



This alliance works to increase awareness about two to four-year higher education programs that exist in Tennessee's universities to improving inclusive higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disability across the state. The alliance has representatives from state and local agencies, representatives from colleges and universities, and representatives who are business owners, family members, and self-advocates. All of these people work together to advance inclusive higher education opportunities for students with disabilities.

What services or resources does this alliance provide?

The alliance itself does not provide services, rather it is a resource that provides information about inclusive higher education programs in Tennessee that are specifically designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The website also mentions financial information that makes paying for these programs more financially feasible to families.

What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

There are inclusive higher education programs spread throughout the state of TN. Below is a list of programs available for students with IDD:

- The IDEAL Program at Lipscomb University, 2-year non-residential certificate program- **Nashville, TN**
- Next Steps at Vanderbilt University, 4-year



non-residential certificate program- **Nashville, TN**

- TigerLIFE at the University of Memphis, 2-year non-residential certificate program- **Memphis, TN**
- University of Tennessee FUTURE Postsecondary Education Program, 3-year non-residential certificate program- **Knoxville, TN**
- The EDGE program at Union University, 2-year residential OR non-residential certificate program- **Jackson, TN**

Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

All of the higher education programs have tuition costs associated with them. Each program offers and accepts different types of financial aid, making it more financially accessible for families. Next Steps at Vanderbilt, University of Tennessee FUTURE, TigerLIFE at the University



of Memphis, Lipscomb's IDEAL, and the Union Edge Programs are approved for federal funding. For more information, refer to this website: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/intellectual-disabilities>. The STEP-UP Scholarship extends to all programs. Students who enroll in a qualified higher education program within 16 months of receiving a diploma or certificate from a Tennessee high school, will receive a scholarship of \$3,500 per year which will be awarded to eligible students. Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation will pay up to \$2,400 for eligible students for up to four semesters at all of Tennessee's inclusive higher education programs. Vocational Rehabilitation recognizes this program as providing quality career training and readiness services.

For which students might this agency be appropriate?

Young adults who have received special education supports and services and their families may want to learn more from the Alliance. The Alliance can provide resources and information as a student and family considers various options.

Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

Check with the individual program for specific eligibility requirements. Some examples of eligibility requirements are: age restrictions (most programs are designed for students 18-26, though some serve students up to age 29), specific reading/math levels, access to transportation, ability to travel independently on college campus, a want or desire greater independence, have or want career goals, have health insurance, utilize basic

Where can I learn more?

Visit the TN Inclusive Higher Education

Alliance website at: <http://tnihealliance.org/>

Visit the Think College website at:

<https://thinkcollege.net>

communication abilities, etc.

What is the referral process?

What documents are needed?

While there isn't a referral process, each program requires an application. The applications have specific requirements but there are some common components to the applications. Some examples of required items include: an application fee, a copy of the most recent IEP, references, a personal statement, a psychological evaluation, and an interview.

What is the family's responsibility?

Families interested having their child attend a higher education institution should explore different higher education programs that might be appropriate for their student.

What is the student's responsibility?

The student must demonstrate an interest in attending an inclusive higher education program. The student can be proactive by seeking more information about the programs they might be interested in attending.



What is the responsibility of an educator?

Educators should share information about this alliance with families. The alliance's website is a great place for families to start learning about the options available in TN. Teachers are encouraged to contact existing programs to ask about bringing a group of students for a campus tour and to talk with current students.

How (and when) do you involve them in transition education/planning?

- Teachers should give families information about the alliance early in the transition process. Parents can learn about eligibility and the application process, allowing them to ensure they are helping their student fulfill all of the components required for eligibility for their program of interest.
- Ask a member of the alliance to come speak to the family and student about the benefits of attending an inclusive higher education program.
- Have prospective students meet with current students or alumni of the higher education program to get their feedback and perspective. Parents can also be connected with other parents to see if this would be a good fit for their son or daughter.
- Attend and Open House event and take campus tours; information will be located on each program's website.

What questions should I ask of my inclusive higher education program?

- Will my student be attending regularly scheduled classes with typical peers at the program they attend?
- How many students are selected to attend the program each year?
- What types of supports will my student receive in the classroom?
- Are tutoring services available for my student?

Additional contact information:

- Visit the Next Steps at Vanderbilt University website at: <http://vu.edu/nextsteps>
- Visit the TigerLIFE at University of Memphis website at: <http://www.memphis.edu/tigerlife/>
- Visit the FUTURE Program at University of TN website at: <http://futureut.utk.edu/>
- Visit the IDEAL Program at Lipscomb University website at: <http://www.lipscomb.edu/education/special-programs/ideal-program>
- Visit the EDGE at Union University website at: <http://www.uu.edu/programs/education/edge/>