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**Higher Education and Transition Programs**

**Focus on Success in the Workplace for People with Disabilities**

Grassroots movements have driven colleges and universities across the nation to offer inclusive post-secondary education programs (IPSE) and transition services for students with disabilities pursuing higher education or moving from high school to employment.

Long-term employment solutions for those with developmental disabilities focus on the early integration of potential employees into the workforce through internships and other educational programs. These programs can begin as early as high school and are also available to adults looking for work.

Transition programs such as **Project SEARCH** help young people with disabilities move from high school into the workforce. This successful internship program prepares high school students and young adults with disabilities for employment, is offered at 12 sites across the state and continues to grow.

**Expansion of Employment Opportunities** is a new North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) initiativethat is developing paid apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) interested in a specific career field. The goal is to bring together traditional and non-traditional partners to work together to improve employment opportunities for people with I/DD in North Carolina.

Western Carolina University’s **Learning and Earning After High School** initiativeprovides transition services and resources for students with intellectual disabilities, even for those with the most complex.

In partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI), ten pilot programs were established at 20 total partner schools to offer post-secondary education and integrated employment opportunities.

Some inclusive post-secondary education programs are producing a 40% paid competitive employment rate among participants and there are a number of options for people with disabilities among the 27 post-secondary education programs across the state.

The University of North Carolina – Greensboro’s (UNCG) **Beyond Academics** and Western Carolina University’s **University Participant (UP)** IPSE programs are offering young adults with disabilities the opportunity to increase their employment potential like never before. Through these programs, more than 90% of students are hired as paid employees within one year of graduation and Beyond Academics achieves an 84.6% employment rate for students with disabilities after graduating from UNCG.

To further expand access to higher education, UNC-Chapel Hill will launch **Heels Up!**, an inclusive post-secondary education program in August 2018.

**- More -**

On the national level, the **Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP)** connects employers with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities eager to prove their skills. The program offers summer or permanent jobs and, since 1995, has placed over 7,000 students and recent graduates in temporary and permanent employment positions.

“Inclusive post-secondary education drives independence, choice and certainly, competitive employment for young people with disabilities,” said Chris Egan, executive director of NCCDD. “When acclaimed universities open their doors to *all* students, it creates a welcoming environment of inclusion and acceptance for a more diverse and talented workforce.”

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**About Everybody Works NC**

The *Everybody Works NC* campaign is increasing awareness of the untapped pool of talent found in the disability community and creating more and more job opportunities for people with disabilities. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) which kicks off the year-long *EveryBody Works NC* campaign with a statewide speaking tour, media relations programs, social media and a series of special events. For more information, visit [*everybodyworksnc.com*](http://everybodyworksnc.com/).

The campaign is led by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), the North Carolina Business Leadership Network (NCBLN) and North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (NCVR) to promote and support inclusive workforce strategies.