

www.ThinkCollege.net

The College Search: Tips and Tools for Parents and Students

Cate Weir and Clare Papay

Think College, Institute for Community Inclusion

University of Massachusetts Boston

Think College is a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving research and practice in inclusive higher education for people with intellectual disability.

www.ThinkCollege.net

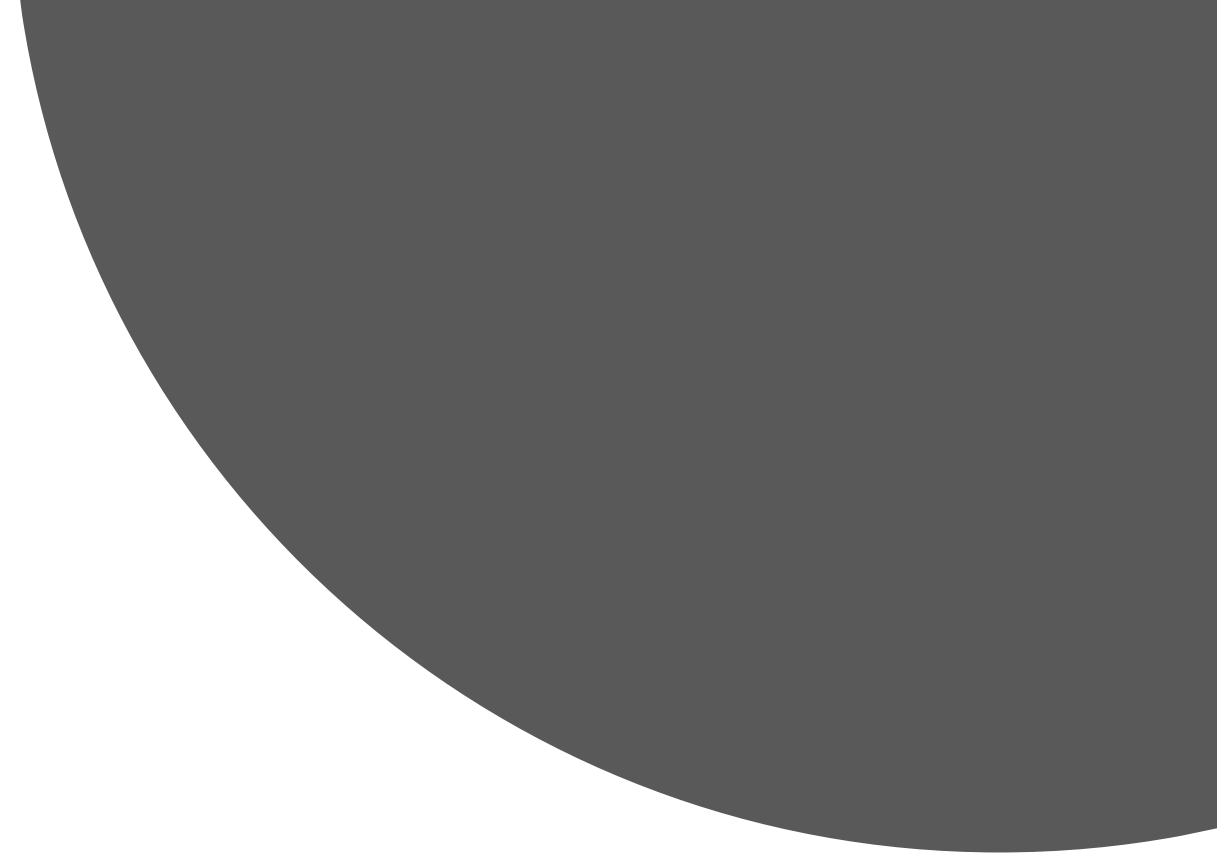
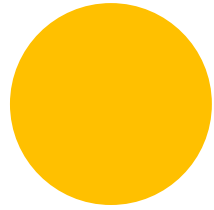
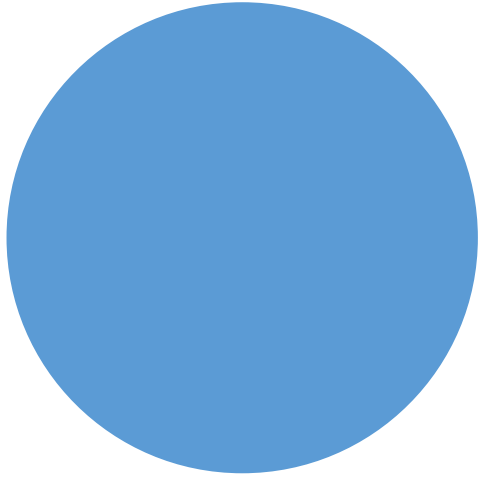
The Think College website is a trusted source for information, training, and resources related to inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disability. The website includes:

- A searchable program directory to learn more about available college options
- A resource library that includes published research as well as field-created tools and resources
- Online learning modules on a variety of topics
- Research to practice briefs, e-newsletters, and journal articles
- Topical information on the critical issues
- A policy and legislation clearinghouse



Steps in the college search





Step 1: Know the
Options



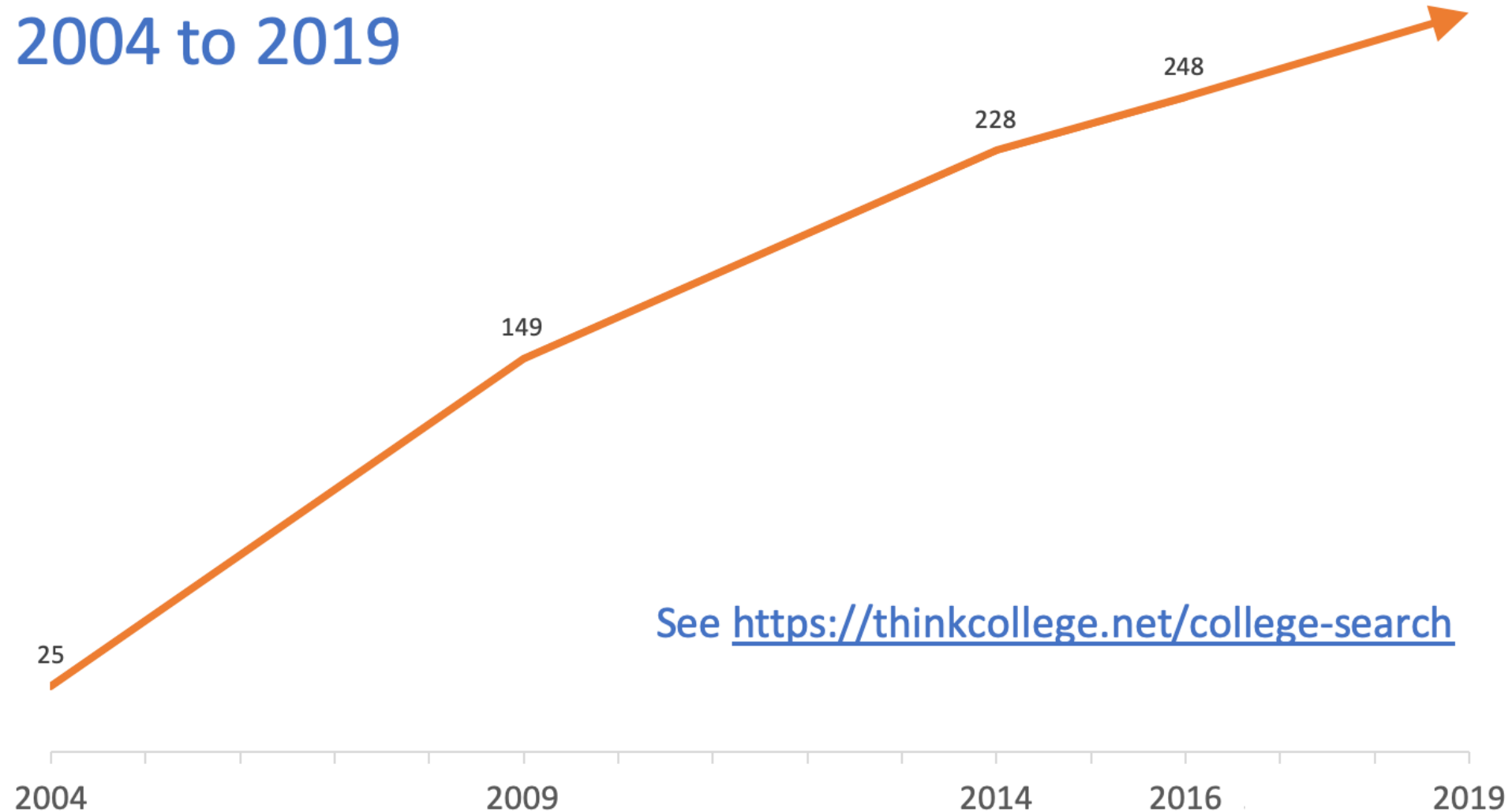
Think College Search: The Fine Print

- Funded in 2009 to conduct a national survey
- Continue to manage the database as a service – no longer funded
- All data is self-reported by the programs
- There may be programs that are not listed in this database
- College Search is meant to make people aware of the options – more research will be required to learn the details of program operations
- A listing in College Search does not imply an endorsement of a program

Higher education programs for students with intellectual disability in the U.S.

2004 to 2019

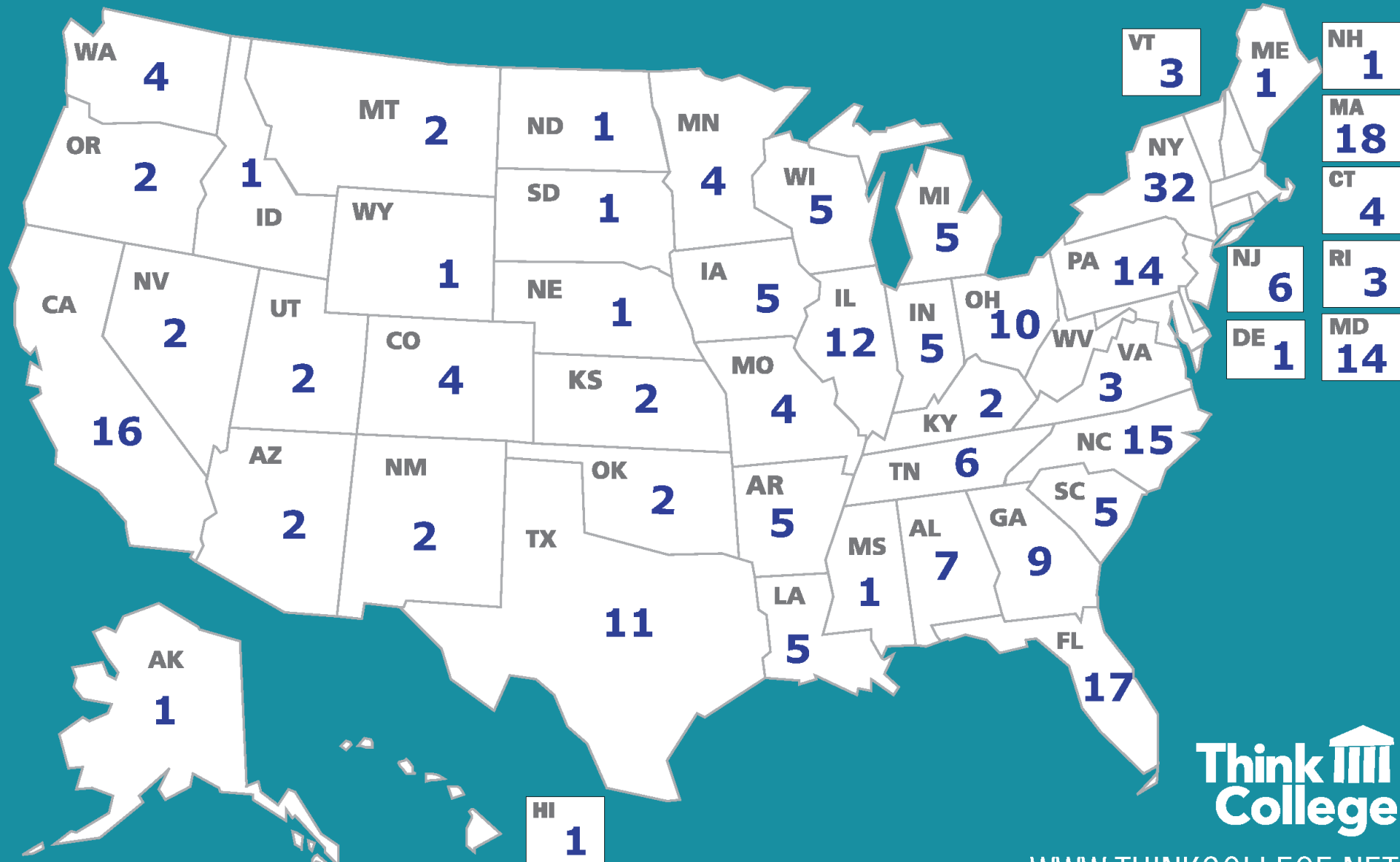
280



See <https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

COLLEGE OPTIONS for STUDENTS with INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, November 2019

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS: **280**



Think College

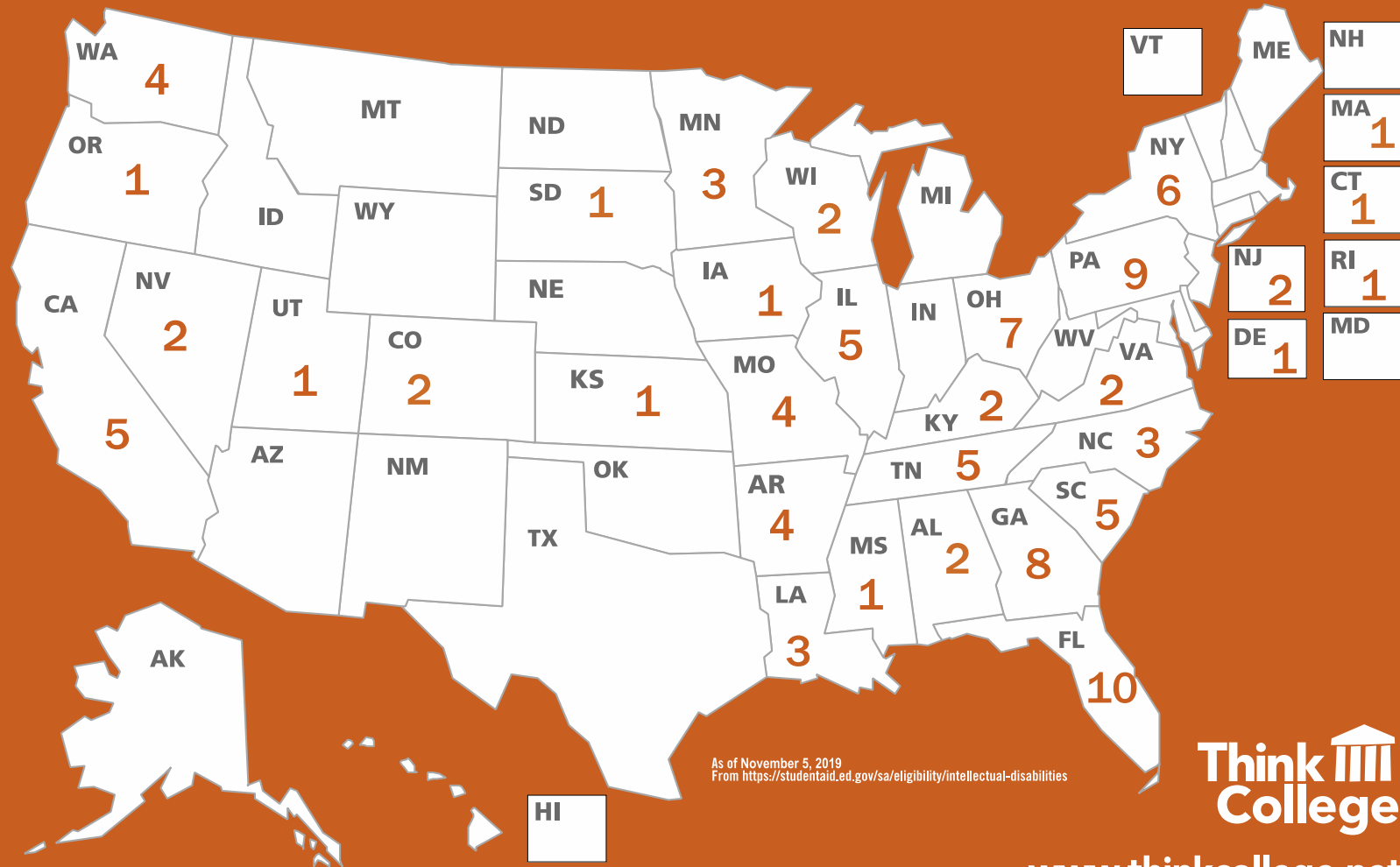
WWW.THINKCOLLEGE.NET

last updated 11-05-2019

Slow and steady
growth in
approved CTPs

2018 – 88
2017 - 63

COLLEGE OPTIONS offering Federal Financial Aid, November 2019 (N=105)



Type of institution

- 106 at 2-year IHE
- 155 at 4-year IHE
- 6 at technical/trade school
- 7 are “other”



100 listed programs
are approved to
offer federal financial aid

99 programs
offer housing

Students

Source: Think College Programs Database,
August 1, 2019

Number of students in program

- Mean = 27
- Median = 16

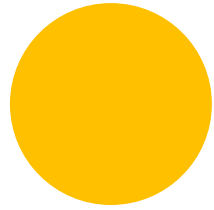
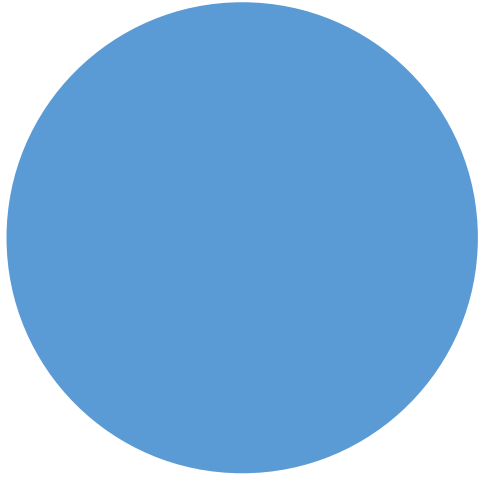
Disability

- 278 (all) enroll students with ID
- 216 enroll students with ID and autism

Type of students served

- 49 serve only high school students
- 155 serve only students who have exited high school
- 53 serve both

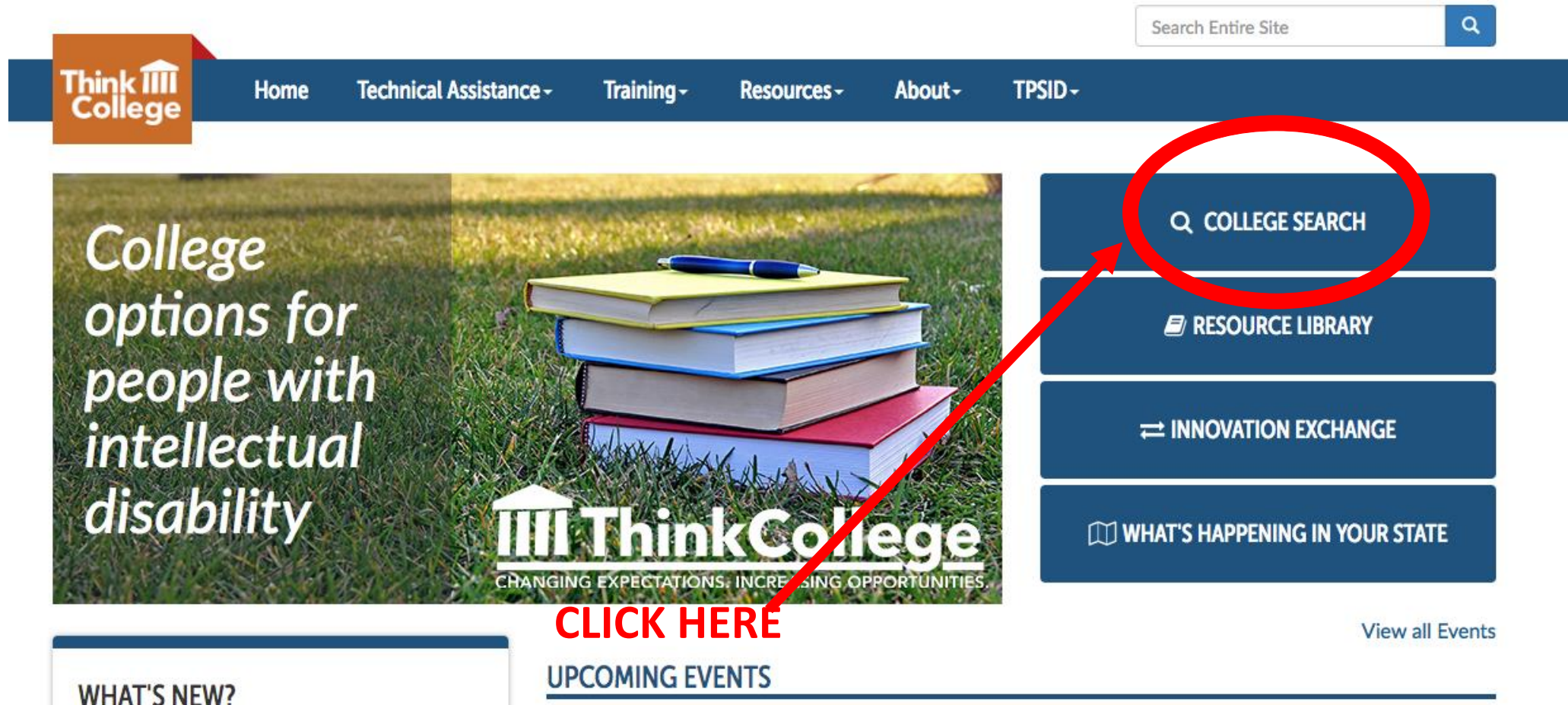




Step 2: Plan and
conduct your search

Use Think College Search to view options

Go to www.thinkcollege.net



The screenshot shows the Think College website homepage. At the top right is a search bar labeled "Search Entire Site" with a magnifying glass icon. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with the Think College logo on the left and links for Home, Technical Assistance, Training, Resources, About, and TPSID. The main content area features a large banner on the left with the text "College options for people with intellectual disability" and a stack of books with a pen on top. The Think College logo and tagline "CHANGING EXPECTATIONS. INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES." are at the bottom of the banner. To the right of the banner is a vertical column of four blue buttons: "COLLEGE SEARCH" (circled in red with a red arrow pointing to it), "RESOURCE LIBRARY", "INNOVATION EXCHANGE", and "WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE". At the bottom left is a "WHAT'S NEW?" section, and at the bottom center is an "UPCOMING EVENTS" section. A red arrow points from the text "CLICK HERE" to the "COLLEGE SEARCH" button.

Think College

Home Technical Assistance Training Resources About TPSID

College options for people with intellectual disability

Think College
CHANGING EXPECTATIONS. INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES.

CLICK HERE

COLLEGE SEARCH

RESOURCE LIBRARY

INNOVATION EXCHANGE

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE

View all Events

WHAT'S NEW?

UPCOMING EVENTS

FAVORITES

Click "♥ save" to add programs to your favorites. You can then save, compare and download basic information for each one. See FAQ: [How do I save and compare programs?](#)

RECENTLY ADDED

- [Alabama A&M University](#)
- [Arkansas State University](#)
- [Bridgewater State University \(MA\)](#)
- [Gwynedd Mercy University \(PA\)](#)
- [University of Oklahoma](#)
- [Texas A&M University](#)

SEARCH

CLEAR

Program or Keyword

SHOW ALL

LOCATION

- ☐ Alabama (7)
- ☐ Alaska (1)
- ☐ Arizona (2)
- ♥ Show more states

PROGRAM FEATURES

- ☐ Serves Students in High School *
- ☐ Offers Financial Aid
- ☐ Offers Housing
- ☐ Program not limited by students' school districts

*Note that students who are dually enrolled might not be eligible for financial aid or housing

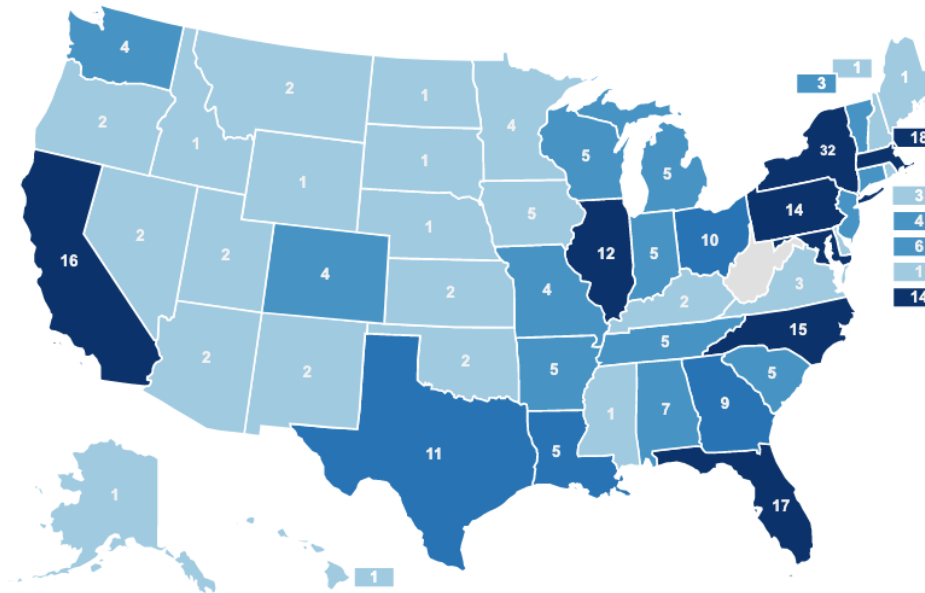
ADVANCED FILTERS

Find the College that is right for you!

This directory includes information on [279](#) college programs for students with intellectual disability. You can search by program name, location, and other keywords. "Advanced Filters" offer more options to narrow your search.

Review these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for answers to some general questions on college programs, how we gather the information in the directory, and how to use the features of College Search.

Once you have located colleges you are interested in, download the [How To Think College Guide to Conducting a College Search \[PDF\]](#). It provides you with the right questions to ask in order to get the answers you need about each program on your list. The How To guide is also [available in Spanish](#).



NUMBER OF PROGRAMS



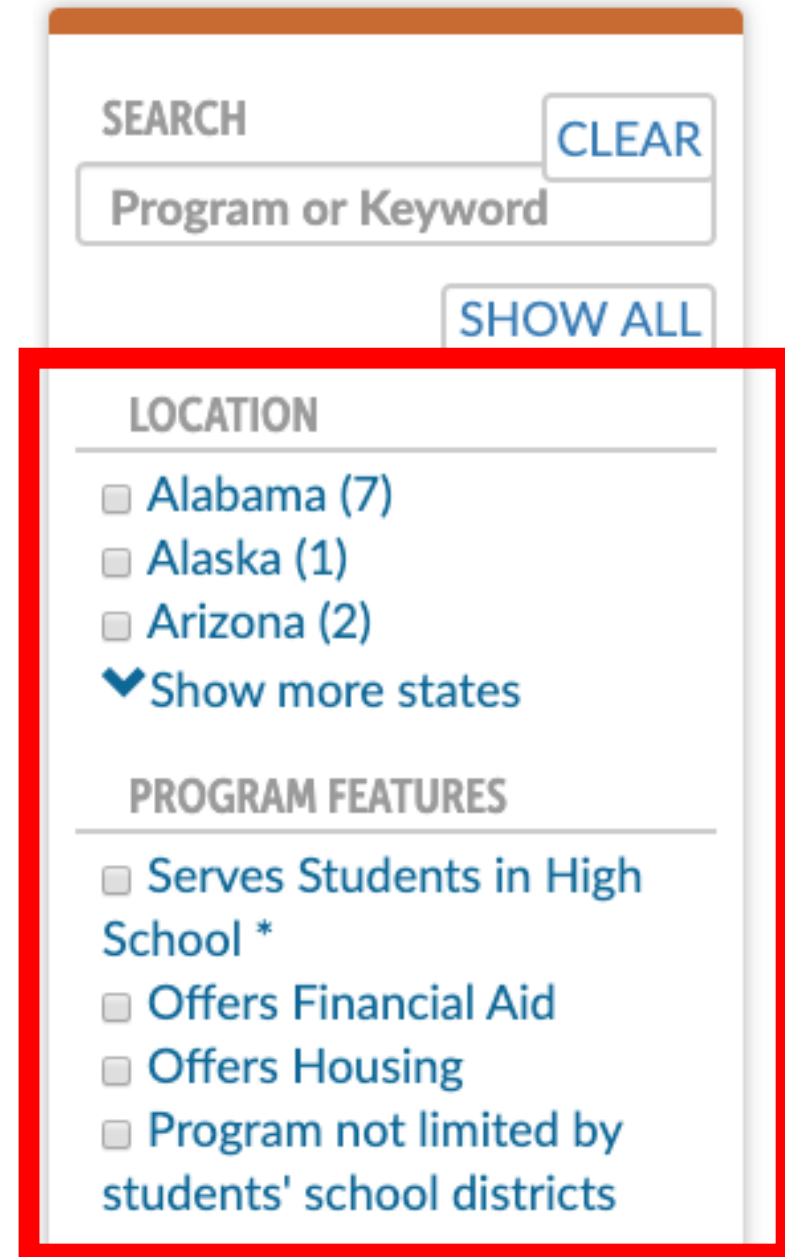
The information included here was submitted to Think College by the college programs. Being listed here does not indicate or imply a Think College endorsement. There also may be programs available that have not reported to us. All programs listed here must be affiliated with an accredited college or university and serve students with intellectual disabilities. To let us know about a new program, or to make changes to an existing program, please email thinkcollege@umb.edu.

Screenshot

Basic filters

- Location (State)
- Program features
 - Serves Students in High School
 - Offers Financial Aid
 - Offers Housing
 - Not limited by school district

*Note that students who are dually enrolled might not be eligible for financial aid or housing



The image shows a search interface with a search bar at the top containing the text "Program or Keyword". To the right of the search bar are two buttons: "CLEAR" and "SHOW ALL". Below the search bar, there are two filter sections. The first section is titled "LOCATION" and lists four options: "Alabama (7)", "Alaska (1)", "Arizona (2)", and "Show more states" (which has a downward arrow icon). The second section is titled "PROGRAM FEATURES" and lists four options: "Serves Students in High School *", "Offers Financial Aid", "Offers Housing", and "Program not limited by students' school districts". The entire filter section is highlighted with a red border.

SEARCH [CLEAR](#)

Program or Keyword

[SHOW ALL](#)

LOCATION

- ☐ Alabama (7)
- ☐ Alaska (1)
- ☐ Arizona (2)
- [▼ Show more states](#)

PROGRAM FEATURES

- ☐ Serves Students in High School *
- ☐ Offers Financial Aid
- ☐ Offers Housing
- ☐ Program not limited by students' school districts

Advanced filters

- Type of Disability
- Type of Institution
 - Public/Private
 - 2 year, 4 year, tech/trade school
- Length of Program
- TPSID (federally-funded model demonstration program)

ADVANCED FILTERS

DISABILITY

☐ Intellectual disability

☐ Autism

☐ Other disabilities

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

☐ Private

☐ Public

TYPE OF SCHOOL

☐ 2-year community college or junior college

☐ 4-year college or university

☐ Technical or vocational/trade school

☐ Other

PLANNED LENGTH OF PROGRAM

☐ 1 year

☐ 2 years

☐ 3 years

☐ 4 years

☐ Varies from student to student

☐ Program is a federally funded TPSID program

New features

List of recently added programs (within the past 3 months)

Identify programs that only serve students from certain school districts, exclude these programs from your search results

Save favorites and download a spreadsheet of favorites with 11 key features for comparison

FAQ section with basic info about college programs and how to use College Search

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- › What are the requirements to attend these programs?
- › What do you mean by the term intellectual disability?
- › What is IPSE, or "inclusive postsecondary education"?
- › Do some of the programs in your listing serve students that are transition-aged and still in high school?
- › What are college-based transition services?

ABOUT THINK COLLEGE SEARCH

- › How do I use Think College Search?
- › How do I save and compare a list of favorite colleges?
- › How does Think College get the info about college programs they share on the site?
- › What criteria does a program have to meet to be listed on Think College Search?
- › What information is provided for each college program?

COLLEGE SUPPORTS FOR AUTISM

- › How do I find college programs for students with autism?



Let's take a live tour!

<https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

Step 3: Dig deeper and ask questions

Read

Read carefully through the program's website



Set up

Set up a phone call to ask questions.



Attend

Attend an open house



Admissions/Student Profile

What kinds of disabilities do students in the program have?

What percentage of students who enroll are students with ID?

How many students apply each year?
How many are accepted?

Student Experiences



What is a typical day like for students?



Can students access everything on campus?



How does a student find out about and gain access to campus activities?



What are some typical things that students do in their free time on campus?



Academics

What courses do students take?

What are the requirements for a student auditing a college course or taking a course for credit?

How many of the courses are separate courses for students with disabilities?



HOW TO ThinkCollege

Issue No. 1 (Updated 2019)

CONDUCTING A COLLEGE SEARCH: QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE PROGRAMS

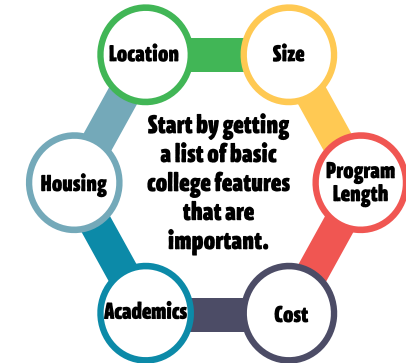
By Cate Weir

Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home (see Figure 1).

For students with intellectual disability (ID), there are some additional aspects to consider beyond the details you can learn in Think College Search. This resource provides questions, suggested by parents and students who have been through the college search process.

These questions may be answered by closely reviewing the college program websites, attending an Open House, or calling the program director. A great place to identify possible options is Think College Search, a searchable database of college programs on the Think College website. There you will find basic information on over 270 college programs for students with intellectual disability. Learn more about it on page 2.

Figure 1. Sample College Features



This guide shares questions about important aspects of the college program, and are offered to help students and families learn as much as they can about program operations so they can make an informed choice about which college is best for them. Several questions are suggested in each of the ten areas below.



Step 4: Visit and apply!



Visit your top choices to see the campus and meet the staff, faculty, and students.



Visit the disability services office to see how involved that office is with the program.



Connect with alumni and their families to learn about their experiences at college and what they're doing now.



Apply!



Cate Weir

cathryn.weir@umb.edu

Clare Papay

clare.papay@umb.edu

Thank You!

WWW.THINKCOLLEGE.NET