**Request for Applications**

RFA – 2024.1.B

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Planning**

**FUNDING AGENCY: North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)*,*** NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Secretary

**ISSUE DATE: June 1st, 2023**

**DEADLINE DATE: July 19th, 2023**

**Receipt of applications online** **through our DD Suite online database,** [**HBCU IPSE Planning**](https://ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=2043)**, is preferred but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm Eastern Time (ET) on July 19th, 2023. Please notify at least two weeks in advance of the due date if you need application materials in an alternate format or otherwise require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Direct all inquiries concerning this Request for Applications (RFA) to:

**Mailing Address:**

NCCDD-RFA

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

2010 Mail Service Center

Raleigh NC 27699

**Via Email:** RFAinfo@nccdd.org

**Delivery Information:**

Applicants for this RFA are strongly encouraged to submit the application electronically in the DD Suite online database found at [**HBCU IPSE Planning**](https://ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=2043)**.** Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Council’s Five-Year State Plan. The NCCDD’s major funding source is the United States Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Disabilities, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The NCCDD makes funds available primarily through competitive bids or Requests for Applications (RFAs). A general description of the current RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available through DD Suite ([**https://ddsuite.org/**](https://ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=2043)) or may be requested in alternate formats or by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply if your organization or agency intends to apply.

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organization, agency, or non-profit demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must also submit proof of 501(c)(3) status with a [**recent IRS determination letter**](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-affirmation-letters).The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Private non-profit and for-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

**II. ABOUT NCCDD**

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, is one of 56 entities of its type in the United States and the territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). NCCDD’s activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people living with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council’s [quarterly meetings](https://nccdd.org/the-council/upcoming-public-meetings/meeting-agendas-minutes.html) are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to ensure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, contribution, self-determination, integration, and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC DHHS.

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its [Five-Year State Plan (2022-2026)](https://nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html). These goals represent the most pressing needs as identified by stakeholders in North Carolina. These goals are approved by the Council as the framework for its work within the context of the Five-Year Plan.

GOAL 1: By 2026, increase financial security through asset development for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 2: By 2026, increase community living for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 3: By 2026, increase advocacy for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

This RFA will address **Goal 1, Objective B:**

Increase integrated competitive employment and long-term careers for people with I/DD through best and promising practices.

Measurement: More individuals with I/DD will have integrated, competitive employment and long-term careers through collaboration which will include education, workforce development, employment support, employer engagement and barrier reduction.

For further information on the work of the NCCDD, please see the NCCDD Five-Year State Plan at our website by clicking <https://nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html>

**III. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) intends to fund a three-year initiative to establish an Inclusive Postsecondary Education program in North Carolina at one of the state’s 11 [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/charlotte/news/2022/02/23/historically-black-colleges-and-universities-in-nc1) (HBCUs) .

***BACKGROUND:***

Universities and colleges have long recognized the importance of a diverse student body. However, many higher education institutions are missing critical opportunities to expand diversity among students by including students with intellectual disabilities. Creating a more inclusive environment and teaching using universal design can have a multiplier effect that will, in turn, attract more students. Inclusive post-secondary educational (IPSE) opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) (or students with ID and co-occurring developmental disabilities) have been expanding for decades. However, IPSE remains a reality that few families consider. Attending college can contribute to growth among individuals with intellectual disabilities in many of the same ways traditional students benefit from postsecondary education: academic and personal skill building, independence, self-advocacy, friendships, and, perhaps most importantly, employment skills.

*Principles of Inclusive Postsecondary Education*

The first principle is that this is an **INCLUSIVE** program. The students are in the campus mix, like any other student, choosing and going to the same classes as everyone else does, having access to the same social networks and events that other students have access to, based on their preferences and interests. Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) students are not in a separate program or in a separate department or building, with different teachers. They are part of the student body, to every extent possible, and that includes having access to campus living.

The second principle is that this is an **ACADEMIC** program. It is not a social program or a disability program.

The third principle is that the students are **ACCOMMODATED** to assist them to successfully navigate the academic environment and these accommodations are legitimate, necessary, and must be designed to help students be seamlessly included and not separated from their peers. So developing the mentor role, training them and the students they support to use these accommodation(s) successfully, and adequately compensating them for their time and contributions is a critical piece of post-secondary education for students with disabilities. Students enrolled in IPSEs often have needs that go beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required accommodations provided on college campuses. Students with I/DD may also need modifications like syllabi in plain language. Accommodations and modifications should be provided through program support.

The fourth principle is that the end goal for these students, like any college graduate, is for them to be **EMPLOYED** in creative, supported, individualized, competitive employment. Each program needs to support an Employment First principle, which means that employment is the FIRST option for support after college. Programs need to engage Vocational Rehabilitation and Campus career placement services in the employment of these students. Also, they should be employed ON CAMPUS, in a variety of jobs just like their peers who work.

The last principle is **EVALUATED**. There is rigorous measure of the students and the project outcomes that can make the case for further funding and accreditation.

There are over 300 programs in the United States that offer a non-certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities, located at public and private, 4-year and 2-year colleges and universities, as well as a few located at technical colleges. Program length ranges from one year to four years and some include a ‘fifth’ year opportunity. The number of students in the programs varies as well. Some programs are focused on a general certificate and others have a more specific career-focused certificate. Some provide residential living for students with an intellectual disability in the campus dorms, though many instead offer commuter opportunities.

Programs offer varying degrees of participation in traditional college classes with students without disabilities. They may be fully inclusive, meaning that all academics, social events, and independent living support happen with students without disabilities. Other programs offer a more separate experience, where students may be on a college campus, but participate in some or most classes and experiences only with other students with intellectual disabilities. The intent of this RFA is to establish a comprehensive, inclusive IPSE program on the campus of an HBCU.

Many of these non-degree programs offer an individualized approach by supporting each student to select courses most closely related to their specific career goals. There are a growing number of programs that offer workforce credentials, but the majority are offering a general certificate that can be tailored to the student's goals.

Out of the 24 IPSE programs in North Carolina, three are fully comprehensive programs[[1]](#footnote-1) and all three are in four-year institutions. They include Western Carolina University – University Participant (UP) Program, University of North Carolina at Greensboro – Integrative Community Studies (ICS), and Appalachian State University – Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program (SDAP).

The Western Carolina UP Program provides an inclusive, two-year, on-campus living and learning experience for college-aged persons with intellectual disability. UP students live in on-campus dormitories distributed throughout university residence halls under the same university policies that apply to all WCU students. On-campus life is fully integrated and inclusive. There are no separate facilities, settings, or classes for UP students. The goal of the program is to facilitate UP students' transition from secondary school to adult life with education, employment, and independent living. The UP Program currently enrolls up to 12 students at a time.

UNC Greensboro’s Integrative Community Studies (ICS) Certificate program is for students with intellectual disabilities who are interested in furthering their education past high school. Comprehensive transition and postsecondary education programs like ICS empower students as they transition into emerging adulthood. The ICS certificate is a four-year certificate program – awarded by UNCG’s Office of the Provost – that emphasizes self-determination, life planning, and career development. With access to an array of campus and community resources, each student develops a college support plan to optimize their curricular and co-curricular experiences while at UNCG. Resources include individualized support, available during the week and weekends, focusing on co-curricular activities, including campus involvement, and personal skill development.

The Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program (SDAP) is a transition-focused program for students with intellectual disabilities with the purpose of increasing their self-determination. SDAP students benefit from an all-encompassing collegiate experience and are an integral part of the campus community. They engage and develop skills through essential activities such as: attending courses with other university students, taking part in sporting events and clubs with other university students, and participating in a wide range of university programs and services. SDAP is a non-degree program in which students audit college courses. SDAP begins as a two-year program with an option for an additional two years, depending on a student’s personal goals and skill level. Graduates leave the program with skills that will help them advocate for themselves throughout their adult lives and have greater opportunity to secure employment in fields that are meaningful to them.

In contrast to the larger IPSE programs, there are 21 smaller IPSE programs scattered throughout North Carolina located in two-year community and technical colleges. Although the smaller programs are more widespread, they are still not in every county and they differ in their inclusive components that comprise them.

There is only one IPSE in the US at an HBCU currently, Alabama A & M University-BullDog L.I.F.E. (Learning Independence, Fostering Education and Employment) Program. The Bulldog L.I.F.E. Program objective is to educate and provide information to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their family members, and others to increase leadership opportunities and inclusive participation in their communities' activities. The College Campus Transition Program (CCTP) is administered by the Alabama A&M Rehabilitation Counseling Program. Students with intellectual disabilities have an opportunity to interact with their peers in a college and community environment while training for employment options that offer a living wage upon exiting the program and transitioning into adult independence. The program is designed to help students with disabilities who exit high school with a special education diploma find independence and become equipped with realistic transferable work skills to prepare them for life after graduation.

 **Proposed Objectives:**

1. Pilot an IPSE program at one of North Carolina’s 11 HBCUs by the end of year 2 of this grant.
2. Demonstrate and highlight promising best practices and program design for successful career skills development and employment within the initial IPSE program’s plan and integrated throughout the contract period(s).
3. Demonstrate best practices regarding use of wraparound employment services and related supports, person centered planning, internships, and career experience that will be part of the college transition program within the initial IPSE program’s plan and integrated throughout the contract period(s).
4. Establish partners and allies for the program outside of the college or university.
5. Determine partners and collaborators within the college or university.

***DELIVERABLES:***

The organization chosen by the NCCDD will be expected to:

1. Within the first three months of initiative, develop a robust one-year plan with concrete action steps to design a planned approach and methodology for creating an IPSE program at the school. The successful applicant will obtain institutional leadership’s official, signatory approval no later than in Year 1 (of up to 3). The one-year plan should detail steps for:
2. establishing and ensuring ongoing support from institutional leadership for the implementation of an IPSE program;
3. developing a recruitment plan for students who will attend and the number of students the program will support once established;
4. developing quality academic access for students in the IPSE program
5. developing career development leading to competitive employment for students with ID or ID and developmental disabilities;
6. creating strategies for campus involvement for the students in the IPSE; and
7. establishing collaborations with accessibility supports available on the school’s campus.
8. Apply for Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) status with the U.S. Department of Education no later than in Year 3 (of up to 3). Think College has a template and a checklist for how to meet this deliverable (Template: [CTP\_Application\_Template--2022.docx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fthinkcollege.net%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Ffiles%2Fresources%2FCTP_Application_Template--2022.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK); Checklist: [How to Become a CTP: Checklist--http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn/](https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/CTP%20Checklist_0.pdf)).
9. Expand opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in NC to attend an HBCU in an IPSE program, through initiating an IPSE program no later than in Year 2 (of up to 3).
10. Develop a plan to sustain the IPSE program beyond Council funding. This can include, but is not limited to, applying for Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities funding (TPSID) in 2025, funding through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVRS), tuition, state and federal resources, private/charitable and other funding while conducting grant activities.
11. Collaborate with the established IPSE programs across the state and the NC Postsecondary Education Alliance, the Southeastern Postsecondary Education Alliance, Think College, and the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NC DVRS).

***ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

**Performance Requirements**

Provide NCCDD the mandatory reports (i.e., quarterly/annual programmatic reports in the NCCDD’s DD Suite database, monthly fiscal reports for reimbursements, Initiative Information Sheet updates, and other relevant reports deemed necessary).

Also, the applicant selected for theinitiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate outreach to and inclusion of the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community. The 2022-2026 State Plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities must identify disparity among a subpopulation of the state’s I/DD community and address that disparity. The NCCDD identified a barrier to services and supports for the Hispanic/Latino community caused by language access issues in response to the Administration on Community Living’s (ACL) mandate. Outreach to, and collaboration with, the Hispanic/Latino community to increase engagement and involvement is the Council’s proposed intent.

In addition, the Council has identified **Collective Impact** as the model to be used during the 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the initiative will be expected to operationalize activities to facilitate the five essential elements to a Collective Impact project, including:

1. Common Agenda:

All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.

1. Shared Measurement:

All participating organizations **agree on the way success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.

1. Continuous Communication:

All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

1. Backbone Support:

An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Examples of when communities are ready or near ready for Collective Impact:

* There is a “champion” for this cause who has the ability to engage and encourage multiple sectors in the community and is willing to use that ability to help the community solve this problem;
* There is some local funding available to begin this effort or in-kind resources (protected time for selected staff members) to begin working to obtain funding;
* There is a history of other kinds of successful collaboration in the community among at least some of the relevant stakeholders;
* The general public is aware of this problem and cares about it or can be readily made aware and will care if they are aware.

***Priority will be given to organizations that offer:***

* Clear evidence of the agency’s capacity to carry out the proposed initiative.
* Evidence of a history of providing related services that are demonstrated to be person-centered.
* Documentation of collaborative relationships in the I/DD field. This should include letters of commitment from partnering organizations and other collaborating agencies.
* That their work and the response in the RFA demonstrates a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of systems change.
* Preference will be given to entities based in North Carolina that are already

familiar with how the I/DD system of services works in this state.

* Preference will be given to entities based in North Carolina that are an HBCU or have demonstrated effective collaboration on related services with an HBCU or HBCUs.

The funding for this RFA will be up to **$80,000.00 each year for three years** with required minimum of 25% non-federal matching funds ($26,666.00), with year 1 (of 3) beginning **October 1st, 2023** and ending **September 30th, 2024**. **The first-year budget should be entered into the DD Suite application.**

Definition of a Developmental Disability

Per the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), “The term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

* is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
* is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
* is likely to continue indefinitely;
* results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;

(i) Self-care;

(ii) Receptive and expressive language;

(iii) Learning;

(iv) Mobility;

(v) Self-direction;

(vi) Capacity for independent living;

(vii) Economic self-sufficiency; and

reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.”

**IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for-profit or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organizations, agencies, or businesses demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must also submit proof of current 501(c)3 status with a recent IRS determination letter dated in the current year. The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents

(see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

***USE OF FUNDS:***

Contract funds may be used to support personnel services, operating expenses, and contracted services. Funds must be budgeted in the categories listed in the line item budget. Applicants must develop a budget narrative to accompany the line item budget. The line item budget and the budget narrative must show a clear relationship between the proposed budget and the proposed activities stated in the initiative plan**.**

**Funds may not support efforts to engage in any political activities or lobbying.**

***PERFORMANCE MONITORING/QUALITY ASSURANCE:***

To meet the requirements of the initiative, the contractor must collaborate with NCCDD staff to:

* participate in trainings and meetings;
* participate in initiative evaluation;
* participate in the NCCDD federally mandated Periodic Performance Review and;
* participate in other activities identified or conducted by NCCDD.

Performance and quality assurance of this contract will be conducted as follows:

* NCCDD will conduct monitoring activities during each contract period and will utilize the contractor’s objectives as its assurance criteria for meeting outcomes.
* The contractor must submit a quarterly progress report through DD Suite and a monthly expenditure report to NCCDD.
* The contractor must submit an Annual Performance Measures Summary form.
* The contractor must submit an End of Year Progress Report.
* The contractor must be available to present at the quarterly NCCDD meetings.

**V. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND APPLICATION REVIEW**

The following is a general description of the process by which applicants will be selected for funding for this initiative.

* 1. RFA announcements are sent to prospective agencies and organizations, via email, and/or posted on the NCCDD website, the DHHS website, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **June 14th, 2023** via email at [RFAinfo@nccdd.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Ctwhite31%5CDownloads%5CRFAinfo%40nccdd.org) to be answered at the Bidders’ Workshop. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCCDD website (www.nccdd.org) within 5 business days after the Bidders’ Workshop on **June 15th, 2023** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form. Subsequent questions will be answered with their answers posted on the NCCDD website and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form prior to the application due date.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM ET on **July 19th, 2023**. Electronic submission is required, except as otherwise noted. Complete application and attach/upload all necessary documents in DD Suite before submitting. The complete RFA package and instructions are available through the DD Suite electronic submission program ([www.ddsuite.org/](http://www.ddsuite.org/)).
	4. Applications will be evaluated by an RFA Review Committee. The recommendations of this committee will be reviewed by the NCCDD, which reserves the right to accept or reject the Review Committee’s recommendations.
	5. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a Request for Applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
	6. Application Process Dates Summary:
		+ **June 1st, 2023**: Request for applications distributed to eligible applicants and posted on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities website ([www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)).
		+ **June 14th, 2023**: Deadline for written RFA questions to be answered at the Bidders’ Workshop.
		+ **June 15th, 2023**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidders’ Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidders’ Workshop or Question & Answer Session at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **July 19th, 2023**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM ET.
		+ **August 28th, 2023**: Award announced.
		+ **October 1st, 2023**:Contract begins.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARD**

See DD Suite to download these attachments – all of these documents must be completed if your agency is awarded the contract for this RFA prior to the execution of the contract:

* Project Profile page
* NCCDD Assurances
* Notice of Certain Reporting and Audit Requirements
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Letter (Contractor’s COI)
* Conflict of Interest Verification – Annual
* Indirect Cost Rate Letter – if applicable
* 501(c)(3) Status Determination Letter/Form (private non-profit agencies) (Note: Public organizations shall submit a document verifying their legal name and tax identification number.)
* IRS Tax Letter
* IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (private non-profit agencies)
* State Certifications
* Federal Certifications
* SAM.gov Unique Entity ID – see <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Contracts
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Expenditure Reports
* Certification of No Overdue Taxes (applies to non-governmental entities)
* Proof of Insurance, if applicable

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit the attachments along with their application. If attachments are not submitted and the applicant is selected to receive the funding for this initiative, the attachments must be completed and submitted with the contract. The NCCDD will not execute a contract until it is in receipt of all attachments. Failure to provide these timely may result in disqualification for funding.

1. Fully comprehensive programs have received the U.S. Department of Education’s Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary designation. Students attending these programs are eligible to apply for funding from the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work-Study programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)