

# HB22-1107: Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities

*Sponsors: Rep. M. Young | Rep. M. Bradfield | Sen. J. Cooke | Sen. J. Bridges*

**Background** In 2016, the state legislature signed into law a five-year Inclusive Higher Education (IHE) Pilot Initiative at the University of Northern Colorado, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Arapahoe Community College providing the funding and structure needed to create college pathways for students with intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD).

- ~70 students with IDD are enrolled in college participating in traditional classes and coursework
- Students are living inclusively on campus
- Beginning in 2020, Colorado saw the first graduates of Inclusive Higher Education
- Students have received credentials in healthcare, advocacy, brewing studies, communication, and human services
- Colorado has established a statewide Inclusive Higher Education Consortium
- The IHE model includes focus on: Academic Growth, Social Development, Independence, and Career Advancement
- CDHE approved the credential an IHE student receives at graduation
- Each IHE has been approved as a Certified Transition Program (CTP) allowing students to access financial aid
- Students access vocational supports from DVR with the addition of an IHE specific line in the fee schedule

HB22-1107, through the development of the Inclusive Higher Education grant program supports state institutions to establish or expand college pathways for students with IDD and allows for ongoing guidance and evaluation of practice and outcomes. This will be done by implementing a grant program allowing for colleges across the state to apply for needed funding to develop, expand and solidify Inclusive Higher Education pathways.

Historically, society's low expectations and limited opportunities have prevented people with IDD from the benefits associated with a higher education. As a result, many live in poverty with few prospects to rise above it. While students with IDD have historically been denied college options, when given the opportunity, students are reaping the benefit from post-secondary education, including higher employment rates, increased access to competitive employment, better wages, increased socialization, community belonging and greater independence.

## 1. *Expand IHE pathways in Colorado*

**While great strides have been made in five years to bring Inclusive Higher Education to Colorado, it is not enough.** The success of the pilot initiative has led to significant demand for more options throughout Colorado. Colorado must meet this demand by supporting new and existing colleges to develop, fund and implement expansion. Further, Colorado must ensure expansion efforts create opportunities to close gaps in equitable geographic and enrollment access.

## 2. *Ensure Measurable Long-Term Outcomes*

It is crucial to utilize student outcome data to track and quantify the ROI of higher education as it relates to employment outcomes, increased community involvement and increased independence. Recognizing the critical importance of life after college, we must ensure graduates are positioned for success in the workforce and their community.

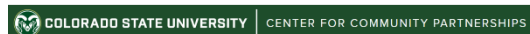
### Your support will:

- ✓ Increase inclusion, social interactions, career pathways and acceptance for students with IDD.
- ✓ Create paths to independence and opportunities for meaningful contribution within our communities.
- ✓ Provide employers with access to a historically untapped workforce.
- ✓ Ensure that students with IDD enter the workforce with in-demand, relevant skills.
- ✓ Reduce reliance on family and community resources.

### Questions?

Tracy Murphy  
IN! Executive Director  
tracy@inclusivehighered.org  
720-620-0804 (c)

Christiano Sosa  
The Arc of CO Executive Director  
csosa@thearcofco.org  
303-864-9334 x10



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