

Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008

Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (PL 110-315) was enacted on August 14, 2008, reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. This law contains a number of important new provisions that improve access to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities.

Of particular note are the new provisions for financial aid and the funding of 27 Transition Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) and a National Coordinating Center.

Financial Aid

Students with intellectual disabilities are eligible to apply for federal financial aid to help cover the cost of attending college under these circumstances:

- The student must meet the definition of intellectual disability as outlined in the act*
- Students must be attending an approved Comprehensive Transition Program
 - - a list of these programs is maintained on the Federal Financial Aid website
- Students who meet these two criteria DO NOT have to have a standard high school diploma, or be pursuing a degree or certificate.
- Students with intellectual disabilities DO still have to meet the financial need criteria for eligibility
- They are eligible for federal grants and work study funds, but NOT student loans.

Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)

The 27 TPSID grantees, located in 23 states, create or expand college programs that focus on academics, social activities, employment experiences, and independent living. TPSIDs provide individualized supports for students and opportunities to be involved in college experiences with their peers without disabilities. Evaluating what works and does not work is a key component of each project.

National Coordinating Center

Think College serves as **the National Coordinating Center** for these projects. The Center conducts evaluation of the TPSID projects and collects information related to best practices in academic, social, employment and independent living program components.

* Rosa's Law changed the definition of **intellectual disabilities** in HEOA as follows:

Higher Education Act of 1965- Section 760(2)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1140(2)(A)) is amended by striking 'mental retardation or'.

Definition now reads:

A student—

(A) With 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.

27 TPSID Grant Sites:

1	AK	Anchorage	University of Alaska-Anchorage
2	AZ	Tucson	University of Arizona
3	CA	Fresno	California State University-Fresno
4	CA	Los Angeles	University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)
5	CA	Taft	West Kern Community College District
6	CO	Fort Collins	Colorado State University*
7	DE	Newark	University of Delaware
8	FL	St. Petersburg	University of South Florida-St. Petersburg
9	HI	Honolulu	University of Hawaii
10	IN	Bloomington	Indiana University
11	IA	Iowa City	University of Iowa
12	KY	Lexington	University of Kentucky
13	LA	Baton Rouge	Louisiana State University
14	MN	Brainerd	Central Lakes College
15	NY	Rochester	University of Rochester
16	NJ	Paramus	Bergen Community College
17	NJ	Trenton	College of New Jersey
18	NC	Cullowhee	Western Carolina University
19	ND	Minot	Minot State University
20	OH	Columbus	Ohio State University
21	OH	Kent	Kent State University
22	SC	Charleston	College of Charleston
23	TN	Knoxville	University of Tennessee
24	TX	Houston	Houston Community College
25	VT	Burlington	Univ of Vermont and State Agricultural College
26	VA	Richmond	Virginia Commonwealth University
27	WA	Des Moines	Highline Community College
TPSID Coordinating Center grantee			
28	MA	Boston	University of Massachusetts-Boston

* CSU grant money was used to develop the OPS Program. This program employs “Our consultative and educational services assist P-12 schools and institutes of higher education regarding accommodations and supports for students with disabilities as they pursue their educational goals. The challenges these students face are often not academic, but do impact their ability to be successful -- such as how to live with a roommate in a residence hall, how to communicate effectively with a professor, and how to make friends and get connected.”

* IN! will partner with colleges and universities to develop college opportunities that strictly serve students with ID as defined by Rosa’s law in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.