Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities (HB22-1107) Grant Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline for submission: **May 1, 2023 11:59 pm**

Grant Program Website: inclusivehighered.org/expansion

Table of Contents

I.   Grant Program Description

<u>Background</u>

The Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program was created as a result of the passing of HB22-1107. *Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities (HB22-1107)* was signed into law in order to establish and expand college pathways for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) at state institutions of higher education across Colorado.

Historically, the education, employment and independent living outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities has often been dismal. Further, challenges exist when accessing high quality postsecondary education and training designed to meet their individual needs. These challenges add to poor outcomes with regard to employment and independence.

While students with IDD have historically been denied college options, inclusive higher education has proven that when given the opportunity, students are reaping the benefits from post-secondary education, including, increased access to competitive employment, increased socialization, community belonging and greater independence. Nationally, with over 300 programs, inclusive higher education programs have continued to improve services and support for students with IDD in postsecondary and have demonstrated their success through improved employment and independent living outcomes.

In 2014, advocates for persons with IDD began working to create inclusive opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities as Colorado was one of only four states that did not have an inclusive higher education pathway. As a result, in 2016 the general assembly enacted a five-year inclusive higher education pilot program at Arapahoe Community College, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and the University of Northern Colorado. Today, approximately 70 students are enrolled at these institutions, participating in traditional classes and coursework, living inclusively on campus, participating in college social life and preparing for their careers.

Inclusive higher education pathways are designed to focus on four primary pillars:

- Academic Growth
- Social Development
- Independent Living
- Career Advancement

Since 2016, many advancements have been made in Colorado for inclusive higher education including the ability to earn an approved credential, access to federal financial aid and the development of state partnerships to support vocational goals. The success of the pilot programs created a demand for more opportunities throughout Colorado.

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of the Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program is to allow for colleges across Colorado to apply for needed funding to develop, expand and solidify inclusive higher education pathways that enable students with IDD to have all the rights, responsibilities, privileges, benefits and outcomes that result from higher education to the greatest extent possible, including academic growth, social development, career advancement and increased independence.

IN! is interested in leveraging the resources offered by Colorado state legislation to promote access to higher education, competitive integrated employment and independent living outcomes for students with IDD. This grant program provides an amazing opportunity to expand the availability of high-quality transition and postsecondary education programs that result in increased numbers of individuals with IDD who are prepared to obtain and retain employment while living independently as active members of their community.

Duration and Funds

This is a multi-year grant program with the Colorado Department of Higher Education as the overseeing state department and IN! as the administering entity. The anticipated duration for each award will be a 5-year term beginning June 2023.

The total award for each institution will be, on average, a total of $400,000 over five years to establish a new program. Startup costs vary by institution and will be determined in accordance with a provided budget template. Grant funding will allow for one year of program development and preparation with technical assistance and program guidance from IN!.

- Legislation funds available: Up to $450,000 annually for five years (beginning FY2022)
- Estimated range of awards: $100,000 to $500,000
- Estimated average size of award: $400,000
- Estimated total awards: 5
- Average project period: 5 years

Grant funding includes both grantees who are establishing new programs as well as those who are expanding existing programs (two separate grant cycles will be offered). Awards, timing and funding subject to change as a result of grant applications received and progress made by grantee.

Requirements

Grantees must propose programming that supports students with IDD. A student with an intellectual or developmental disability means a student:

A. With a cognitive impairment, characterized by significant limitations in:
   a. Intellectual and cognitive functioning.
   b. Adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills.
   c. Who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for free appropriate public education under IDEA.

Grantees must propose to create a high quality, inclusive model that would be eligible to receive comprehensive transition and postsecondary program (CTP) status at a future date. CTP is defined as: The term "comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities" means a degree, certificate, or non degree program that meets each of the following:

A. Is offered by an institution of higher education.
B. Is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment.
C. Includes an advising and curriculum structure.

D. Requires students with intellectual disabilities to participate on not less than a half-time basis as determined by the institution, with such participation focusing on academic components, and occurring through one or more of the following activities:
   a. Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses with nondisabled students offered by the institution.
   b. Auditing or participating in courses with nondisabled students offered by the institution for which the student does not receive regular academic credit.
   c. Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, non degree courses with nondisabled students.
   d. Participation in internships or work-based training in settings with nondisabled individuals.
E. Requires students with intellectual disabilities to be socially and academically integrated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent possible.

NOTE: For purposes of this grant, preference will be given to program models that follow regular enrollment guidelines as indicated in section (a) above.

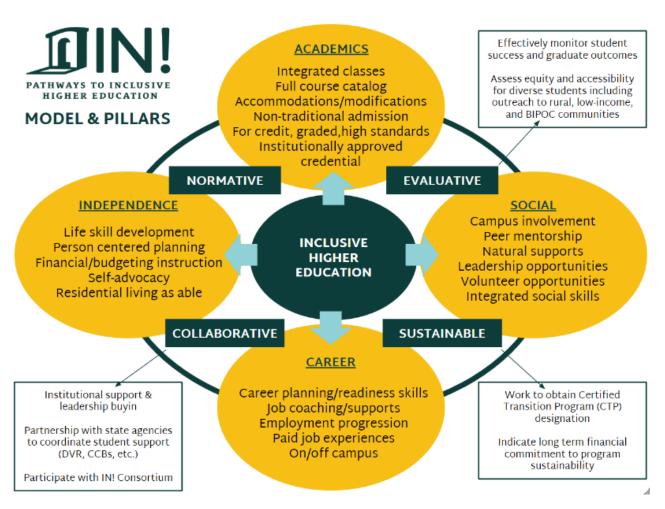Applicants will need to demonstrate a plan to develop an inclusive program that includes the following:

- Receiving program approval from president and top leadership.
- Demonstrating how students with IDD fit into the broader university plan for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Assessing institutional policies and practices in order to determine adequate training, technical assistance and the capacity needed to provide inclusive higher education opportunities for students with IDD.
- Ensuring program outreach and enrollment to adequately support program sustainability with a focus on reaching BIPOC, rural and low-income communities.
- Developing normative, individualized programs and supports representing the four key pillars: academics, social, career, and independence (model & pillars graphic below).
  - **Academics**: Students will have access to integrated classes in their area of study and the full course catalog, support with accommodations **and** modifications, receive college credit and transcripts, and are expected to achieve high standards of excellence in the classroom.
  - **Social**: Students will have ways to engage in campus activities, mentorship, leadership and volunteer opportunities, and develop integrated social skills.
  - **Career**: Students will have opportunities to engage in career opportunities both on and off campus including work study and internships. Students should receive career preparation/readiness skills, career planning skills and employment support.
  - **Independent Living**: Schools will support students in navigating residential on-campus living (as available), developing critical life skills, finding safe paths to independent living, engaging in person-centered planning, financial and budgeting education, and learning self-advocacy.
- Developing alternative admission standards that do not require applicants to take a national assessment test as an admission requirement and allows for modified coursework.
- Creating and offering an institutionally approved credential for students with intellectual disabilities upon program completion.
- Integrating person-centered planning in the development of each student's postsecondary plan.

- Providing peer mentoring services for the students, ensuring normative support across campus.
- Offering post-graduation programmatic support that will ensure a successful transition of students into life after college (i.e. benefits counseling, community resources, etc.).
- Coordinating programs and supports with available vocational rehabilitation through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.
- Completing a budget and financial sustainability template, template provided by IN! as needed.
- Participating in the Colorado Inclusive Higher Education Consortium, facilitated by IN!, to obtain guidance, evaluation and program development support.

Attention will be given to increasing diversity and accessibility within expansion efforts. While expanding inclusive higher education pathways, it is critical to ensure program development is focused on creating opportunity and increasing equity for students with IDD potentially facing barriers to accessing inclusive higher education in rural, low-income and BIPOC communities.

While all applicants will be expected to pursue model standards as listed above and as depicted in the model graphic below, it is valuable for each applicant to propose unique program options that meet the specific needs of each institution and offer diverse choices for students with IDD across the state. This can include, but is not limited to, concurrent enrollment plans, trade certification programs, etc.

Program Model & Pillars Graphic

Eligibility

The Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program will ***provide grants to state institutions of higher education across Colorado.*** HB22-1107 defines a state institution in the following manner: "STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" MEANS A STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-18-102 (10). The following defines CRS 23-18-102 (10) and must be true to be eligible to receive grant funding as a result of HB22-1107:

(a) "State institution of higher education" means a public postsecondary institution that is governed by:
> **(I)** The board of governors of the Colorado State University system;
> **(II)** The board of regents of the University of Colorado;
> **(III)** The board of trustees of the Colorado School of Mines;
> **(IV)** The board of trustees of the University of Northern Colorado;
> **(V)** The board of trustees of Adams State University;
> **(VI)** The board of trustees of Western Colorado University;
> **(VII)** The board of trustees of Colorado Mesa University;
> **(VIII)** The board of trustees for Fort Lewis College;
> **(IX)** The board of trustees for Metropolitan State University of Denver; or
> **(X)** The state board for community colleges and occupational education.

(b) "State institution of higher education" does not include a local district college that is part of a local college district organized pursuant to article 71 of this title, which districts shall continue to be eligible for direct grant funding from the general assembly pursuant to section 23-71-301.

II.   Application and Submission Details

Key Dates
- Application open: March 15, 2023
- Applications due: May 1, 2023 11:59 pm
- Finalist present proposals: May 8th-May 10th, 2023
- Deadline for review and selection: May 15, 2023
- Grant funding disbursed: June 30, 2023

Submission Format and Process
- Applications must include completion of application cover page (pg. 7), application narrative that answers the grant application questions and utilizes the corresponding headings, an attached budget and leadership approval letter.
- Use 11 point or larger font on 8.5x11 with 1" margins at top, bottom and both sides
- Applications must be no more than 20 pages, not including cover page, budget or any attached addendums.
- Applications must be submitted and received in PDF format by the deadline via email to info@inclusivehighered.org . *Your submission is not complete until you receive email confirmation verifying the date of receipt.*

Required Elements

A. Application Cover Page

Applicant Information	
Institution Name	
Mailing Address	
Primary Phone	

Region Indicate which region of CO this program will most directly impact		Eligibility Identify the governing body of institution
☐ Metro ☐ Pikes Peak ☐ North Central ☐ Northwest	☐ West Central ☐ Southwest ☐ Southeast ☐ Northeast	

Primary Contact		Authorized Representative *Contract/MOU Signing Authority	
Name		**Name**	
Title		**Title**	
Email		**Email**	
Phone		**Phone**	

Applicant Commitments
If awarded grant funding, do you commit to the following: (check all that apply)

☐ Yes, my institution will take the necessary steps to become a Certified Transition Program (CTP).
☐ Yes, my institution will appoint the appropriate program staff to join the Colorado Inclusive Higher Education Consortium.
☐ Yes, my institution will offer students an approved credential.
☐ Yes, my institution will integrate students academically and socially into the normative offerings of the institution.
☐ Yes, my institution will participate in annual evaluation requirements including collecting data, surveying stakeholders, and assessing student and graduate growth.

Requested Funding
Provide the total requested funding amount for five years and indicate the amount allocated per year.
Ensure amounts match and are supported by the attached budget.

Total		Year 3	
Year 1		**Year 4**	
Year 2		**Year 5**	

B. Narrative Questions

Commitment to Inclusion

1. Describe your institution's plan for diversity, equity and inclusion and how individuals with IDD fit into that plan. Include your institution's experience and commitment to serving this population.

2. How do you define inclusion in higher education for students with intellectual disabilities?

3. Describe how your proposed program model will address gaps or weaknesses in services at your institution to successfully meet the needs of students with IDD.

Program Pillars

4. Please describe the program model you are proposing with specific details regarding how you will support the four pillars of inclusive higher education:
   a. Academics: Students will have access to integrated classes in their area of study and the full course catalog, support with accommodations **and** modifications, receive college credit and transcripts, and are expected to achieve high standards of excellence in the classroom.
   b. Social: Students will have access to participate in campus activities, mentorship, leadership and volunteer opportunities and develop integrated social skills.
   c. Career: Students will have opportunities to engage in career opportunities both on and off campus including work study and internships. Students should receive career preparation/readiness skills, career planning skills and employment support.
   d. Independent Living: Schools will support students in navigating residential on-campus living, developing critical life skills, finding safe paths to independent living, engaging in person-centered planning, financial and budgeting education, and learning self-advocacy.

Supportive Elements

5. Describe your proposed program with regards to enrollment process, an approved credential and program requirements (time, coursework, etc.).

6. Describe how you will utilize person-centered planning.

7. Describe partnerships that might be utilized in the development of this program (internal and external).

8. Describe the programmatic supports that will be in place upon program completion to ensure a successful transition of students into life after college.

9. Describe any barriers you foresee in developing the program over the next five years.

10. Provide a timeline for program implementation and achieving program development requirements.

Equity, Access and Outreach

11. Describe how your program will increase equitable access within your region by ensuring program outreach and enrollment with a focus on reaching BIPOC, rural and low-income communities.

Staffing

12. Describe your hiring process and plan to staff the program. Please indicate your intent to appoint key staff positions, evidence of desired staff qualifications, and commitment to diverse, equitable, and inclusive hiring efforts.

C. Leadership Approval

Please attach a signed letter indicating program support from leadership.

D. Budget

Please attach a 5-year budget for the proposed program. A budget template has been provided for your use and is available on the grant website, if needed. The budget must demonstrate how the program will attain sustainability without grant funding.

Proposed partner institutions (if applicable) must meet the same definition of an institution of higher education (IHE) as indicated above. Additionally, the IHE to whom grant funds are obligated will remain the primary fiscal agent responsible for maintaining, documenting, and reporting activities associated with use of funds.

Applicants may attach a one-page budget narrative as necessary.

Information and budget guidance sessions will be available during grant writing timeline, prior to application due date.

III.   **Application Review Process**

All submissions will be initially scored by a multidisciplinary review team in accordance with the rubric found on the grant website and attached to this packet.

Finalists will then be asked to present their program proposal virtually between May 8th-10th. All applicants should plan accordingly.

IV.   Requirements if selected

If selected, grantees will be expected to participate in:

1. Monthly Inclusive Higher Education Consortium meetings.
2. Annual program evaluation. This evaluation will be completed by IN! and will include:
    a. Collecting data for comparison with national standards.
    b. Surveys of stakeholders (student, family, faculty, staff, peer mentors).
    c. Assessments for students to demonstrate growth while in college.
    d. Surveys of graduates (as applicable).
3. Quarterly progress reporting.

Unsatisfactory progress, program development or lack of participation in the above could result in termination of funding.

V.   Application Technical Assistance

All applicants can submit written questions to info@inclusivehighered.org. Answers will be provided to each question and shared publicly on our grant webpage.

Additionally, there will be information sessions during the grant application period open to all interested applicants.
- March 27, 12-1pm: Budget Template & Financial Planning Info Session (register here)
- April 6, 12-1pm: General Applicant Q&A Session (register here)
- April 20, 12-1pm: General Applicant Q&A Session (register here)

Updates, supporting documents, and helpful resources can be accessed on our grant website at: https://inclusivehighered.org/expansion.html

---

VI.   Scoring Rubric

Grant Application Scoring Rubric		
Area of Focus	**Criteria**	**Maximum Points Possible**
Leadership Support/Approval	Schools must demonstrate their commitment to an Inclusive Higher Education program with a letter of approval and signature from top leadership.	Yes/No Will not accept proposal without this component
Financial Commitment	Schools must complete a 5-year budget template and exemplify their long-term financial commitment to program sustainability.	10
Commitment and Requirements	A commitment was made to: *Work to obtain a Certified Transition Program (CTP) designation *Join the Colorado Inclusive Higher Education Consortium *Offer students an approved credential *Integrate students academically and socially into the normative offerings of the institution *Participate in evaluation requirements	5
Equity, Access and Outreach	Schools must demonstrate they can increase equitable access in Colorado by serving BIPOC, rural, and low-income students through program outreach and enrollment.	10
Population Served	Schools must clearly identify their commitment to serving students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and/or students that require additional supports, including modified curriculum, to access college.	5
Commitment to Inclusion	Schools must define inclusion in higher education and outline the broader university plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and specifically state how individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) fit into their plan. Schools will identify how they will address gaps or weaknesses in services to successfully meet the needs of students.	10
Ability to support 4 pillars of Inclusive Higher Education Model	Schools must demonstrate how they intend to support the 4 pillars (below) that are expected as part of establishing Inclusive Higher Education: Academics: Schools will ensure that students with disabilities have access to integrated classes in their area of study and the full course catalog, support with accommodations **and** modifications, receive college credit and transcripts, and are expected to achieve high standards of excellence in the classroom.	30

	Social: Students will receive adequate ways to engage in campus activities, mentorship, leadership and volunteer opportunities, and develop integrated social skills. Career: Students will have opportunities to engage in career opportunities both on and off campus including work study and internships. Students should receive career preparation/readiness skills, career planning skills and employment supports. Independent Living: Schools will support students in navigating residential on-campus living (as available), developing critical life skills, finding safe paths to independent living, engaging in person-centered planning, financial and budgeting education and learning self-advocacy.	
Supportive Elements	Schools will develop Inclusive Higher Education that includes: *Admissions standard that does not require national assessment testing and allows for modifications *Program requirements with regards to approved credential and expectation of coursework *Person-centered planning/individualized supports and programming *Partnering with internal and external departments/agencies to coordinate student supports *Providing a transition plan to students including resources and supports for post graduate success in employment, social connections and independent living	20
Implementation Timeline	Schools must create an outline that demonstrates a timeline for achieving program development requirements.	5
Staffing	Schools must describe a hiring plan to fully staff the program. Schools should indicate their intent to appoint key staff positions, evidence of their desired staff qualifications, and commitment to diverse, equitable, and inclusive hiring efforts.	5
Institution Name: _____		**_____ / 100**