks
- Team responsibilities
- Maintaining communication with students, families, faculty, staff, local K-12 school district, and agencies

- Conducting interviews, hosting campus tours, and sharing information
- Implementing CTE curriculum through academic supports
- Developing Section 504 and ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act) Funding Level Classification Matrix
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring accommodations
- Maintaining regular communication with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and consultants
- Providing comprehensive case management

3. What accommodations are needed in CTE programs?

- Define accommodations
- Identify student needs
- Identify teacher needs based on professional background and CTE program
- Reflect, review, and reflect again
- Integrate technology connection, including distance learning required by COVID-19 or for other reasons



4. Who are members of the core team?

- Staff for program (supports available to begin and supports needed to grow)
- Students
- Parents/families
- Administration
- Teachers of CTE
- Counselors, testing chair, financial aid staff
- Everyone on campus—secretary, registration clerks, business manager, treasurer, security staff, and custodial staff

5. Where can prospective partners be found?

- FLDOE
- Local K-12 school district staff; transition specialists; curriculum supports for students with an intellectual and developmental disability
- Local public or private middle and high schools and postsecondary programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Best Buddies
- Advisory committee for CTE programs
- Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)
- Project 10
- Think College, FCSUA
- Local regional Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
- Local Arc chapter

GETTING IT DONE

This section outlines activities involved in developing and implementing an inclusive postsecondary CTE program at a Florida technical college. Each team will adapt these activities to fit the procedures of the participating college and school district(s) and the needs of the local community.

The activities require collaboration among several institutions and individuals. Collaboration is critical for a successful inclusive postsecondary CTE program for students with an intellectual and developmental disability in the Florida technical college system. Sustainable, independent employment is the desired long-term outcome for students participating in these programs. Institutions and individuals must collaborate to build an effective, comprehensive program that engages all available resources to support students in postsecondary training and the transition to employment. The most important task when preparing to implement such a program is securing the cooperation and support of all parties and ensuring that each group understands its role and responsibilities.

Ideally, teams begin the planning and program development process well in advance of their target date for having students begin attending their postsecondary career certificate classes. (Project TOPS found that students with these disabilities were already enrolled at the technical college.)

PLANNING

Step 1: Building a Team

The first step in developing a plan for an inclusive postsecondary CTE program is building a team, which should include certain key collaborators, including at a minimum representation for each of the following:

- Program development
- Resource development
- Secondary transition
- Technical college administration
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Financial aid

STRENGTHENING THE TEAM

Encourage team members to attend biannual FCSUA Institutes and work collaboratively outside the Institute to develop, refine, and implement their plan as a team. Technical colleges that are receiving an FCSUA grant as an approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) are required to attend these Institutes. (See page 39 on FPCPTs.)

Step 2: Building Support at the Top

Before moving forward, there must be approval and support from key administrators, which may include the top technical college administrator, school district CTE director, and others. Staff desiring to create a program will need to understand the structure of the technical college and school district(s) to determine which administrators need to be brought on board. Pursuit of grant funding to begin a program may require school board approval.

Activities to win top-level support may include making presentations about the model to the key administrators, inviting them to visit Project TOPS or other Florida inclusive postsecondary CTE programs, and encouraging them to review Section 1 of this guide, which is targeted at administrators and decision makers. One strategy is to recruit the highest-ranking administrator who desires to create a program to help approach other key administrators. FCSUA provides both remote and on-site technical assistance for program development of FPCTPs and can assist in encouraging the necessary buy-in from key administrators.

Staff may emphasize the following talking points in making a case for an inclusive postsecondary CTE program for students with an intellectual and developmental a disability:

- Improving employment outcomes for students with a disability is of increasing concern in the state and nation.
- Postsecondary education and training options for students with an intellectual and developmental disability are limited. This program is intended to successfully transition students with these disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education and to employment, the same outcomes as for other students in CTE programs.
- There are already programs (such as Project TOPS) at other Florida technical colleges that can serve as sources of technical assistance.
- There are grant funds, scholarships, and other resources available that can support the development of comprehensive, inclusive CTE postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual and developmental disability.
- Students served in the program will receive accommodations and supports to succeed in their career certificate program, but the content of the curriculum and what students are required to learn will not be modified (unless either Specialized Career Education or Specialized Career Education-Comprehensive is the program that is taught).
- With appropriate supports, students in these programs can achieve positive outcomes, including earning occupational completion points, completing programs, earning industry certification or licensure, and obtaining employment.

MAKING THE CASE FOR INCLUSIVE POSTSECONDARY CTE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

Florida technical colleges can make a real difference in outcomes for students with an intellectual and developmental disability by developing sustainable inclusive postsecondary CTE programs, showing the way for other communities where there are few options for persons with an intellectual and developmental disability to help them build more productive lives—not isolated from the mainstream, but a vibrant part of the mainstream.

Section 1 of this product, *Developing a Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program for Students with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability in Florida’s Technical College System: **Institutional Leaders and Policymakers Guide***, is designed to help teams garner support for their efforts from decision makers in local institutions, including the technical college and the school district(s). It is available at: fcsua.org.

There are many other resources to help teams make their case, including the documentary *Intelligent Lives* from the Institute on Disability/UCED. Made by award-winning filmmaker Dan Habib, the film can be “a catalyst to transform the label of intellectual disability from a life sentence of isolation into a life of possibility for the most systematically segregated people in America.” In the documentary, actor Chris Cooper essentially asks: Why not inclusive postsecondary education for his son Jesse, who had cerebral palsy, and other students with an intellectual and developmental disability? With Micah’s story, the film makes a compelling case for why inclusive postsecondary programs for students with IDD are needed by depicting how powerful a difference can be made for these students and others around them. See the trailer, resource library, and discussion guide for *Intelligent Lives* at: intelligentlives.org.

Step 3: Building a Plan

Those working to replicate Project TOPS are advised to take advantage of one of several pre-existing processes and/or tools to support the planning process.

For example, teams may start with the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities' *Team Planning Tool for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs* (i.e., Team Planning Tool) at fcsua.org/I_Tool.php. FCSUA's *Introduction and Resources for the Planning Process* presents inclusive postsecondary education and transition content in four domains: student focused, faculty and staff-focused, program and institution-focused, and concept and system development. Each domain includes specific benchmarks tied to evidence-based practices, reflective questions, and sample indicators. "Steps 1-3: Identify Team, Assess Status, Make a Plan" provides a framework to examine the degree to which the evidence-based practices are being implemented. One of the program development goals for inclusive postsecondary education should be to employ practices that are research-based, and the Team Planning Tool is consistent with this goal. See FCSUA's comprehensive web-based tool at transitionprogramtool.org for developing an online plan.



RESOURCES PLANNING

From FCSUA, a webinar about their web-based planning tool, *Overview of the Online Strategic Planning Tool: Postsecondary Education Programs Component* (September 10, 2019):

youtube.com/watch?v=Nwei4d3Xq3c&feature=youtu.be

From FCSUA, a webinar, *Preparing for the Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute – Fall 2019: Using the Online Strategic Planning Tool to Summarize Your Work and Prepare for the Future* (October 7, 2019):

youtube.com/watch?v=LkhV3jd5q-I&feature=youtu.be

From Think College, *Using a Change Model Approach to Guide Development of an Inclusive College Experience for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*: thinkcollege.net/resource/program-development/using-change-model-approach-guide-development-inclusive-college

Step 4: Building in Program Evaluation

Of course, it is important to build standards, benchmarks, quality indicators, and program evaluation into the overall program plan. Below are several tools that can assist new and continuing programs.

Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education provides eight standards, one or more quality indicators per standard, and benchmarks to measure those standards. With some possible modifications needed for career certificate programs, this instrument is a good way to measure the comprehensiveness of program design and evaluation, along with the FPCTP *Team Planning Tool* referred to above.

Quality Indicator 8 of *Think College Standards* at thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/standardsbriefinsert_F2.pdf addresses the ongoing evaluation that should occur on a regular basis. It specifies the data that should be collected and the need for ongoing review by the stakeholders and implementation of program changes as a result of data review. FCSUA has a comprehensive program evaluation and reporting system that is required of approved FPCTPs. The evaluation addresses program- and student-specific data and is useful for program evaluation purposes.

RESOURCES PROGRAM EVALUATION

The FCSUA Annual Report provides data and other information about approved FPCTPs for program evaluation and improvement purposes:
fcsua.org/aboutus.php



Project TOPS photo by Vivian Vieta

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This section reviews important elements of an inclusive CTE program and decisions that need to be made to develop an effective and comprehensive program. Although choices made by the Project TOPS team are described here, each team must make decisions in these areas that fit the needs and resources of their students and their institution.

RESOURCES

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Project TOPS overview webinar (February 4, 2020)

fcsua.org/events.php

FAQS FROM PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND PROGRAM VISITORS

See Appendix A of this document for questions that programs should be ready to answer for students, parents/families, and program visitors.

Selecting CTE Program Options

Decisions need to be made about the types of supports needed for students to succeed, given available resources, and which CTE programs will be part of the technical college's inclusive program for students with an intellectual and developmental disability. One consideration may be which faculty members are most likely to provide the accommodations and other supports students need, given appropriate training and other assistance. Career and technical education instructors have varying levels of exposure to education and training about teaching methods, learning styles, accommodations, and related topics, which may factor into this equation.

Project Achieve determined that their institution could provide the support needed for students to enroll in any of the career certificate programs at FSCJ within the funds the FDDC contract provided, along with individual student funding provided by VR and other resources. Project TOPS initially limited their model to seven CTE programs and three instructors (five programs were taught by one instructor simultaneously) to provide the needed level of support appropriate for students both inside and outside the CTE classroom. The number of programs was later reduced, largely due to the college reducing the number of CTE offerings. Limiting the number of CTE programs students can participate in limits student choice. Programs are encouraged to consider how student program options can be made available as broadly as possible, through providing additional training to better equip faculty members to educate students with an intellectual and developmental disability and other means.

Identifying Eligible Students

Programs need to identify student eligibility criteria, as not all students with an intellectual and developmental disability may be best served in such programs. The student eligibility criteria for Project TOPS are listed on page 10 of this guide.

Programs are advised to consider criteria that are as inclusive as possible and that do not arbitrarily limit participation for students with the greatest need for such programs. There are prospective students who may need an attendant for self-care or may have difficulty independently performing classroom tasks but who—given adequate supports by other entities (such as assistive technology provided by VR)—may be able to participate in the program.

To assist in determining student eligibility to participate in Project TOPS and interest in a particular program, the potential student is encouraged to bring a portfolio, letters of reference from teachers or others, or other evidence of a connection to the CTE program that the student has expressed interest in. Other documents reviewed by Project TOPS to assist in making a determination include:

- Individual educational plans (IEPs), including transitional individual educational plans (TIEPs), and/or other educational records from K-12
- Vocational Rehabilitation documents, including community referral, psychological report, vocational aptitude report, and individual plan for employment (IPE)
- Medical documentation of their disability (as students will need to self-disclose and document their disability)

A standard process for determining student eligibility is also necessary, and this determination should not be made by a single person. With Project TOPS, the prospective student and family member(s) receive a half-day pass to learn more about the CTE program of interest and the campus. There is initially an orientation meeting that includes parents and family members, the program director, and a Robert Morgan counselor. Exposure to the program includes the opportunity to observe the classroom environment, review the textbook used, and learn about the program from the CTE instructor. A tour of the Robert Morgan facility also occurs.

The program director next interviews the prospective student, using an interview form that has been developed for this purpose. As a final step, the prospective student is interviewed by a committee composed of the program director, a Robert Morgan counselor, and the CTE program instructor to determine if he or she meets the program eligibility criteria.

Matching Students to Specific CTE Programs

Students must be matched to an appropriate CTE program. It is not enough to select a particular CTE program based only on what family members think may be a good fit for the student, although this may be a consideration.

Certain CTE programs that are academically more rigorous than others may make it less likely that the student will be successful if the student has an intellectual disability that makes academics more challenging for them.

The FLDOE DCAE Basic Skills List at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/program-resources.shtml gives the basic skills exit standards for career certificate programs for reading, language, and math. (See more on these basic skills exit requirements on page 17). For example, the current exit standards for Baking and Pastry Arts, one of the CTE programs selected for Project TOPS supports, is grade level equivalency nine for reading, math, and language. In contrast, the basic skills standards for 3D Animation are grade level 10 equivalency across the board. These standards may be an appropriate factor in determining whether the CTE program is a good fit for the student. For example, if a student scores at a very low level in reading, this may be a consideration in CTE course selection.

Note that the basic skills requirements for CTE programs are exit requirements, not entry or placement requirements. Federal Rule 34 CFR Part 100 Appendix B at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/vocre.html prohibits denying entry into any CTE program on the basis of criteria that have the effect of disproportionately excluding persons of a particular race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. In order to use such criteria, the recipient must demonstrate that such criteria have been validated as essential to participation in a given program.

RESOURCES

MATCHING STUDENTS WITH A CTE PROGRAM

The FLDOE DCAE *CTE Basic Skills Assessment TA Paper* at:

fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-adult-edu-technical-assistance-.shtml

“Counseling is an essential element in career preparation to assist students in identifying career goals and selecting appropriate training programs. Explaining the demands of the academics involved in the CTE program is an important part of the counseling process. A clear understanding of expectations will better prepare the student for making sound decisions and successfully completing the program. It is important for students to understand the relationship between basic skills and success in his or her chosen CTE program, and that improving his or her skills will help foster success in the program and in future employment.”

Project TOPS staff believe that a low reading score alone may not predict whether a student will be successful in a particular program; rather, such factors as prior knowledge, high interest in a program, and intrinsic motivation are more critical determinants for student success.

For example, the Baking and Pastry Arts Program that Project TOPS students are enrolled in has two OCPs: OCP A is Pastry Cook/Baker, and OCP B is Pastry Chef/Head Baker. As with other career certificate programs at technical colleges, this is a clock-hour program—600 hours in total, which may end up being more or less hours for each student. Students should be encouraged to earn a career certificate by completing all OCPs within their CTE program and meeting the basic skills exit requirements, unless otherwise waived by their technical college, if their program is 450 hours or more.

Career Assessment and Development

Determining the appropriate student/program fit involves more than the student or parent expressing interest in a particular CTE program. Fortunately, students have typically already engaged with a number of assessment tools while in secondary education or earlier. The results of these assessments can help the student make an informed career choice. Career assessment should have been incorporated into the process of developing the transition individual educational plan (TIEP) required by age 16 that sets postsecondary education and career goals and needed supports. Most students with an intellectual and developmental disability should have a TIEP (though it may still be referred to as an “IEP”), and many students continue to engage in career assessment throughout their secondary experiences. The student’s latest TIEP may be helpful as a career assessment.

Person-centered planning (PCP) is a process that helps students with a disability plan for their future, including potential careers, while promoting self-determination. Results of this process from the secondary level may be available as a resource. However, if there is a continuing need to engage in person-centered planning with the student, it is not too late to do so. (See information about Students Transitioning to Adult Roles [STAR] and other PCP-related resources in the sidebar.)

Another useful tool is the summary of performance (SOP) that documents a “child’s academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child’s postsecondary goals.”

A number of public and commercial career assessments are available at the secondary and postsecondary levels, including FloridaShines. The prospective student may have used the MyCareerShines online resource as a career development tool before graduation, and there is a separate online resource for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Additional career assessment may be needed before a decision to enroll in a specific program is made to ensure that students do not just land in programs that are not a good fit. The technical college or other agencies may have resources that can respond to this need.

RESOURCES

CAREER ASSESSMENT & DEVELOPMENT

From Project 10, information about TIEPs:
project10.info/DPage.php?ID=342

From Project 10, information about person-centered planning:
project10.info/DPage.php?ID=103

From FCIHE, an overview of Students Transitioning to Adult Roles (STAR) person-center planning process:
fcihe.com/star-person-center-planning-module

From FDDC, *Planning Ahead: A Guide for Parents, Family Members, and Legal Representatives of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities*:
fddc.org

From FCSUA, a webinar and resources, *A Quality Summary of Performance (SOP) and How Postsecondary Programs Use the Information They Contain* (April 2, 2019):
fcsua.org/events.php

From Think College, resources for career assessment:
thinkcollege.net/resource/job-development/state-and-national-resources-references-and-websites

FloridaShines:
floridashines.org/find-a-career

Student Recruitment

Developing a program requires more than “build it and they will come.” There needs to be a plan to recruit potential students at program inception, which may include those who have not graduated from high school and/or those no longer in high school. Students with a disability may defer graduation up to age 22 if the IEP reflects that the student still needs transition services.

Students with a significant cognitive disability may be receiving or have received access points instruction in the four academic content areas of English Language Arts, math, social studies, and science, where the curriculum standards are modified and customized for the individual student. These students take the Florida Standards Alternate Assessments (FSAA) rather than the Florida general assessment program assessments.

A pipeline from K-12 that creates a seamless transition from the earlier grades to postsecondary education is a critical piece in program development. Project TOPS has facilitated tours of high school students, worked with VR to accept referrals, and used other recruitment strategies.

Student Enrollment

Any procedures and paperwork beyond that required for others students that must be completed before program entry will have to be established. For example, Project TOPS students are required to sign the Student Authorization to Release Information, so that Project TOPS team members can communicate with the parent or other family members, VR, and others.

Project TOPS also assists students in obtaining financial aid by coordinating with the financial aid office on campus and clarifying the process when students or families are confused. Project TOPS works closely with VR to ensure students are receiving the financial supports VR has committed to Project TOPS student

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Good Academic Standing

Programs will need to determine what the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards are for student progression purposes. If a student in Project TOPS is not making a grade of “C” or better in their CTE program, the student is placed on academic probation. Project TOPS has established a process before the student is placed on academic probation that includes the involvement of the project director, CTE instructor, college counselor, and student and family individualized support to assist in improving his or her academic performance, including required “pro sessions” after their CTE instruction. Failure to meet SAP imperils student retention of the FPCTP scholarship. (See page 39.) As is true of all Robert Morgan students, students in Project TOPS must remain in good academic standing, which includes meeting SAP, maintaining consistent academic progress, and adhering to the Student Code of Conduct.

Supports for Student Success

Programs will need to provide academic and other supports to enable students with an intellectual and developmental disability to be successful in their inclusive programs. The program expectation is that students are fully included in CTE classes.

Academic Supports

This support may include identifying or creating supplemental materials that will assist the student in better understanding what they need to learn in their CTE program. In Project TOPS, the level of individual supports and accommodations needed is assessed and committed to writing through a 504 plan (referring to Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) and developed by Project TOPS staff with the student and an ADA/AA funding level classification (explained on page 43). Project TOPS provides student support within the inclusive CTE classroom, as well as “professional sessions” (“pro sessions”) outside of the classroom. Project TOPS has developed supplemental student materials (e.g., study guides, video podcasts, and online tests) when program staff have been unable to identify readily available resources to respond to an identified instructional need, including preparation for industry certification exams and soft skills. This is a critical support for students.

Instructor Support

CTE instructors must have an understanding of the unique needs of students in their programs and the provision of appropriate accommodations. Numerous resources exist to assist instructors in understanding how to provide support for students in the program. The program will need to provide staff development that meets the needs of instructors, other technical college staff, and students. Sessions on topics such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can benefit all faculty and all learners.

The CTE instructor is aware of the student’s learning needs and works closely with the Project TOPS staff to help the student succeed with appropriate accommodations. Project TOPS staff are co-teachers within the CTE classroom. The CTE instructor indicates to the Project TOPS staff the additional support that the student needs beyond the CTE classroom to be successful in their CTE program. The CTE instructor and Project TOPS staff will determine when the student is ready to take his or her industry certification exam based on pre-test results.

The Project TOPS Program Director has conducted workshops on UDL using Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) resources, self-disclosure, accommodations, and other teaching strategies for supporting students with disabilities.

RESOURCES

SUPPORT CTE INSTRUCTORS

From Project TOPS, a webinar, *Faculty Voices from Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College* (July 1, 2019):

[youtube.com/watch?v=Hw01z4Gdk4w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw01z4Gdk4w)

From FCIHE, a module on universal design for learning:

flconsortiumudl.net

From CAST, information on universal design for learning:

cast.org

From Think College Resource Library, search for “UDL”:

thinkcollege.net/resource-search?sort=field_resourc_publication_date&order=desc

“Pro Sessions”

Students must commit to attending “pro sessions” several days a week outside of their inclusive CTE classes, where they receive additional instruction provided by facilitators who are certified and experienced teachers of exceptional student education and/or CTE. In these “pro sessions,” students receive additional academic support for their CTE programs that includes tutoring, groupwork, and assistance preparing for and obtaining accommodations for their industry certification exams.

Before the advent of COVID-19, a Google Classroom site was implemented with resources, files, and videos that students could access to help them be successful in their CTE classroom and prepare for an industry certification exam. These sessions include soft skills instruction in such areas as professionalism, job readiness, time management, organizational skills, self-determination, and self-advocacy.

The term “pro sessions” rather than “tutoring” was adopted to encourage student participation in this activity. The notion that these students are young professionals supports the creation of a positive student self-image; this theme runs throughout this program.

Accommodations

In order to succeed, students will need to access accommodations—and they will need to become effective self-advocates in ensuring they receive the accommodations for which they are eligible. Project TOPS employs a wide range of accommodations:

- Modeling actions and/or steps required for assignments/tasks
- Allowing and prompting students to take a photograph or video using a smart phone or tablet to capture instructors’ modeled actions
- Repeating oral instructions
- Rewording oral and written instructions
- Providing visual samples of a completed assignment in both print and digital formats
- Using electronic versions of the textbook on students’ computer in PDF, so that students can make annotations, highlight, type notes, or use other strategies
- Using various formats for resumes and cover and follow-up letters
- Providing step-by-step video tutorials that accompany each activity assigned to students
- Using print, digital, and classroom calendars
- Developing an individual assignment schedule
- Providing visual examples of completed assignments and/or products
- Using professional emails for daily/weekly communication
- Using student demonstrations of learned concepts
- Employing electronic and printed study guides, outlines, and vocabulary
- Having students review and self-correct written exams/quizzes
- Integrating instructional tools through technology
- Using verbal and non-verbal cues to assist with strategies for self-soothing, on-task behaviors, communication, and self-advocacy
- Developing individual organizational strategies and organization of materials



FLORIDA'S ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM FAAST, Inc

FAAST, Inc is the State of Florida's number one resource for assistive technology (AT).

We provide AT Services such as:

- Information & Assistance
- AT Training
- AT Demonstrations
- AT Device Loans
- and More!

...to Floridians from one of our locations around the state.

[Sign up for our Monthly Email](#)

[2020 Strategic Plan Draft Download](#)



Upcoming Meeting

[FAAST AT Award Discussion](#)

October 29, 2020 1:30pm

[Technology Awareness Committee October 2020 Meeting](#)

October 30, 2020 2:30pm

[AT Advisory Council November 2020 Meeting](#)

November 17, 2020 9:30am

RESOURCES ACCOMMODATIONS

See *Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities* at: fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf

From Think College, *Getting Accommodations to Succeed at College*:

thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/HTTC_04_Getting_Accomodations_to_Succeed.pdf

(helps students understand the available range of accommodations and steps to receiving needed accommodations)

From ATIA, a fuller explanation of the range of AT supports: atia.org/at-resources/what-is-at

From FAAST, a listing of local FAAST contacts: faast.org

A number of these accommodations are considered assistive technology (AT), which has been defined by the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) as “any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.”

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) is a free resource to assist in determining AT needs. FAAST also assists with loans of AT equipment and locating resources for AT purchases. CTE faculty and others who provide supports for students need to be equipped to support student use of AT.

Academic Peer Mentors

Peer mentors is a research-based practice that supports student success. Many inclusive postsecondary programs have formalized structures for peer mentoring related to mentor selection, mentor training, and mentor feedback.

Mentorship occurs naturally in Project TOPS, and there is no formalized structure. Program staff watch and encourage the process. Examples of academic support by mentors include repeating instructions, encouraging the mentee to pay attention while the instructor is speaking, texting the mentee to remind them that an assignment is due, and helping the mentee prepare for and participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) competition. Mentors also participate with their mentees in other inclusive activities, such as a community event where Project TOPS students and their mentors greeted guests and served desserts they had prepared in their CTE program.

RESOURCES

PEER MENTORING

From FCSUA, a webinar: *Completing and Submitting the International Mentor Training Program Certification (IMTPC) Documentation to the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)*:

fcsua.org/events.php

From Think College:

thinkcollege.net/resource-search?search_api_views_fulltext=mentoring



Case Management

Inclusive postsecondary CTE programs need to provide an array of case management services for students as needs are identified. For example, programs need to be prepared to address behavioral issues, such as panic attacks, sensory issues, etc. The following are case-management services provided by Project TOPS:

- Supporting employment preparation
 - Access to accurate personal data
 - Resume, cover letter, and follow-up email development
 - Employment application (print or online)
 - Employment-related forms (e.g., W-4)
 - Job searches
 - Diverse career portfolio development
 - Personal budget (needs and wants)
 - Professional work wardrobe (selection and purchase)
- Improving communication skills
 - Parents, family members, siblings, and friends
 - Peers, teachers, counselors, financial aid staff, registration staff, security, and VR
 - Managers and co-workers in a work environment
 - Technical college “customers” for whom Project TOPS students are developing graphics and other products
- Developing and applying self-advocacy skills
 - Clarification of unclear information
 - VR staff
 - Financial aid and IRS-related documents
 - Transportation services navigation
 - Accommodations requests for industry certification exams and coordination with parents
 - Reference letter requests
- Engaging in problem-solving scenarios
 - Uncertainty about how to complete assignments
 - Absences
 - Poor performance on a test/quiz
 - Assignment deadline shortfalls
 - Questions from VR staff (e.g., attendance, grades, hours, and program completion)
 - Transportation problems, such as the provider is late or paying for transportation with a credit card
 - Funds needed to purchase lunch or to access public or private transportation
 - Conflict with others
 - Hygiene
 - Multi-tasking assignments and responsibilities
 - Coping with anxiety, frustration, and stress

Parents and Families/Age of Majority

Project TOPS believes active engagement by a parent or other family member is a critical support for student success. Family members need to be made aware of postsecondary education opportunities as early as possible in K-12 and need to be prepared to support their young person in successfully transitioning to postsecondary education or training.

Program staff are able to communicate with parents or other family members under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) until the child turns 18. However, there are important considerations once a student reaches the age of 18, which is the age of majority in Florida. Absent court action to remove some of the rights of majority age, the student gains all the legal rights and responsibilities of an adult at age 18. Project TOPS requires the student, guardian advocate, or guardian, as appropriate, to sign the Student Authorization to Release Information, so that Project TOPS team members can communicate with critical stakeholders. Each program will need to determine its policies and procedures related to student rights and family involvement.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

From FCIHE:

fcihe.com/upcoming-events-training

From FCSUA, resources for planning for college:

fcsua.org/E_resources.php

From Think College, online modules for families:

thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn/families-0

From Family Network on Disabilities, Inc. (FND), Parent Training Information Center, resource library, and more:

fndusa.org

From the Florida Bar Foundation, a resource on guardianship, Turning 18:

turning18.org

From FDDC, a guide on guardianship and restoration of rights, *Developing Abilities and Restoring Rights: A Guide for Supporting Persons with Disabilities* (and related resources):

fddc.org

Inclusion

Programs should work to maximize the inclusion of students in the program with non-disabled students both inside and outside the CTE classroom. Project TOPS students are full members of the technical college community and have access to all of Robert Morgan’s facilities and resources, including the Student Center that was developed with guidance from Project TOPS staff and resources provided by the school district and technical college. This center provides computers, counseling, student workshops, and other resources for all Robert Morgan students. Other inclusive technical college activities include Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) participation and dialogue with students conducted by the technical college principal.

Career and Technical Student Organization Competitions

Postsecondary CTE students can become members of CTSOs that coincide with the CTE programs they are enrolled in. CTSOs have been shown to better connect students to their academics and strengthen their technical and employability skills. There is a fee to join a CTSO, and there are additional costs to participate in competitions.

Project TOPS students have competed in regional, state, and national competitions through SkillsUSA, the CTSO for students enrolled in the three CTE programs that support Project TOPS students. Students receive assistance preparing for this contest within their “pro sessions.” They have had remarkable success when competing, especially in the Employment Application Process (EAP) competition for students with 504 plans. In EAP competition, one student earned a gold medal in state SkillsUSA and a bronze in national SkillsUSA. This was the first time this student left town without his parents and was an incredible experience for the student. The next year, students won nine regional SkillsUSA medals and, in state competition, won six medals, including gold, silver, and bronze in an Employment Application Process contest. This demonstrates that the employability soft skills instruction that Project TOPS students received in their “pro sessions” has prepared them well.

Federal Perkins CTE funds covered expenses for a student and faculty member to attend national SkillsUSA competition and for transportation to a trade conference.

NATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

ctsos.org

Evidence of Student Success

In order to maintain and increase institutional and community support, programs need to be able to demonstrate positive student outcomes, such as OCPs, career certificates, industry certifications or licensure, Satisfactory Academic Progress, and employment.

Programs should establish protocols to record all student-achievement data beginning on day one of the program. The need for objective information about student success may also be another good reason to support student participation in CTSO competitions such as those mentioned previously.

Employment

Postsecondary CTE is intended to lead to employment, and inclusive postsecondary CTE programs for students with an intellectual and developmental disability in technical colleges should have the same goal. As was indicated earlier, completion of one or more OCPs or full program completion means that the student has mastered all the competencies required for one or more jobs. A student who has earned two OCPs in Baking and Pastry Arts at Robert Morgan has mastered the competencies for two jobs. However, some employers require licensure or industry certification as a condition for employment that can be earned in CTE programs.

Programs will need to develop activities and strategies that assist students in transitioning from school to work and retaining employment, such as creating internships, teaching soft skills, conducting job development, collaborating effectively with VR and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), creating job shadowing and other work experiences, and facilitating employment, including supported employment.

A career assessment that is appropriate for students with a significant disability is the Discovery assessment. Available through Florida VR, it is a “deep dive” into the individual that includes interviewing the individual, family members, and significant others and observing the individual in various settings. The product is a Discovery Profile that reflects the person’s interests and the conditions needed for the person to be successful in a job. It normally precedes another VR service, supported employment, which is a job tailored to the particular needs of the individual and employer. Supported employment is “competitive work, paid at or above minimum wage, which provides regular opportunities for interaction with people who do not have a disability. Supported employment typically includes job coaches or employment specialists who help students with disabilities to get and keep a job.”

Project TOPS strategies that support employment:

- Employability skills instruction, including interviewing skills and portfolio development (e.g., print portfolio, resume, photos, and videos)
- Paid and unpaid internships with businesses, a non-profit, and the school district
- Collaboration with employers: hosted a summer professional conference that included employers as guest speakers who also conducted student mock interviews and reviewed career portfolios
- Partnerships with VR and other agencies
- Student attendance at the Graphics of the Arts Trades Fair that included mock interviews and the opportunity to learn more about their intended profession
- Development of the Project TOPS logo, posters, business cards, and other production documents that simulates real-world employment, including interaction with technical college or other customers to determine their product needs
- Professional speakers bureau on topics including legal topics in the graphics industry, employment opportunities in baking, interview skills, workplace harassment, and professionalism and manners in the workplace

RESOURCES

EMPLOYMENT

From Think College, a webinar, *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs—What’s the Big Deal?*:
thinkcollege.net/resource/employment-assessment/jobs-jobs-jobs-whats-big-deal

From VR, information on Discovery and supported employment:
rehabworks.org/joey_cunio.shtml

From VR, chapter 17 of *VR Counselor Policy Manual*, which addresses supported employment:
rehabworks.org/policy.shtml

From Think College, information on the Discovery career assessment:
thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/GG6_final.pdf

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Unique Abilities Partner Program supports businesses that hire persons with a disability:
floridajobs.org/unique-abilities-partner-program

Transportation

Unless family members or others are providing transportation, students may need to learn how to navigate public transportation, Florida's transportation system for people who are transportation-disadvantaged, or other transportation resources. Programs may want to incorporate travel training in their instruction to expand transportation options for students. Project TOPS helps students navigate their transportation, including addressing transportation-related problems as they arise. Most students use the county-supported transportation system.

RESOURCES TRANSPORTATION

From Easter Seals Project Action, training and certification for travel trainers:
projectaction.com

For the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, information on Florida's transportation-disadvantaged system:
ctd.fdot.gov

PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Inclusive CTE programs face many challenges. Programs will need to be prepared to respond to demand that exceeds capacity. One of the issues Project TOPS has faced is the need to limit the number of students enrolled in the programs Project TOPS supports in order to ensure that those programs remain inclusive. Project TOPS developed a waiting list, and in year three closed the waiting list due to demand exceeding capacity. Before being placed on the waiting list, prospective students were interviewed, their documents were reviewed, and the registration process was completed. A procedure was developed to require potential students and families to set an appointment to address the problem of walk-ins. The program has also developed a referral list, so students expressing interest in the program are aware of other postsecondary programs and other options.

Other challenges Project TOPS has faced include the following:

- Obtaining sufficient funding to hire faculty to support students as co-teachers in inclusive classrooms
- Expanding supports to students in other CTE programs
- Addressing student mental health needs
- Obtaining additional resources to support sustainability
- Receiving psychological reports with conflicting information or incomplete diagnosis
- Obtaining student and family commitment to employment as a goal
- Determining how to address students whose an intellectual and developmental disability were identified after they enrolled
- Addressing situations where students have exceeded the number of contact hours for their CTE program and its impact on financial aid
- Maintaining ongoing communication with parents/guardians and other family members

FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Many resources are available to support these programs; to become sustainable, programs will need to be adept at maximizing those resources.

FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMS—PROGRAM SUPPORT AND STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities at University of Central Florida administers a grant program for start-up and enhancement of approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs for students with an intellectual disability who are no longer enrolled in K-12. The FCSUA website contains the application and instructions for submitting an application to become an approved FPCTP, which can be submitted at any time.

Key elements of proposals include experiential inclusive opportunities, access to courses, and a meaningful credential that is intended to lead to employment. Students enrolled in these programs should have employment as a goal, and programs must indicate the activities that are intended to lead to employment, not simply those that are intended to lead to program completion or industry certification or licensure. For technical colleges, district school board approval is required.

Approved FPCTPs can apply for and receive a start-up or enhancement grant of up to \$300,000 a year for a period for up to three years, followed by an enhancement grant for funding beyond the initial grant. If a school district has multiple technical colleges, each technical college can receive its own startup or enhancement grant.

Students enrolled in FPCTP-approved programs can receive a \$7,000 annual scholarship that is not needs-based, as long as they are making Satisfactory Academic Progress. Programs will need to work with other entities within their technical college to establish procedures to make these scholarships available to students. Project TOPS has worked with the technical college business office to develop application and disbursement procedures for scholarship funds, while at other technical colleges the financial aid office may assume this role

The definition of a “student with an intellectual disability” who can be served in a FPCTP is provided in section 760 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*:

(2) STUDENT WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.--The term ‘student with an intellectual disability’ means a student--

“(A) with mental retardation or a cognitive impairment, characterized by significant limitations in--

“(i) intellectual and cognitive functioning; and

“(ii) adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and

“(B) who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

*(www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/html/PLAW-110publ315.htm)

FCSUA leaves it up to the postsecondary institution to define the terms in (2) (A) and (B) that must be met for a student to qualify as a “student with an intellectual disability.” The technical college should have documentation that supports each student’s eligibility determination.



RESOURCES

FROM FCSUA ON FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Florida Center for Students with Unique
Abilities application for FPCTP approval:
fcsua.org/I_application.php

FPCTP grant opportunities:
fcsua.org/I_grant.php

Webinar: *FCSUA Portal FPCTP Start-up and
Enhancement Grants* (May 6, 2020):
[youtube.com/watch?v=K-
tHR2sq4LM&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=K-tHR2sq4LM&feature=youtu.be)

Annual report containing information on
FPCTP-approved programs:
fcsua.org/aboutus.php

Webinar: *Perspectives From FLDOE: What the
Florida College System and Career and Adult
Education Look for When Reviewing Florida
Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition
Program (FPCTP) Applications for Approval*
(October 2, 2018):
[youtube.com/watch?v=VqhWSORUz2M&fea
ture=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=VqhWSORUz2M&feature=youtu.be)

Webinar: *Scholarship Requests Using FCSUA
Salesforce Portal* (December 1, 2020):
fcsua.org/events.php

FEDERAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Students with an intellectual disability may qualify for certain needs-based federal scholarships that may not otherwise be available to them, if the postsecondary program they are enrolled in has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education as a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP). Once a program is approved as a CTP, enrolled students with an intellectual disability may apply for any of three types of federal financial aid: Pell grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), and work study.

To obtain need-based aid, applicants will need to submit a Federal Application for Financial Student Assistance (FAFSA). One question that may arise regarding these applications is verification of information. The best advice for students and families is that they should comply with these requests by providing the proper documentation in a timely fashion.

RESOURCES

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

From FCSUA, a list of sites that provide information about applying for federal financial aid and information about applying for CTP:

fcsua.org/E_FFA.php

(Note the FCSUA requirement regarding approval or pursuit of CTP approval as a FPCTP condition.)

FCSUA webinar: *Completing your Federal Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program Application* (May 1, 2018):

youtube.com/watch?v=Cbze9zRXyW0&feature=youtu.be

From FCIHE, *Policy and Financial Aid, CTP & FPCTP Certifications*:

fcihe.com/resources/policy-financial-aid/ctp-and-fpctp-certifications

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Most students enrolled in inclusive postsecondary programs, CTE and otherwise, receive “traditional” VR services, which may include payment for such costs as tuition, other student fees, books, supplies, assistive technology, and more. Vocational Rehabilitation considers the financial resources of the individual to determine how much they will contribute to paying these costs. Students receiving traditional VR services may also be able to access help obtaining and keeping a job. VR is an especially critical resource for students who do not have an intellectual disability, as only students with an intellectual disability are eligible to receive FPCTP and CTP scholarships.

Technical colleges may want to consider becoming a VR pre-employment transition services (called the STAR Program or pre-ETS), employment services, or other vendor to enable colleges to provide these services directly for students who have an intellectual and developmental disability or other disability. The Florida DOE VR office has a youth transition unit that is responsible for facilitating inclusive postsecondary education, and each VR region has one or more persons who have a similar responsibility.

Project TOPS coordinates closely with VR. The program developed a relationship with the VR area supervisor early on that has continued. Ongoing communication about student progress should be addressed, as this impacts the continuation of VR financial and other services. Project TOPS works with VR to ensure an open line of communication and support for program students, including providing monthly reports that address student progress, concerns, and needs.

RESOURCES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

From FLDOE VR, the *Counselor Policy Manual*:
rehabworks.org/policy.shtml

From FLDOE VR, more information about the FLDOE VR youth transition unit that oversees pre-employment transition services, Discovery, inclusive postsecondary education, and other services:

rehabworks.org/stw.shtml

From FLDOE VR, their vendor site at:

rehabworks.org/vendors.shtml

From Think College, the Innovation Exchange Vocational Rehabilitation page:

thinkcollege.net/resources/innovation-exchange/vocational-rehabilitation

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is the Florida agency whose mission is to provide supports for those categories of persons with an intellectual and developmental disability that are listed in the Florida definition of “developmental disabilities” listed in section 393.063(12), *F.S.*

Local APD providers can assist in identifying their consumers receiving services who may be potential students to enroll in inclusive postsecondary programs. Students receiving iBudget/Medicaid Waiver (iBudget) services who need personal supports to attend postsecondary programs will need to include those services within their individualized plans. The support VR is able to provide after a person with disability has obtained supported employment (referred to as “phase one”) is time-limited, and APD iBudget services (referred to as “phase two”) may be needed after VR services end to continue to support job retention.

RESOURCES

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

From APD:
apd.myflorida.com

APD resource directory to assist students and families with an identified need within their local area:
resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com

Florida Navigator, an APD online tool for accessing state of Florida programs by service needs:
navigator.apd.myflorida.com

From FCSUA, the webinar *Agency Supports for Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs: The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)* is an overview of APD programs, including Adult Day Training, iBudget/Medicaid Waiver (iBudget), and Employment Enhancement Program (September 11, 2018):
[youtube.com/watch?v=ITfbwEE9uiM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITfbwEE9uiM&feature=youtu.be)

OTHER RESOURCES

There are other resources that can be used to support these programs, including the following:

- State-appropriated Adults with Disabilities funds administered by VR for school districts and other entities receiving this legislative appropriation
- State workforce development funds available for school districts for postsecondary CTE and adult education postsecondary programs can be used to support technical college programs; districts may receive additional funding for students with a disability within the workforce development funding formula if they meet the requirements relating to Workforce Education 504/ADAAA Plans for students who have 504 ADA plans, including a determination of the level of service and coding in the Workforce Development Information Systems (WDIS) database, that are outlined at **fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/state-funding-districts/resources.shtml**
- Student tuition and fees and fee waivers and exemptions for postsecondary CTE students provided for in *Florida Statutes*, including the annual General Appropriations Act
- Perkins V federal CTE funds: see **fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities**
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) federal adult education funds: **fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities**
- FLDOE BEESS-funded discretionary projects: contact FLDOE BEESS staff
- Technical college funds
- School district funds
- Career Source career centers funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Investment Act: **careersourceflorida.com/career-services**
- Best Buddies
- Local Center for Independent Living: **floridacils.org**
- Local Arc chapter: **arcflorida.org**
- Business industry partners in CTE advisory committees or other business partners
- Foundations (Florida Atlantic University obtained foundation funding to support their inclusive postsecondary education program.)

RESOURCES

COSTS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

From FLDOE, the attachment to the latest Workforce Education Tuition and Fees Memo for guidance on tuition, fees, and fee exemptions and fee waivers for postsecondary CTE programs:

fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/state-funding-districts/tuition-fees.shtml

From FCUSA, a webinar, *Building and Sustaining Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs*, an overview of potential program costs and funding sources to support inclusive postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability (April 3, 2018):

youtube.com/watch?v=Glhcg4lrzO8&feature=youtu.be

TIPS FOR PROGRAM SUCCESS

- Successful collaboration includes many partners: project staff, CTE instructors, secondary transition, VR, school district administrators, and staff of departments across the technical college, including administration, admissions, financial aid, and student counseling services, and other agencies.
- Implementation teams tailor the inclusive postsecondary CTE program to meet local systems and needs.
- The program is proactive in pursuing the resources, both programmatic and financial, that are needed to develop and sustain successful programs.
- Students enroll in programs that are a good fit for them, given their preferences, skills, interests, and abilities.
- The program provides supports, including academic support, that facilitate student success in their postsecondary CTE program, based on a 504 plan that meets the individualized needs of each student. Project staff work closely with the instructor and student to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in their CTE program. If additional support is needed within or outside the classroom, that support is provided.
- Instructors and others within the technical college are equipped to assist the student in providing the needed accommodations and other supports.
- The program is structured in a way that results in employment for participants.
- There is a strong emphasis on data collection, evaluation, and reporting student success to build and sustain the program.

KEEPING IT GOING: SUSTAINABILITY

To be truly successful, a program must be sustainable. To enhance sustainability, programs must access a variety of funding sources to meet critical student needs, including:

- Complete an application to be approved as a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program by the FCSUA at the University of Central Florida and pursue separate processes to obtain startup or enhancement grant funding and scholarships for students with an intellectual disability enrolled in these programs, subject to availability of funding.
- Obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Education as a Comprehensive Transition Program, so students with an intellectual disability in your inclusive postsecondary CTE program can pursue certain federal financial aid.
- Maximize existing resources and services. For example, Florida VR offers education- and employment-related support for students. This is particularly critical for serving students with a developmental disability other than an intellectual disability, as FCSUA grant funding can only be used to serve students with an intellectual disability.

Project TOPS is making good progress toward sustainability. It is a FPCTP-approved program that in 2019 obtained a renewal of its FCSUA enhancement funding and a renewal of its FPCTP status in 2020. Enrolled students with an intellectual disability who are making satisfactory academic progress are receiving state scholarships. Project TOPS is also an approved CTP, so students can apply for the federal financial aid for students in approved programs. Students are receiving supports from VR, and a mechanism has been developed to communicate with VR on an ongoing basis.

The Student Center that has been developed with assistance from Project TOPS benefits all students at the technical college. The center is managed by a coordinator who collaborates with administrators, faculty, counselors, and TOPS team members to meet student needs. The coordinator schedules monthly seminars on a wide range of topics and seeks community support for CTE programs. The center makes computers available for easy computer access outside of the CTE classroom.

POSTSCRIPT: PROJECT TOPS REMOTE LEARNING SUPPORTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

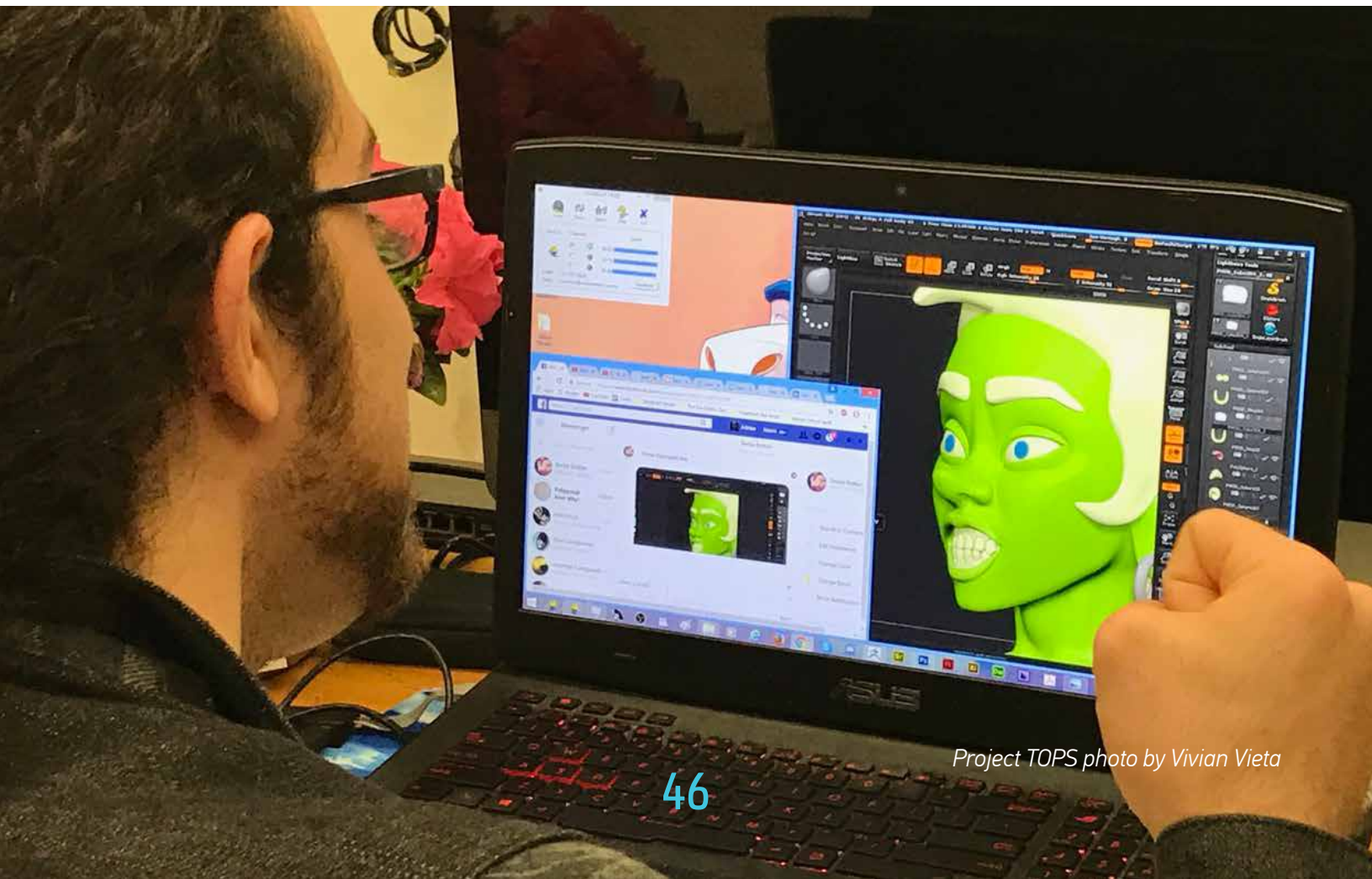
- Pairing students with team members for individualized support with online instruction and technology use
- Identifying best platforms for student instruction (e.g., Zoom and Canvas)
- Identifying and developing supplemental instructional resources
- Training faculty to teach students remotely and addressing student stress, anxiety, and non-compliance
- Monitoring student emotional state and providing needed supports
- Debriefing faculty and Project TOPS team
- Communicating with parents

CONCLUSION

Launching and sustaining a postsecondary career and technical education program for students with an intellectual and developmental disability takes a great deal of planning, collaboration, and institutional support. However, the benefits to students of such a program can be life-changing.

Remember, there are many resources in Florida and on a national level to support your team's efforts. Improving employment and independent living outcomes for students with an intellectual and developmental disability is not the work of just one team or one institution. It will require a multi-pronged attack and a sustained effort over a period of years. However, teams that are now working to

implement such a program have the opportunity to benefit from the experience and expertise gained by the programs that came before them. Use that knowledge to support your efforts and programs such as Project TOPS to help you realize your goal of making a real and significant impact on the students you serve and the world around them.



Project TOPS photo by Vivian Vieta

Appendix A

FAQS FROM PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND VISITORS

This Project TOPS list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) reflects the types of questions programs should be prepared to respond to.

From Students

- Can I earn a degree like in a college or university?
- When can I start? I want to start the program immediately and finish quickly.
- What are OCPs?
- What is an industry certification?
- Why do I have to complete the FAFSA form?
- Why does the VR counselor or consultant need to know how I am doing in class?
- I want a job, but my parents do not want me to get one. What should I do?
- Why do I have to volunteer or intern? I want to make money.
- Why is the fact that I like making frozen dough pop-up bread or drawing or playing video games not a sufficient reason to enroll in a specific CTE program?
- Will I have to do homework?
- Reading is hard for me. Do I need to read and write well to be successful in my CTE program?
- I do not like math at all and cannot do it. Will I have math in college?

From Parents/Families

- What programs does TOPS support?
- Can I tell you what my son/daughter likes?
- What do you mean that you need my child's permission to speak with me? My child lives with me, and that makes me their guardian.
- Will you pick up my child from the parking lot every morning?
- Can you call me and tell me how my child is doing every week?
- Do you follow a specific curriculum?

From Program Visitors

- How long did you plan before starting TOPS?
- How many staff members do you have?
- How did you determine what CTE programs to support?
- What supports do you provide for students?
- Who contacts parents/guardians and how often?

Appendix B

DEFINITIONS

Career certificate: a certificate earned from completing a clock-hour CTE program and meeting basic skills exit requirements (also referred to as a Postsecondary Adult Vocational, or PSAV, program)

CTE (career and technical education): programs leading to occupational completion points (OCPs), industry certification or licensure, or a career certificate, diploma, or degree (degrees only in state college programs); also other curriculum options for certain postsecondary students with a disability

CTP (Comprehensive Transition Program): a program approved by the U.S. Department of Education approval to offer financial aid available for students with an intellectual disability, including Pell grants, work study, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) **studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities**

Developmental disability (DD): as defined under Florida law at section 393.063 (10), Florida Statutes, persons having the following disabilities: Spina Bifida, intellectual disability, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Phelan-McDermid, Prader-Willi syndrome, and Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD). A broader federal definition of “developmental disability” exists in section 102(8) of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (Developmental Disabilities Act). This is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability and other disabilities that are apparent during childhood.

FLDOE BEESS (Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services): oversees exceptional education in Florida; **fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu**

FCSUA (Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities at University of Central Florida): coordinates the dissemination of information for students with a disability; other responsibilities support the development of Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTPs) for students with an intellectual disability; **fcsua.org**

FDDC (Florida Developmental Disabilities Council): organization whose mission is “to advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with an intellectual and developmental disability”; **fddc.org**

FPCTP (Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program): approval by the Center for Students with Unique Abilities at the University of Central Florida of a postsecondary comprehensive transition program for students with an intellectual disability that meets the requirements in state law in academic, inclusion, business partnerships, and other areas; **fcsua.org/I_application.php**

Appendix B *(Continued)*

DEFINITIONS

Higher Education Opportunity Act (HOEA): a federal law that covers a wide variety of higher education, including several provisions related to students with intellectual disability. These include defining Comprehensive Transition Programs and funding model demonstration projects and a National Coordinating Center for those projects.

Intellectual disability (ID): a disability that originates before age 18 and is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.

SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress): the standards developed to determine if the student is progressing satisfactorily in their CTE program

TIEP (Transition Individual Educational Plan): the individual educational plan that begins the process of identifying the need for transition services that must have postsecondary education and career goals in place no later than when a student with a disability reaches the age of 16

Appendix C

ROBERT MORGAN EDUCATIONAL CENTER & TECHNICAL COLLEGE INFORMATION FROM AN INTERESTED STUDENT

FOR STAFF USE ONLY!

Date: _____ Time: _____

Initials: _____

Currently, Project TOPS is full to capacity and the waiting list is closed.
If you are interested in obtaining more information, please complete the information below
and we will contact you by email. Thank you!

STUDENT NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL: _____ **YEAR OF GRADUATION:** _____

PROGRAM OF INTEREST TO STUDY: _____

STUDENT TELEPHONE: _____

STUDENT EMAIL: _____

Is the student requesting accommodations? If yes, please be prepared to provide the following documentation to Project TOPS:

- Current psychological evaluation and/or medical documentation that demonstrates a development disability (autism spectrum disorders or an intellectual disability)
- Community referral from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Individual Employment Plan from VR
- Contact information of VR Counselor
- High school Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Last psychological evaluation from high school
- High school transcripts (must be sealed!)
- Be willing to sign a Release of Authorization (for us to share information with parents)

PARENT NAME: _____

PARENT TELEPHONE: _____

PARENT EMAIL: _____



Interested students and parents will only be seen by appointment. Please contact Dr. Vivian Vieta at vvieta@dadeschools.net for specific questions. Kindly allow 48 hours for a response.

Appendix C (Spanish)

ROBERT MORGAN EDUCATIONAL CENTER & TECHNICAL COLLEGE INFORMACIÓN DE UN ESTUDIANTE INTERESADO

FOR STAFF USE ONLY!

Date: _____ Time: _____

Initials: _____

Actualmente, **Project TOPS está lleno a capacidad y la lista de espera está cerrada**. Si usted está interesado (a) en obtener más información, favor complete la información a continuación y nos pondremos en contacto con usted por correo electrónico. Muchas gracias!

NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIANTE: _____

FECHA DE NACIMIENTO: _____

ESCUELA DE GRADUACIÓN: _____ **AÑO DE GRADUACIÓN:** _____

PROGRAMA DE INTERÉS PARA ESTUDIAR: _____

TELÉFONO DEL ESTUDIANTE: _____

CORREO ELECTRÓNICO DEL ESTUDIANTE: _____

¿Está el estudiante solicitando acomodaciones? Si lo está, por favor prepárese a proveer la siguiente documentación a Project TOPS:

- Evaluación psicológica actual y/o documentación médica que demuestre una discapacidad de desarrollo (autismo o intelectual)
- Referido comunitario de Rehabilitación Vocacional (VR)
- Información para contactar al consejero de VR
- Plan Individual Educativo de la escuela secundaria (high school)
- Última evaluación psicológica de la escuela secundaria
- Calificaciones de la escuela secundaria (selladas)
- Esté dispuesto(a) a firmar el Permiso de Autorización (para nosotros poder compartir con otros padres)

NOMBRE DEL PADRE/MADRE: _____

TELÉFONO DEL PADRE/MADRE: _____

CORREO ELECTRÓNICO DEL PADRE/MADRE: _____



Los estudiantes interesados y los padres sólo serán vistos por cita. Por favor, póngase en contacto con la Dra. Vivian Vieta enviando un correo electrónico a vvietta@dadeschools.net si tiene preguntas específicas. Por favor esperar 48 horas para una respuesta.

Appendix D: Project TOPS Flyer (Front)

- Graduated high school
 - Ages 18 – 24 years
 - Client of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or willingness to be referred to VR.
 - Completion of career interest inventory and/or previously identified CTE area of interest
 - Able to independently perform classroom tasks, access transportation, provide self-care, and demonstrate appropriate behaviors
 - Interview with RMECTC counselor, instructor of CTE program and Project TOPS Director
- Referral to the program can be initiated by a student (who is willing to self-disclose a disability and requests additional supports), a parent, counselor, teacher, Transition Specialist and/or VR Consultant.

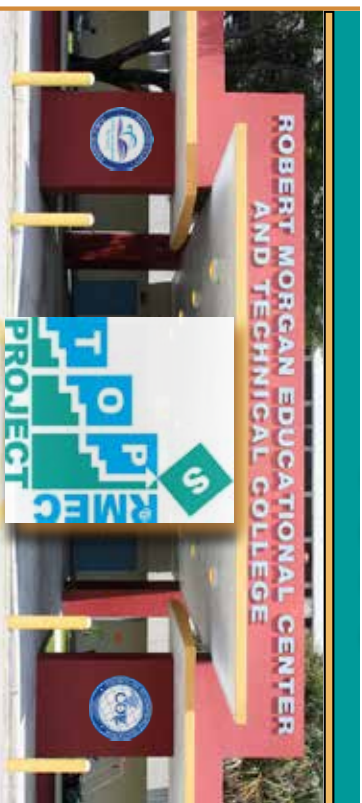
NOTE: Project TOPS is at **full capacity** now. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Dr. Vivian Viera to schedule an appointment: vviera@dcdadeschools.net

WHAT PROJECT TOPS PROVIDES

Project TOPS provides students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the supports needed for success by earning at least one Occupational Completion Point (OCP) and/or passing an Industry Certification Exam (ICE). The students are required to have identified an interest in a career technical education (CTE) program.

STUDENTS WILL BE ENROLLED IN A FULLY INCLUSIVE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) COURSE

- Student case management support and access to specialized facilitators and accommodations through a Section 504 Plan.
- Ongoing professional development for faculty and staff in strategies and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Direct supports and accommodations for the programs of 3D Animation Technology, Commercial Art Technology and Baking and Pastry Arts including: development of study guides, communication, time management, organizational skills and integration of instructional technology.
- Facilitators available after school who are certified and experienced teachers of special education and/or CTE.
- Ongoing communication with students, parents and support providers.
- Collaboration with potential employers, V. R. Consultant and other agencies.
- Integration between hard skills (CTE) and soft skills (professionalism, job readiness, self-determination and self-advocacy) instruction.
- Access to unpaid and paid internships and campus work experiences.
- Development of traditional and mobile resumes, business cards, cover letters, and



ABOUT PROJECT TOPS

Project TOPS began as a collaborative partnership with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC), Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) Office of School Operations and Adult Education and Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College (RMECTC).

The mission of Project TOPS is to address the unique abilities of students with developmental and intellectual disabilities enrolled in an inclusive postsecondary Career Technical Education (CTE) program.

TOPS has been approved and receives funds as a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program by the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) at the University of Central Florida (UCF).



Appendix D: Project TOPS Flyer (Back)

CTE PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT

The **Project TOPS Team** provides supports to students through direct in class instruction and after school sessions.

During 2019-2020, students registered in only the CTE programs listed below may be eligible for services, based on available class enrollment:

CONSIDER THE CTE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND FACTS. DO SOME RESEARCH AND SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO VISIT THE PROGRAM BEFORE DECIDING IF THE PROGRAM IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOU.

COMMERCIAL ART TECHNOLOGY

PROGRAMS: Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign

GOAL: Advertising of graphic designs for the promotion of services, products and ideas.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH FOR
COMMERCIAL ART TECHNOLOGY
AVAILABLE AT:

<https://www.blis.gov/oh/arts-and-design/graphic-designers.htm>
Select Career Certificate Program, then select:
<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/curriculum-frameworks/2019-20-frameworks/arts-a-v-technology-communication.stml>

SOFT SKILLS NEEDED FOR BOTH PROGRAMS

1. Complete paper and pencil/traditional drawings.
2. Think creatively on a wide range of topics, not only what is of high interest.
3. Learn independently from textbooks, online tutorials, video tutorials and technology-based study guides.
4. Have the necessary academic skills of reading, writing notes and math.
5. Work independently and as part of a team (direct assistance not provided)
6. Maintain focus while on the computer (no off-topic Internet surfing).
7. Able to receive instructions and constructive criticism.
8. Participate in multi-step projects (short and long term).
9. Participate in unpaid projects or internships, if available.
10. Develop comprehensive career portfolio with samples and guidance.
11. Request assistance or accommodations as needed and accept the supports provided.
12. Able to manage time effectively and meet deadlines.
13. Maintain consistent attendance and punctuality.

3D ANIMATION TECHNOLOGY

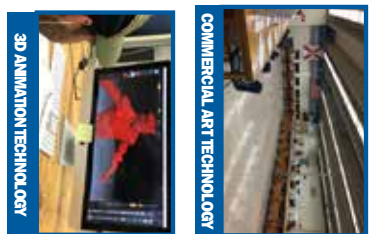
PROGRAMS: Adobe Photoshop, Animate, Flash, Sculpt3rs, Moya

GOAL: Create characters and environments for entertainment purposes.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH FOR
3D ANIMATION TECHNOLOGY
AVAILABLE AT:



PERSONAL TRAITS FOR SUCCESS ON THE JOB



<https://www.blis.gov/oh/arts-and-design/multimedia-artists-and-animators.htm>
<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/curriculum-frameworks/2019-20-frameworks/arts-a-v-technology-communication.stml>
Select Career Certificate Program, then select: 3D Animation Technology (1480200) (RTF)

BAKING AND PASTRY ARTS

1. Work in a commercial bakery setting.
2. Bake from scratch and sell all products on site at Giorgio's Café.
3. Have the necessary academic skills of math (adding, subtracting, multiplying/dividing), reading and writing notes and measuring.
4. Follow multi-step oral and written instructions independently.
5. Work independently and as part of a team.
6. Able to receive instructions and constructive criticism.
7. Able to tolerate loud noises, stand all day, multi-task, and work in a fast pace environment.
8. Request assistance or accommodations as needed and accept the supports provided.
9. Be responsible for studying and reviewing information at home on a daily basis.



BAKING AND PASTRY ARTS

WHO SUPPORTS PROJECT TOPS



FDDC, Inc. is a non-profit organization sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Council's mission is "to advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities." <https://www.fddc.org/>



FCSUA provides support to students, families, and institutions of higher education so that students with intellectual disabilities have opportunities for on-campus college experiences that lead to employment opportunities. Students participating in TOPS may be eligible to receive an annual scholarship to cover tuition costs. Learn more at <https://fcsua.org/>

To learn more about the program, please schedule an appointment via email:

Dr. Vivian C. Vieta, Program Director | vieta@adadeschools.net
Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College
18180 SW 122nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33177 | 305-253-9920
<https://www.robertmorganmtech.net/>

Available research at:
<https://www.blis.gov/oh/production/bakers.htm>
<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/curriculum-frameworks/2019-20-frameworks/hospitality-tourism.stml>
Select Career Certificate Program, then select: **Baking and Pastry Arts** (NI100600)



Appendix E: Sample FAFSA Brochure (Front)



FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid
<https://fafsa.ed.gov>

1 st TRIMESTER	2 nd TRIMESTER	3 rd TRIMESTER
August 2020 - December 2020	January 2021 - April 2021	April 2021 - July 2021

- ✓ **When do I complete the FAFSA?**
 - ⇒ FAFSA **must** be completed every year.
 - ⇒ As soon as you decide to attend RMECTC, fill out the FAFSA!
 - ⇒ **Returning students** may complete the FAFSA as soon as the yearly application opens.
- ✓ **What will I need to complete the FAFSA?**
 - ⇒ All tax documents from **2018**. You **DO NOT** provide **2019** tax information, even after you file **2019** taxes. This is a new practice called “Prior, Prior.”
 - ⇒ FAFSA ID (consists of a user-created username and password)
 - ⇒ RMECTC Federal School Code: **016919**
 - ⇒ Make sure you electronically sign the online application. Your parents also sign, if they claim you.
- ✓ **What happens after I complete the FAFSA?**
 - ⇒ You will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) via email.
 - ⇒ Read it carefully! Revise any information that is marked.
 - ⇒ If you have doubts, ask questions.
 - ⇒ If you are asked for documents, **YOU MUST** submit them!
 - ⇒ **YOU** are responsible for sending a SAR and any documents being requested to Ms. Ferro, aferro@dadeschools.net.
- ✓ **Completing/Renewing FAFSA will help you:**
 - ⇒ Stay debt free.
 - ⇒ Complete the program.
 - ⇒ Fulfill your professional goals.



Sponsored by United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.

Appendix E: Sample FAFSA Brochure (Back)

RMECTC'S Financial Aid Department is HERE to support you and has computers available for your use.



FINANCIAL AID

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY: 8:00AM - 6:45PM
TUESDAY: 8:00AM - 3:45PM
WEDNESDAY: 8:00AM - 3:45PM
THURSDAY: 8:00AM - 3:45PM
FRIDAY: CLOSED OR
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

CLOSED EACH DAY FOR LUNCH BETWEEN
11:30AM - 12:30PM

HAY AYUDA DISPONIBLE EN ESPAÑOL!

If you are a client of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), it is **YOUR** responsibility to complete the FAFSA every year. This is part of the signed contract you enter with VR. Both a Pell Grant from FAFSA and services from VR require **YOU** to maintain an academic grade of "C" or higher.



FAFSA CHANGES for 2018-2019 ARE LISTED AT:
[HTTPS://STUDENTAID.ED.GOV/SA/ABOUT/ANNOUNCEMENTS/FAFSA-CHANGES](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/announcements/fafsa-changes)

FAFSA HELP DESK WITH FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:
[HTTPS://FAFSA.ED.GOV/HELP.HTM](https://fafsa.ed.gov/help.htm)

Project TOPS Advisory Committee

The following persons have served on the advisory committee over the duration of this project:

Vivian Vieta

Robert Morgan Project TOPS Director

Kathleen Becht

Florida Consortium for Inclusive Higher Education

Ronni Bianco

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

Adda Bogaards

Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College

Reagan Chalmers

*Miami-Dade School District
Department of Exceptional Student Education*

Ericka Caldwell-Clinch

Robert Morgan, Vice Principal

Claudia De Zendigui

Parent of student

Libby Navarette

Parent of student

Kenneth Durrum

Released Solutions

Lisa Friedman-Chavez

Project 10

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*Miami-Dade School District
Department of Adult and Career Technical Education*

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Department of Exceptional Student Education*

Maggie Marrero Neville

*Miami Dade School District,
Transition Specialist*

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Mirtha Silverang

Robert Morgan, Student Services

Matty Rodriguez-Walling

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Jane Silveria

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Luis Sanchez

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Alejandro Diaz

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