



**WHERE ABILITY
MEETS OPPORTUNITY**

HIREABILITY VT

HireAbility, formerly the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, has been dedicated to helping Vermonters living with disabilities achieve employment and vocational goals for years.

The services that we provide are not just about finding a job, but also obtaining the training, education, and credentials needed for higher-wage career opportunities. It's about working together to navigate a path to grow and working with individuals to pursue their dream career.

WHAT DOES THE STATEWIDE TRANSITION PROGRAM LOOK LIKE ?

- 26 Transition Counselors (TCs) serving high schools to young adults – ages 14 through 24
- Student eligible in HS through IEP or 504
- TCs have established relationships with schools in their area (split up by 12 AHS districts)
- Each TC works with a Youth Employment Specialist (employment arm of the work)
- Services/activities are dependent upon the needs of the student – focus on Pre-Employment Transition Services to engage:
 - Career Exploration
 - Work Readiness Skills
 - Work Based Learning (WBL)
 - Self-Advocacy
 - Post-Secondary Exploration

WHAT DOES THE STATEWIDE ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

- Adult Counselors serve individuals who are aged 24 and up.
 - They provide services in each of our 12 District Offices Statewide and have the capacity to meet virtually or in person.
 - Anyone with a disability or chronic health condition may be eligible for services.
 - Designed to meet the needs of the individual participant
- Services provided:
 - Vocational Counseling and Assessment.
 - Case service funding
 - Work Incentives Counseling
 - Progressive Employment/Education
 - Job placement and retention services
 - Assistive Technology

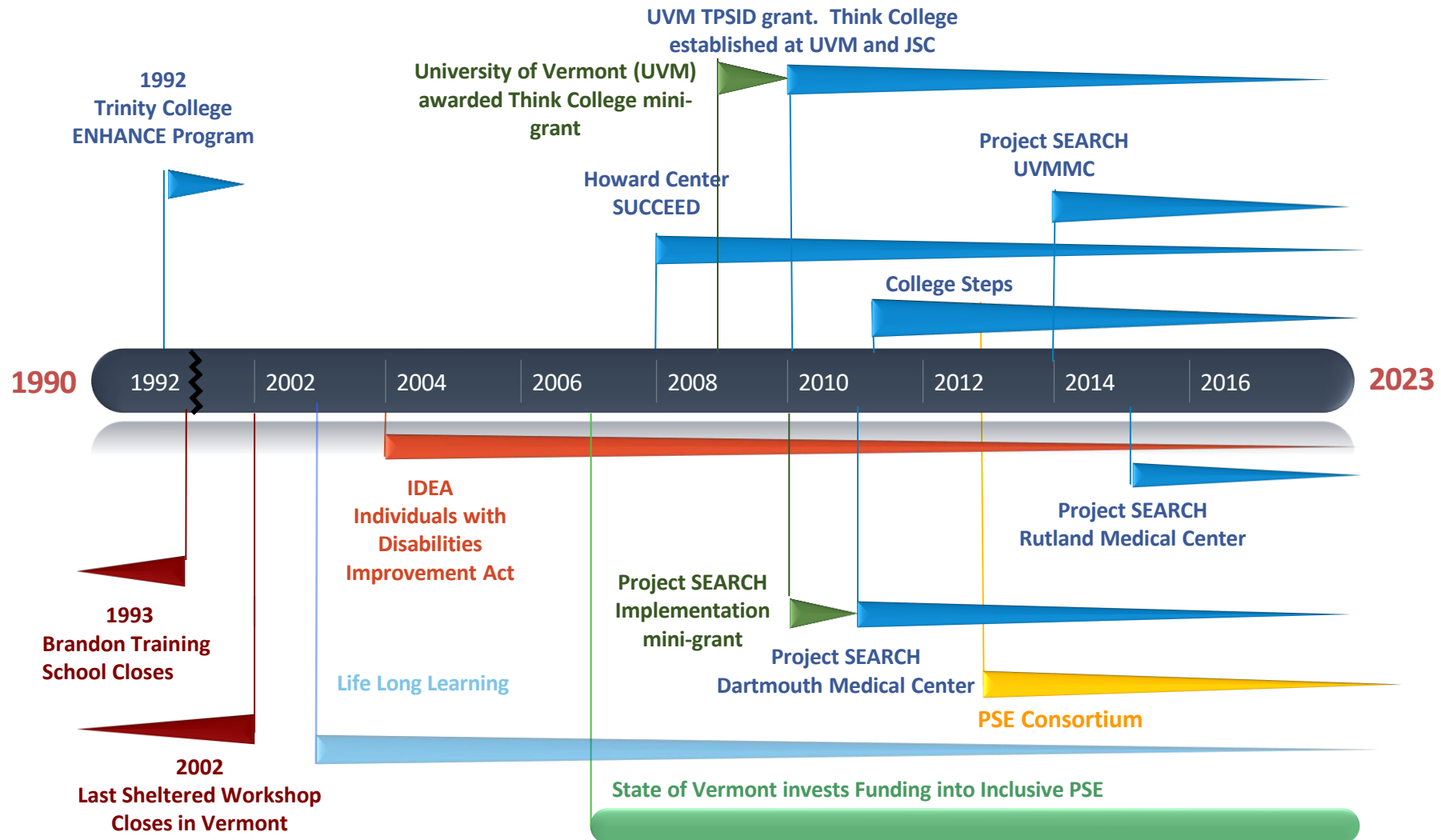
INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS ARE CRUCIAL

- Core Transition Teams
- Partnerships with other Agencies and Community Partners
 - Post-Secondary Institutions like Community College of Vermont
 - College Compass Program

**WHAT DOES
OUR WORK
REALLY
LOOK LIKE?**

New Website

Inclusive PSE in Vermont



State Level Alliances

Resources

All PSE programs work collaboratively with state DDSD and HireAbility

State DDSD, AOE, HireAbility work in unison to support all programs

State funders agree to co-fund programs

State implements PSE Initiative through its work with programs

State Agency of Education promotes PSE with VT school districts ~ Dual Enrollment

PSE Programs and state leadership convene annually to share outcomes, data, and challenges to transform the initiative as established long term services





Gaps

Inconsistent Public Awareness





Inconsistent Funding

Attitudinal Barriers

Underdeveloped Student Housing

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Support Services for Students with ID, DD, and/or Autism				
<small>Click on program name for its website</small>	High School Transition	College Campus Programs		
<i>Program</i>	Project SEARCH 	Howard Center SUCCEED 	Think College Vermont 	College Steps 
<i>Primary Focus</i>	Vocational training & employment	Independent Living, College inclusive academics, employment	Inclusive academics, transition services, & employment	Inclusive academics, transition services, & employment
<i>Credential</i>	High School Diploma	SUCCEED Certificate	UVM Certificate of College Studies, Degree	Certificate of Higher Learning or Degree
<i>Population Served</i>	High school students and young adults with intellectual disabilities and autism	Students on autism spectrum & intellectual disabilities	Students on autism spectrum & intellectual disabilities	Students living with social, communication or learning challenges
<i>Length of Program</i>	1 year (final year of high school)	2-3 years	2-4 years	2-4 years
<i>Housing</i>	NO	YES	Independent living option	NO
<i>Age-Range</i>	18-35	18-25	18-30	16-30
<i>Locations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windsor County – Dartmouth/Hitchcock Chittenden County - UVM Medical Center Rutland County – Rutland Regional Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burlington area colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Vermont Champlain College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vermont State University - Lyndon Vermont State University - Johnson Vermont State University – Castleton

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Support Services for Students with ID, DD, and/or Autism

<i>Click on program name for its website</i>	<i>High School Transition</i>	<i>College Campus Programs</i>		
<i>Program</i>	<u><i>Project SEARCH</i>  </u>	<u><i>Howard Center SUCCEED</i>  </u>	<u><i>Think College Vermont</i>  </u>	<u><i>College Steps</i>  </u>
<i>Primary Focus</i>	Vocational training & employment	Independent Living, College inclusive academics, employment	Inclusive academics, transition services, & employment	Inclusive academics, transition services, & employment
<i>Credential</i>	High School Diploma	SUCCEED Certificate	UVM Certificate of College Studies, Degree	Certificate of Higher Learning or Degree
<i>Population Served</i>	High school students and young adults with Intellectual disabilities and autism	Students on autism spectrum & intellectual disabilities	Students on autism spectrum & intellectual disabilities	Students living with social, communication or learning challenges
<i>Length of Program</i>	1 year (final year of high school)	2-3 years	2-4 years	2-4 years
<i>Housing</i>	NO	YES	Independent living option	NO
<i>Age-Range</i>	18-35	18-25	18-30	16-30
<i>Locations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windsor County – Dartmouth/Hitchcock • Chittenden County - UVM Medical Center • Rutland County – Rutland Regional Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington area colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Vermont • Champlain College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont State University - Lyndon • Vermont State University - Johnson • Vermont State University – Castleton

Howard Center's SUCCEED Program

Education

Campus Life

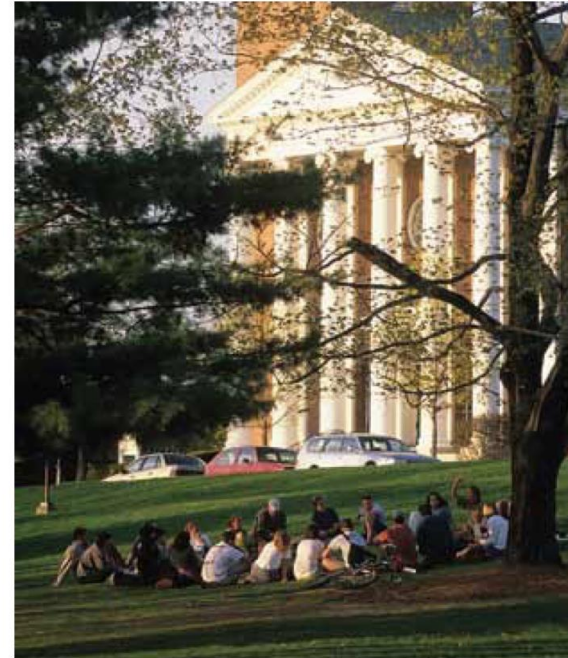
Career Development

Residential/Independent Living



SUCCEED

- ▶ Year program started: *2008*
- ▶ Location: *Downtown Burlington*
- ▶ Student age range: *18-25*
- ▶ Program capacity: *14 students*
- ▶ Number of residential locations: *2*
- ▶ Length of program: *2-3 years*
- ▶ Full year programming? *Yes*
- ▶ www.howardcenter.org/succeed



What Do Supports Look Like?

- ▶ Guidance philosophy
- ▶ Encouraging self-advocacy
- ▶ Facilitating student transitions
- ▶ Academic supports outside of the classroom
- ▶ Safe navigation of campus & community
- ▶ Independent living skills development
- ▶ Exposure to social opportunities





HOWARD
CENTER
Help is here.







**HOWARD
CENTER**
Help is here.

Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ VT residents who meet diagnostic criteria for Medicaid Waiver and System of Care funding priority
- ▶ High school graduates between the ages of 18–25
- ▶ Meet independence & safety requirements
- ▶ SUCCEED is voluntary!



Think College at the University of Vermont

- ▶ Federally funded grant from 2010-2015
- ▶ 2-3 year Certificate of College Studies or degree
- ▶ 14 students currently enrolled, 40 completed certificate
- ▶ Academic courses across 25 departments, 30 vocational internship sites
- ▶ Peer mentor support from UVM students
- ▶ UVM impact
- ▶ 90% employment rate
- ▶ Research and Evaluation through National Coordinating Center

Admissions Criteria for Think College

- Transition age (generally 18-26 years of age)
- Documentation of disability and need of support
- Transportation plan to get to and from campus (the program does not provide or coordinate transportation)
- Student must demonstrate functional communication and basic literacy and math skills
- Student demonstrates moderate level of independence, motivation, and emotional stability
- Moderate flexibility and ability to manage stress
- Student desires to continue learning and increase autonomy and independence
- Students must comply with the UVM Student Code of Conduct
- Family/guardians will support the student's education, development of independence, and employment outcomes
- Continuing Education students
 - Certificate
- Matriculated students
 - Degree



Student Expectations

- ▶ Enrollment in Think College is a privilege, not an entitlement
- ▶ UVM students and are held to the student code of conduct
 - ▶ Behavior & Academic Integrity
- ▶ Accommodations, not modifications
- ▶ UVM Student Accessibility Services



Think College at the University of Vermont

Academic Enrichment

- Enroll in UVM classes with peer mentor support

Social & Recreational Activities

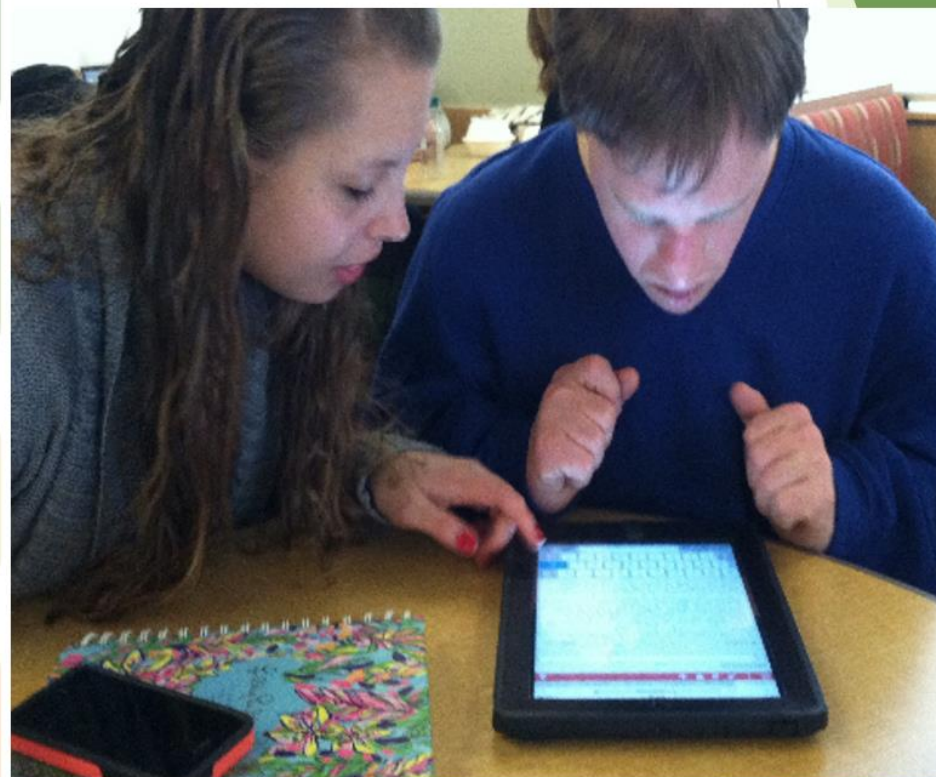
- Meet new people and participate in social & recreational activities

Life Skills & Self-Advocacy

- Improve daily living skills & increase independence and confidence

Career Skills & Work Experience

- Explore careers, develop employability skills, & establish a career path

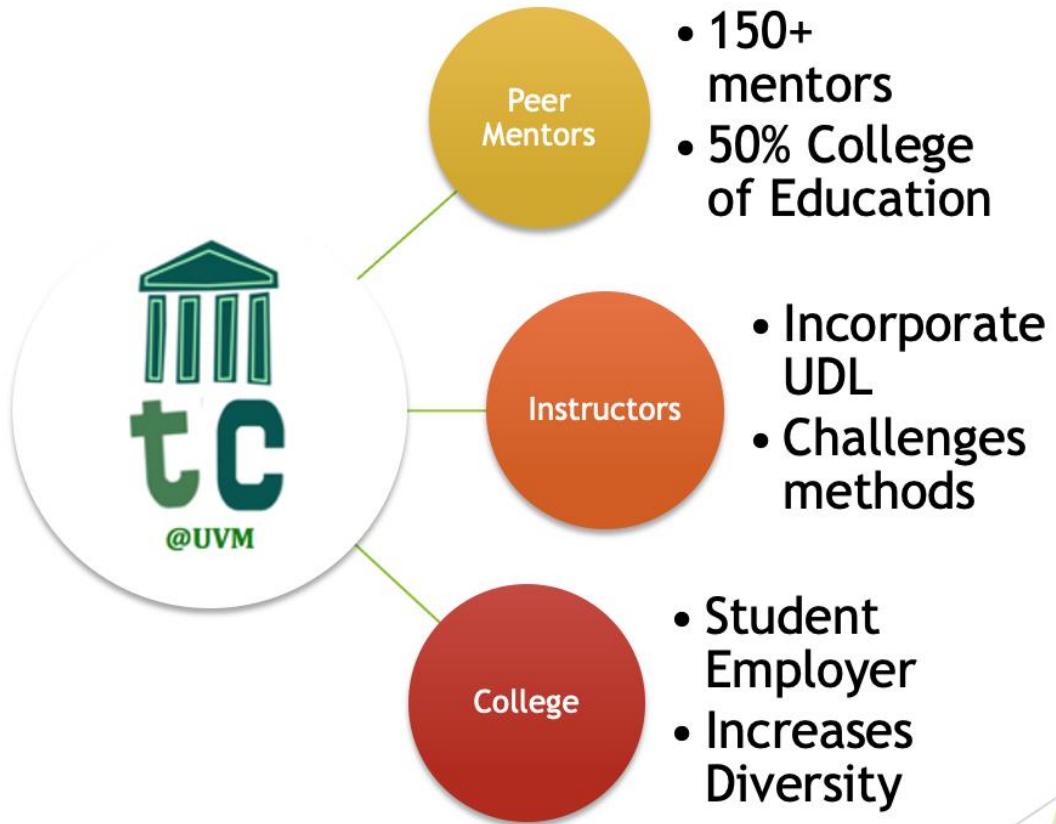




Peer Mentors

- ▶ **Mentors help students:**
 - ▶ Communicate with professors
 - ▶ Prepare for class and plan assignments
 - ▶ Study and review their coursework
 - ▶ Develop relationships with their peers
 - ▶ Support and encourage students with high expectations in a strength-based way to foster independence
 - ▶ Navigate campus life

Think College Program Impact



BUILD YOUR FUTURE COLLEGE STEPS



VERMONT PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

What We Do



Community-Based
Transition Provider

Student-Centered

Personalized

Peer Inclusion

Multidisciplinary

How We Work



Structured Support

Thorough Planning

Thoughtful Action

Comprehensive
Measurement

Strong Communication

Where We Are



Twelve (12) current
locations throughout
Connecticut,
Massachusetts,
New Jersey, New York,
Vermont and Virginia

Authentic Adult
Learning Environment

PARTNERSHIPS WITH IMPACT

High Schools



School Districts contract with College Steps to implement transition goals and we become an integral part of the IEP team

Families



Some parents work directly with College Steps, providing a strong supplement to in-school and private care services

Colleges

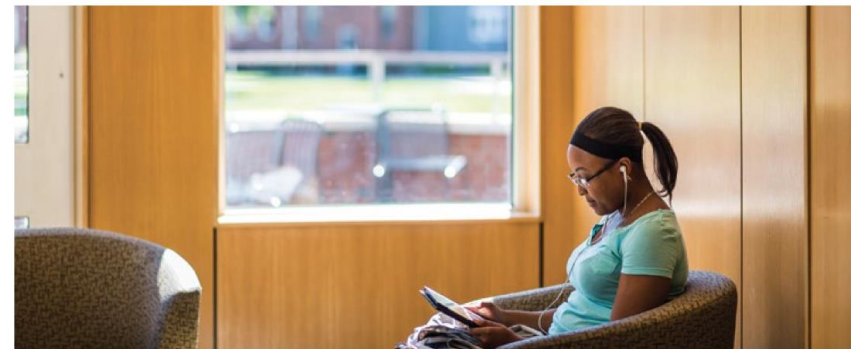
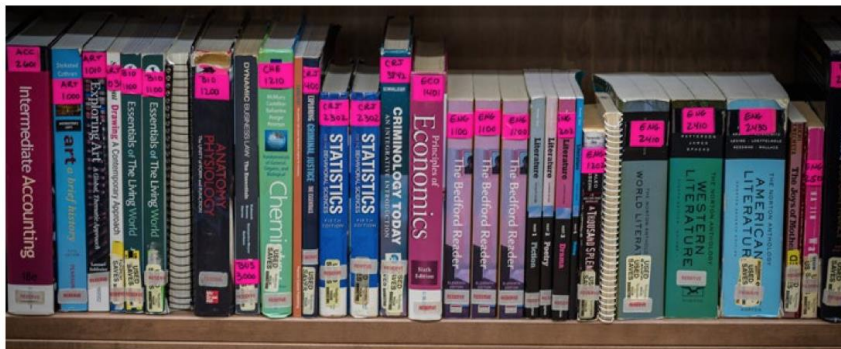


College Partners collaboration with College Steps allows us to enhance existing services and improve retention rates

Agencies



Community agencies serve as an essential bridge to support our work with high schools, parents, colleges and students



EMBEDDED SUPPORT TEAM



College Steps also partners with the students' Family, IEP Team, Adult Service Agencies as well as the campus specific supports.

INDIVIDUALIZED COLLEGE PLAN



PEER MENTOR CORE PRINCIPLES

We offer adult-based and consent-based support

We honor student experience, expertise, and advocacy

We work toward independence and inclusion for all of our students

PEER MENTOR GUIDELINES

Spotlight student goals

Provide a supportive environment for developing Executive Function skills

Foster social connections for a more inclusive campus community

Practice skills and strategies for long-term independence

Build strong and authentic student relationships



CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION (2-YEAR CERTIFICATE)

College Steps Certificate of Higher Education is a non-accredited program but endorsed by the partnering institution, which focuses on increasing social, independent living, and advocacy skills to prepare students for gainful, meaningful employment.

Participation in events, clubs, or on-campus teams

Work on individualized, experiential, and community-based goals related to independent living and self-advocacy skills

Minimum of 12-credit hours (one course per semester)

Career exploration, vocational experience, and career development

Minimum 30-hours of job experience



COLLEGE COMPASS PARTNERSHIP

In partnership with VT Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), College Steps will support students who have an open case with VR and have received a referral from their VR Counselor.

College Compass provides student access to:

- Four to ten hours of support per week
(support hours determined by Program Coordinator)
- Goal review with the Program Coordinator and/or mentors
- Support for communication with campus offices
(advising, accommodations, counseling, etc.)
- Group-based supports for homework
- Weekly Community Skills Class
- Promotion of self-advocacy skills
- Class preparation and/or direction with assignments



Project SEARCH



What are the eligibility criteria?

- All 3 Vermont sites are considered hybrids because they accept young adults between the ages of 18-35.
- The Program focus is on serving young adults with disabilities and Autism. The intern needs to be able to work independently.
- 75% of prospective interns need to be eligible for developmental services.

Project SEARCH



What are the central program components?

Project SEARCH is a business-led program. This means that students learn relevant, marketable skills while immersed in the business and those businesses are active partners, participating without subsidies.

Collaboration among partner agencies is essential. This leads to seamless transition services and sustainability through braided funding streams. The following are active partners at each Vermont site:

- Host Business
- School
- Long-term Developmental Disabilities Service Agency
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Families

Project SEARCH



What are the central program components? (cont'd)

- Interns complete three unpaid 10-week internships in a variety of departments at the host site acquiring transferrable job skills.
- Each day interns spend approximately four and a half hours at their internship site.
- Project SEARCH has a formal curriculum and interns spend time at the beginning and end of the day in the classroom learning employment skills.

Curriculum Topics Covered at Project SEARCH	
Financial Literacy	Self-Advocacy
Health & Wellness	Team Building
Maintaining Employment	Technology
Preparing for Employment	Workplace Safety

Project SEARCH



What are the expected outcomes?

The sole definition of a successful outcome is competitive employment in an integrated setting for each Project SEARCH intern.

- Employment in an integrated setting that is, working alongside coworkers with and without disabilities.
- Year-round work (not seasonal employment)
- 16 hours/week or more
- Minimum wage or higher

Project SEARCH



What does support look like from a student/staff perspective?

- Interns receive 1:1 support during the initial days of launch; after that they receive regular daily check-ins. The goal is to have natural supports in place with fading support from Project SEARCH staff.
- On-site there is a full-time special education teacher and skills trainers. The skills trainer may also be the job developer.

International Innovative Policy Award on Employment

- The State of Vermont Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Initiative promotes college education and industry-based career training for transition-age youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, and access to lifelong learning. The policy aim is for enhancing the employment options in the open labour market. In 2019 over 200 young people and adults participated across 19 transition, education, or life-long learning programmes. PSE graduates have an 84 per cent employment rate.
- https://zeroproject.org/policy/pol21_3027_aw/



Program Contacts

• Think College VT	Bryan Dague	bryan.dague@uvm.edu
• SUCCEED	Mark Prior	mprior@howardcenter.org
• College Steps	Chris Kennedy	chris@collegesteps.org
• Project SEARCH		
• Dartmouth-Hitchcock	Todd Balise	todd.balise@lincolnstreetinc.org
• UVM-MC	Karen Hussey	karenh@howardcenter.org
• Rutland Regional MC	Evangeline Jones	etheodorou@rmhscn.org