Social Return on Investment as a Tool for Impact Evaluation and Funding Decisions

Comprehensive Transition Programs for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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About the Capstone

This project was developed to provide Philanthropy Southwest (PSW) with an evaluation of the social return on investment (SROI) generated by Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Specifically, this project applies a phased and iterative SROI methodology, including a literature review, expert interviews, stakeholder surveys, outcome mapping, valuation exercises, and sensitivity analysis, to assess the tangible and intangible returns associated with CTP program participation.

The evaluation captures a range of outcomes such as increased employment, expanded transportation independence, enhanced independent living skills, strengthened social networks, and improvements in family well-being. Financial proxies were sourced from credible national

datasets to assign monetary value to these outcomes, and conservative impact adjustments were applied to ensure transparency and credibility.

The findings are intended to inform philanthropic investment, strategic planning, and policy development efforts aimed at expanding access to inclusive postsecondary opportunities for individuals with IDD. Through this project, the team seeks to advance broader goals of equity, dignity, and full societal participation.

Mission

To empower philanthropic leaders by creating a framework that demonstrates philanthropic impact and facilitates strategic and practical giving within the Southwest region.

Executive Summary

Overview

Despite landmark legislative advances such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) continue to encounter systemic barriers to postsecondary education, competitive employment, and independent living. Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs offer a transformative solution to these persistent challenges. By providing integrated academic, vocational, independent living,, CTP programs create critical pathways for individuals with IDD to achieve fuller, more autonomous lives.

This project, developed in partnership with Philanthropy Southwest and grounded in the principles of Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology, evaluates the broader societal impact of CTP programs. Through a phased and iterative approach encompassing a literature review, expert interviews, stakeholder surveys, outcome mapping, valuation exercises, and sensitivity analysis, the project constructs a holistic framework that captures the tangible and intangible returns generated by these programs.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment conducted reveals the enduring disparities faced by individuals with IDD. National data underscore the underrepresentation of individuals with IDD in postsecondary education, their higher rates of unemployment or underemployment, and the challenges families face in accessing coordinated transition services. Systemic barriers such as limited financial aid for non-degree-seeking students, inconsistent transition planning, and persistent societal biases further inhibit progress.

Interventions

The interventions evaluated through this analysis include inclusive academic coursework, work-based learning experiences, independent living skills development, structured social and community engagement opportunities, leadership and self-advocacy training, and family support initiatives. Notably, in programs lacking formal residential components, families played a pivotal role by coordinating independent housing solutions, further promoting participant immersion and autonomy.

Impacts

Illustrative outcomes gathered through stakeholder engagement reflect the far-reaching impacts of CTP participation. Participants have achieved significant milestones including saving for

homeownership, attaining competitive employment, securing driver's licenses, and building lasting personal relationships that lead to family formation. These real-world examples affirm that the outcomes of CTP participation extend well beyond academic or employment metrics, they encompass self-determination, autonomy, social connection, and full societal participation.

Participation in CTP programs also correlates with increased transportation independence, a critical factor influencing access to employment, education, and community life and basic needs like access to medical care. For many individuals with IDD, mastering public transit systems, ride-sharing technologies, or obtaining a driver's license represents a monumental step toward autonomy. Expanded transportation options not only improve employment prospects but also enhance social inclusion and personal agency.

Family Outcomes

Family outcomes form another essential dimension of the broader social return generated by CTP programs. Parents and caregivers frequently report experiencing reduced stress and anxiety regarding their child's future. Transitioning from a full-time caregiver role to one of mentor and supporter allows family members to pursue personal and professional growth, enhancing overall family stability and well-being.

SROI

Application of the SROI framework enabled the translation of these outcomes into quantifiable social value. Increased earnings, reductions in reliance on public benefits, enhanced quality of life, expanded tax contributions, and improved family stability were monetized using credible financial proxies sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Social Security Administration, and disability-focused economic studies. Conservative impact adjustments, including deadweight, attribution, displacement, and drop-off, ensured credibility and transparency in the valuation process.

Preliminary Findings

Preliminary findings suggest that CTP programs generate significant social returns for every dollar invested. Conservative estimates indicate strong positive returns, even when accounting for potential confounding factors. Moreover, the inclusion of intangible benefits, such as improvements in mental health, expansion of social networks, increased civic participation, and greater overall life satisfaction, further amplifies the true value generated by CTP participation.

This report provides funders, policymakers, and philanthropic leaders with a robust, evidence-informed framework for evaluating the impacts of CTP programs. It offers both qualitative and

quantitative evidence supporting the expansion of inclusive postsecondary education as a mechanism for advancing civil rights, promoting economic participation, and fostering stronger, more inclusive communities.

Long Term Implications

Beyond immediate outcomes, the long-term implications of supporting CTP programs are profound. By building self-sufficiency among individuals with IDD, reducing long-term reliance on public support programs, and cultivating new generations of civically engaged citizens, investments in CTP programs create a lasting legacy of inclusion and empowerment.

Deliverables

Deliverables produced through this project include a comprehensive literature review, a detailed logic model linking program activities to outcomes and impacts, thematic findings from expert interviews and stakeholder surveys, outcome valuation frameworks, preliminary SROI ratio calculations, and recommendations for future program-specific evaluation replication. These tools equip stakeholders with actionable insights for strategic investment, advocacy, and policy development.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this project affirms that CTP programs are not merely academic interventions , they are transformative engines of opportunity. They embody the highest ideals of equity, dignity, and human flourishing. Through continued investment in and expansion of these programs, we can fulfill the promises of civil rights legislation and create a future where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the opportunity to learn, work, live, and thrive alongside their peers.

Introduction

Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) continue to face stark inequities as they transition into adulthood. After high school, many find limited pathways to higher education or employment, while these are opportunities that their peers without disabilities take for granted. Fewer than one in five adults with IDD achieve paid work in the community.This leads to high underemployment rates, social isolation, and lifelong reliance on public assistance. Families often bear immense caregiving burdens well into the individual's adulthood, with few programs available to support independent living or career development for this population.

Based on these persistent gaps, philanthropic leaders could help to deliver better outcomes for IDD youth and their families. One promising response is the emergence of Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs: inclusive college-based programs tailored for young adults with IDD. CTP programs combine academic coursework, vocational training (such as internships and job coaching), life skills instruction, and social integration on a college campus. Essentially, they provide an "ideal model" of holistic transition support, enabling IDD students to continue their education alongside peers and build skills for employment and independent living. Early evidence suggests that CTP graduates achieve dramatically improved life outcomes. For example, studies of federally funded inclusive higher education programs report that well over half of program participants secure competitive employment within a year of completion. This rate is far above the baseline for adults with IDD. Many CTP Programs also show outcomes in the fields of self-sufficiency, community participation, and reduced need for ongoing services. CTPs can be a comprehensive solution to the unmet needs of IDD youth.

Despite their potential, CTP programs remain relatively new and face important challenges. They are not yet widely accessible - only a few hundred such programs exist nationwide, serving a small fraction of eligible youth. Program quality and outcomes can vary, and long-term impacts are still being documented. CTPs also require significant resources and coordination (funding, trained staff, partnerships with colleges and employers), which can limit their growth. Meanwhile, families and educators may be hesitant to embrace a model without a well-established track record, and policymakers have only begun to adjust funding streams and policies (e.g. federal student aid eligibility) to support inclusive postsecondary education. These challenges make it clear that robust evaluation is needed to demonstrate the impact of CTPs. By rigorously estimating the benefits these programs generate, stakeholders can better understand why investing in CTPs is worthwhile and how to strengthen their implementation.

In this report, we adopt a Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach to evaluate the societal impact of comprehensive transition programs. SROI is a framework that exceeds traditional outcome metrics to assign monetary value to social outcomes, allowing funders to see a bottom-line style "return" for each dollar invested. This approach is particularly well-suited to the current philanthropic climate. Foundations and social investors today are increasingly influenced by impact investing mindsets, seeking measurable, evidence-based returns on their grants and program-related investments. As philanthropic funding becomes more data-driven and strategic, tools like SROI have gained appeal by translating social impact into the language of investment. In collaboration with Philanthropy Southwest (PSW), this analysis was undertaken as part of a capstone project to build a philanthropic investment case for CTP programs. The goal is to provide decision-makers with clear, quantifiable insights into what outcomes they can expect if they allocate resources to expand or enhance CTP initiatives.

Notably, this project's SROI analysis is national in scope and cross-site in design, setting it apart from typical single-program evaluations. Rather than examining one college's program in isolation, we draw on data and insights from CTP initiatives across the country to estimate the social returns of an "ideal" CTP model. This broader lens offers a more generalizable business case for investment: it captures common costs and benefits observed in multiple settings. It shows what a high-quality CTP can achieve under favorable conditions. Complementing the national data, we conducted expert interviews and stakeholder surveys to collect first-hand evidence that adds site-specific detail and context. This approach aligns with the strategic perspective of foundation boards interested in scalable impact. By focusing on an ideal model grounded in national data, the report speaks to what systematic investment in CTPs could accomplish in terms of economic gains for participants, reduced public assistance, improved quality of life, and other social dividends.

In partnership with PSW's member foundations, this report aspires to advance knowledge and action - leveraging SROI evidence to channel new resources into expanding life-changing opportunities for young people with IDD.

Research Questions

1. What social return on investment can a well-implemented comprehensive transition postsecondary (CTP) program generate for young adults with IDD?
2. How can the SROI findings inform foundation boards' decisions regarding investments in CTP programs?

Background and Literature Review

Historical Background

Both systemic injustices and critical legislative milestones have shaped the disability rights in the United States. Despite landmark advances such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) continue to encounter disproportionately low rates of higher education participation and employment. In other words, while notable progress has been achieved, persistent barriers faced by individuals with IDD reveal an ongoing struggle to translate legal rights into real-world equity (National Council on Disability, 2012).

Exclusion and Institutionalization (19th - mid-20th Century)

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many U.S. cities enforced "ugly laws" that barred people with visible disabilities from public spaces, criminalizing disability and reinforcing social stigma (Schweik, 2009). Charitable donors of the era often financed large custodial institutions, "schools for the feebleminded", that warehoused residents with minimal education or vocational training (Carey, 2009). By the early 1970s, only about one in five children with disabilities attended public school; more than a million others lived in institutions with scant services (Conrad, 2018).

Disability-Rights Movement and Early Legislation (1960s - 1970s)

Public outrage over institutional abuse, exemplified by the 1972 Willowbrook exposé, fueled a national disability-rights movement (Rivera, 1972). Landmark lawsuits, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills v. Board of Education (1972), affirmed students' rights to public education, paving the way for the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EHA). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibited disability discrimination by federally funded programs, while EHA guaranteed a "free appropriate public education" in the least restrictive environment. For the first time, children with IDD had an enforceable right to public schooling with individualized support (National Council on Disability, 2012).

Expanding Inclusion (1980s - 1990s)

EHA was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, adding mandatory transition planning to prepare students for adult life. That same year, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) banned discrimination in employment, public services, and public accommodations. The Supreme Court's Olmstead v. L.C. (1999) decision further held

that unnecessary institutionalization constitutes discrimination under the ADA, affirming the right to community-based services (National Council on Disability, 2012). Supported-employment models gained traction, replacing sheltered workshops and demonstrating that with job coaching and workplace accommodations, many individuals with IDD could succeed in competitive jobs (Wehman et al., 2017).

Postsecondary Access and Workforce Reforms (2000s - 2010s)

Policy attention shifted toward postsecondary inclusion. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 formally recognized Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs and made certain federal financial aid available to students with IDD (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012). Research has since shown employment rates of 70 to 90% for CTP graduates, far above typical outcomes for adults with IDD (Grigal et al., 2019). In employment policy, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 emphasized competitive integrated employment and limited sub-minimum wages, pushing states to phase out sheltered workshops (National Council on Disability, 2018). The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 restored a broad definition of disability after restrictive court rulings, reaffirming workplace protections (Duncan, 2020).

Ongoing Gaps and the Role of Philanthropy (2020s - Present)

Despite legal gains, youth with IDD still face low postsecondary participation and employment. Foundations historically dedicate less than 1% of U.S. grant dollars to disability inclusion, reflecting persistent ableism in philanthropy (Ho & Bokoff, 2022; Siegel, 2023). Forward-looking funders are beginning to address this gap. Philanthropy Southwest's PSW Advance initiative, for example, trains family foundations to use program-related investments and other tools to finance sustainable disability programs (Impact City Initiative, 2020). Inclusive postsecondary models such as CTPs align well with this emerging interest, offering evidence-based, community-embedded solutions that can attract mission-aligned capital.

Figure 1.

The Road to Disability Inclusion

Late 1800s

"Ugly Laws" enacted, criminalizing public appearance by people with disabilities

1972

Willowbrook State School exposé by Geraldo Rivera highlights institutional abuse

1973

Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 signed into law

1987

Willowbrook State School closes

1990

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed

2004

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorized

2008

Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) creates a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) program recognition

2014

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes employment for individuals with disabilities

The historical progression of disability rights, outlined in Figure 1 and further detailed in Appendix F, has laid the foundation for today's inclusive education initiatives. Among these is the development of Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs, which seek to extend the promise of higher education to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As these programs continue to grow, it is essential to assess whether they are truly advancing inclusion and delivering meaningful outcomes for participants. This evaluation uses an Ideal Model, a blueprint for effective inclusive practices, alongside a Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework to measure the social and economic impact of CTP programs.

Need Statement

Challenges Facing Youth with IDD

Youths with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face persistent and multifaceted challenges as they transition to adulthood. Despite decades of disability rights progress, outcomes in employment and independent living remain starkly inequitable. In 2021, only about 19% of working-age Americans with disabilities were employed, compared to 64% of those without disabilities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). For individuals with IDD in particular, community employment rates are even more alarmingly low: roughly 17% of adults with IDD hold paid jobs, even though nearly half of those not employed express a desire to work (NASDDDS, 2024). Those who do work are often limited to part-time, low-wage roles with little opportunity for advancement, reflecting barriers such as lack of access to postsecondary education and job training, low expectations from employers, disincentives in public benefit programs, and insufficient transition support services bridging school to adulthood (Human Services Research Institute & NASDDDS, 2024). As a result, many youths with IDD have few access to college or competitive employment after their high school. Finally, they fall into long-term unemployment or underemployment.

These challenges carry high personal and societal costs. Marginalized from the workforce, young adults with IDD frequently experience lifelong economic insecurity and social exclusion. The poverty rate among working-age people with disabilities is about 25%, more than double the 10% rate for non-disabled peers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Families of individuals with IDD often must fill service gaps as unpaid caregivers, incurring significant emotional stress and financial strain. At the community and national level, the exclusion of people with disabilities results in lost productivity and higher public expenditures (for income support, health care, and social services). In sum, the status quo represents not only an injustice for individuals and families but also a missed opportunity for society to benefit from the talents and contributions of youth with IDD. These unmet needs recall initials to develop and support programs that enable inclusive education, skills development, and pathways to employment for these youths.

Historical Underinvestment by Philanthropy

Compounding the challenges above is a historical pattern of underinvestment in disability inclusion by philanthropic institutions. Disability issues have rarely been a strategic priority for major foundations, which traditionally focused on other causes; as one commentator noted, many grantmakers long treated disability as "not part of their strategy," leaving this community out of their funding agendas (Siegel, 2024). This neglect is reflected in funding patterns: In 2019, disability grants were $755 million, just 2% of the $37 billion awarded by the Foundation 1000 (Disability & Philanthropy Forum, 2023). Grants that backed disability rights and social-model change accounted for only 0.1% of all Foundation 1000 giving (Disability & Philanthropy Forum, 2023). In other words, a minuscule share of charitable dollars directly addresses the needs of people with disabilities, a fraction vastly disproportionate to the size and needs of this population. Even within that small slice, philanthropic funds have tended to concentrate on traditional, charity-oriented services (such as medical care or basic support programs) rather than on empowerment or systemic-change efforts. For example, the majority of foundation disability funding has historically gone toward medical treatment and support services, with only a tiny portion (around 4%) aimed at advancing disability rights or inclusion (Siegel, 2024).

The underrepresentation of disability in philanthropic portfolios has left critical gaps. Promising programs for youth with IDD have often relied on piecemeal public funding or small-scale grants, struggling to scale up due to the absence of major philanthropic investment. In short, while foundations have poured resources into education and poverty alleviation broadly, they have seldom targeted those investments to include students and jobseekers with IDD in a meaningful way. This historical underinvestment by philanthropy has contributed to the limited opportunities and support systems currently available to IDD youth, indicating a clear need (and opportunity) for philanthropic leaders to step up engagement in this arena.

Alignment with Emerging Philanthropic Investment Trends

Encouragingly, the landscape of philanthropy is evolving in ways that could be powerfully aligned with the needs of youth with IDD. In recent years, many leading foundations and high-net-worth donors have begun to adopt an investment mindset in their philanthropy, seeking not only to give, but to "invest with purpose" for sustainable social impact (Woodley, 2019). This shift is evident in the rise of venture philanthropy and impact investing, approaches that apply business-like strategies and emphasize measurable returns in social outcomes. Philanthropists are increasingly redirecting portions of their portfolios into impact funds, social enterprises, and program-related investments topics like poverty, health, and education (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019). Education is a leading focus for these strategies. Over recent

decades, foundation investment in higher education has progressed from expanding access, to supporting persistence and completion, and now to strengthening the link between study and employment (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2019). These priorities match the core obstacles facing IDD students: entry, completion, then transition to work.

Impact-oriented funders also look for less crowded issue areas where capital can spark innovation and produce outsized returns (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019). Disability inclusion fits this profile: it remains underfunded, yet evidence shows that inclusive postsecondary programs yield substantial benefits such as higher employment, reduced public-assistance dependence, and stronger community engagement (Reisman & Olazabal, 2016). Foundations further seek opportunities to leverage public systems and community assets. Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs do exactly that, operating on college campuses, linking to vocational rehabilitation and workforce agencies, and engaging local employers. Their model is long term, potentially self-sustaining, and designed for scale. These qualities align with the comparative advantages of large philanthropic investors.

Employment Challenges for Youth with IDD: Root Causes and Interventions

Root Causes

1. Unequal Education and Skills Gap

Limited access to education and training. Many youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) do not receive the same quality or breadth of education and job training as their peers. Only about 25% of young adults with disabilities enroll in post-secondary education (PSE), compared to 41% of non-disabled peers, and participation rates for those with IDD are even lower (Mock & Love, 2012; Zhang et al., 2023). Specialized college or vocational programs tailored to IDD are scarce, serving less than 5 % of eligible students (Zhang et al., 2018). This leads to a skills gap: emerging industries demand advanced skills, yet many youth with IDD leave school without marketable credentials. They often miss out on inclusive higher education, internships, or technical training opportunities that build job skills. For example, earning a bachelor's degree boosts earnings for individuals with cognitive disabilities by almost 68%, even more than the general population's 57% gain, but financial and support barriers (e.g., extra costs for assistive tech, transportation) limit access to such education. The result is that many youth with IDD enter adulthood underprepared for competitive employment, reinforcing low employment rates.

2. Societal Bias and Employer Discrimination

Low expectations and stigma from an early age. Youth with IDD often encounter biases in school and work that curtail their opportunities. Educators and transition programs sometimes channel these students into sheltered workshops or menial vocational tracks instead of higher education or mainstream jobs, reflecting a belief that they are suited only for simple tasks (Almalky, 2020; Wehman et al., 2014). This stigmatization continues into the workplace. Many employers harbor misconceptions about productivity or the cost of accommodations, making them hesitant to hire people with IDD. A large-scale field experiment found that job applicants who disclosed a disability were 26% less likely to receive a callback than identical non-disabled applicants (Ameri et al., 2018), highlighting persistent hiring discrimination. Even when hired, workers with IDD can face "glass ceilings": they are often relegated to entry-level or token roles with limited chances for advancement. Consequently, those who do find work tend to be concentrated in low-paying industries (e.g., food service, cleaning), with minimal opportunities for skill development or promotion (National Core Indicators, 2023). These societal biases form a self-perpetuating cycle: low expectations lead to fewer opportunities, which then reinforce stereotypes about limited capabilities.

3. Structural and Policy Barriers

Systemic disincentives and inconsistent support. Beyond personal attitudes, policy frameworks and systemic issues create barriers for youth with IDD entering the workforce. A key issue is the so-called "benefits cliff": strict public-benefit rules that can penalize those who work. For instance, earning above roughly $794 per month can jeopardize one's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid coverage (Rockefeller Institute of Government, 2021). This discourages full-time or higher-wage employment, as many individuals (and their families) fear losing essential health and support services if they earn "too much." Administrative complexities (like overpayment penalties) further deter work attempts. In addition, uneven state and local policies lead to inconsistent support systems. Some states have invested in inclusive higher education and Employment First initiatives and have seen improved employment outcomes for participants. But in other regions, youth with IDD lack access to robust transition services, effective vocational rehabilitation, or supported-employment programs (Think College, 2023). Labor-market structures also pose challenges: modern hiring often emphasizes formal qualifications ("credentialism"), which disproportionately excludes those with IDD who faced educational barriers (SSI Stability Report, 2016). Online job applications and recruiting tools may be inaccessible to people with cognitive or communication impairments, further narrowing their opportunities. In sum, gaps in policy implementation and structural hurdles (from benefit laws to hiring practices) significantly limit employment prospects for youth with IDD, even when they have the motivation and ability to work.

Together, these root causes help explain why youth and adults with IDD experience chronically low employment rates. In the United States, only about 17% of adults with IDD have a paid job in the community, and nearly half of those without work say they want to work (Human Services Research Institute & National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, 2024).

Intervention Choices

1. Skill Development and Readiness Interventions

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Programs. Increasing access to college and vocational programs tailored for students with IDD is a critical intervention. These programs combine academics with life-skills and career training in inclusive settings. Evidence shows that participating in specialized inclusive higher education significantly boosts employment success. Graduates of Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTPs) secure competitive jobs at much higher rates than similar individuals who did not attend such programs. 57% of CTP graduates obtained paid employment within one year versus 19% of non-participants (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011). For example, Texas A&M's Aggie ACHIEVE and PATHS programs offer college experiences for students with IDD, blending coursework with supervised work experience. The PATHS certificate program reports an 84% employment rate upon graduation, indicating how such education can bridge the gap from school to work (Aggie ACHIEVE, 2019; Zhang, Grenwelge, & Petcu, 2018). By imparting both job skills and social experience, inclusive PSE programs address the skills gap and improve confidence, making youth with IDD more job-ready.

Vocational Training and Inclusive Apprenticeships. Structured job-training programs, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and technical-skills courses, provide another pathway. Effective models adapt training to different learning needs and often incorporate assistive technologies, coaching, and mentorship. Such programs can be tailored to high-demand fields like information technology, healthcare, or skilled trades, enabling youth with IDD to gain practical skills. Research by the U.S. Department of Labor shows these inclusive apprenticeship programs can yield a strong return on investment, about $1.44 in benefits for every $1.00 spent, thanks to outcomes like higher productivity and lower turnover among participants (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). There is also emerging rigorous evidence for person-centered approaches: a 2024 randomized controlled trial of Customized Employment found that youth with IDD who received this intervention were significantly more likely to obtain competitive integrated jobs than those in usual services. This suggests that well-designed vocational interventions (including supported or customized-employment models) can substantially improve

employment rates for transition-age youth. Key components include hands-on skill building, real-work experience, and alignment with labor-market needs rather than defaulting to low-skill occupations.

Transition Planning, Career Counseling, and Support Services. Preparing youth with IDD for the workforce also requires individualized planning and support to navigate the transition from school to employment. Programs often provide career counseling, job coaching, life-skills training, and psychological support to young people and their families. For instance, the Texas Youth2Adult initiative offers a comprehensive transition curriculum covering job-search skills, financial planning, and independent-living skills along with one-on-one coaching (Easter Seals Greater Houston, 2024). Such supports address personal and emotional barriers like low self-confidence or social-skills deficits. Evidence consistently links these supports to better job retention and satisfaction for workers with disabilities. By boosting self-advocacy, resilience, and soft skills, transition support services help young adults with IDD not only find jobs but also maintain and grow in them.

2. Employer Engagement and Workplace Adaptation Interventions

Employer Disability-Awareness Training. Because employer attitudes are a major barrier, many interventions focus on educating and engaging employers. Formal training programs and consulting services help demystify accommodations and highlight the value that employees with IDD bring. Adopting a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA) framework is one recommended approach. Training sessions might cover disability etiquette, legal responsibilities, and success stories of inclusive hiring. Studies show that when companies shift focus from "fixing" the individual to adapting the work environment, the long-term employment outcomes for employees with disabilities improve markedly (Van Berkel & Breit, 2024). Teaching managers how to redesign jobs or workflows to fit diverse employees (instead of expecting employees to conform without support) leads to better productivity and retention.

Inclusive Hiring Initiatives and Incentives. Governments and nonprofits have also introduced programs to encourage the hiring of people with disabilities through incentives and inclusive recruitment initiatives. Employers can benefit from tax credits or wage subsidies when they hire individuals with disabilities. Initiatives like the federal Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) on Disability Inclusion disseminate best practices and recognize companies that excel in disability inclusion (EARN, 2022). Organizations that embrace these diversity-hiring efforts often report tangible benefits. Research indicates that companies prioritizing disability inclusion see higher workforce productivity and improved workplace morale. These measures make a strong business case for hiring youth with IDD. Additionally,

some programs facilitate partnerships between schools/vocational agencies and employers (e.g., internship or mentorship programs), effectively creating a talent pipeline.

Accessible Recruitment and Workplace Accommodations. Another set of interventions ensures that hiring processes and job environments are accessible from the start. This includes revising recruitment practices: job postings written in plain language, applications compatible with assistive technologies, and accommodations during interviews. Making these adjustments helps level the playing field (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Once hired, providing appropriate job accommodations and assistive technologies is crucial for retention. Most accommodations are low-cost or cost-free, and they enable employees with IDD to perform at their full potential. Research has documented that bias-reducing tools, like anonymized résumé-review software or structured interviews, can counteract unconscious discrimination in hiring. This category focuses on changing employer practices and workplace design so that youth with IDD can enter and thrive in a job on equal footing.

3. Policy and Environmental Support Interventions

Strengthening Legal Protections and Benefit Reforms. At the macro level, policy interventions aim to fix the systemic issues that hinder employment for people with disabilities. One approach is rigorous enforcement of disability-rights laws and promotion of new policies. Ensuring these laws are followed and closing loopholes (for example, phasing out sub-minimum-wage programs) are critical. Experts also emphasize reforming public-benefit rules so that taking a job doesn't mean losing healthcare or income support. Measures like Medicaid Buy-In programs or raising SSI income/asset limits can remove disincentives to work (Rockefeller Institute of Government, 2021).

Assistive Technology and Accessible Infrastructure. Technological interventions help mitigate functional barriers, enabling youth with IDD to perform jobs independently and efficiently. Assistive technologies (AT) range from communication devices to organizational apps to adaptive tools for physical tasks. Equipping a young person with the right AT can substantially improve productivity and confidence. Likewise, information and communication technologies can make work more accessible, software that simplifies user interfaces or virtual-coaching platforms. Some employers are also adopting innovative hiring tools to reduce bias and focus on candidates' abilities. By investing in accessible infrastructure and assistive tech, society can remove many practical obstacles that have traditionally limited what jobs a person with IDD could do (Tarafdar, Beath, & Ross, 2023).

Supportive Networks and Cross-Sector Partnerships. Effective solutions often involve collaboration across government, schools, nonprofits, and businesses to create a supportive

ecosystem. Local “community employment collaboratives” might bring together vocational-rehabilitation agencies, disability-service nonprofits, employers, and schools to coordinate resources and job opportunities for youth with IDD. These networks facilitate mentorship programs, job fairs, and sharing of best practices. Philanthropy also plays a role. The Ford Foundation has invested $294 million in disability-inclusion grants that scale inclusive-employment initiatives (Ford Foundation, 2022). Such cross-sector alliances can increase the scale and sustainability of interventions. Research suggests that regions with strong inter-agency coordination see better employment outcomes, as fragmented services are replaced by a continuum of support. By pooling knowledge and resources, these partnerships help build a more inclusive labor-market infrastructure.

The measures outlined above address different pieces of the problem systematically. High-quality evidence shows that inclusive education and supported-employment interventions can dramatically raise employment rates. Likewise, changes in employer practices and public policy can remove long-standing barriers. By implementing a mix of these strategies, stakeholders can ensure that youth with IDD are not just able to find a job, but to build meaningful careers as included, empowered members of the workforce.

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Programs

1. What Are CTP Programs

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs are federally defined higher education programs designed specifically for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) to attend college. Established by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and regulations at 34 C.F.R. 668 Subpart O, a CTP can be a degree, certificate, or non-degree credential program that supports students with ID in an inclusive campus setting (34 C.F.R. § 668.231). To qualify as a CTP, the program must ensure students with intellectual disability receive academic, career, and independent living instruction that prepares them for gainful employment, with at least 50% of participation in inclusive activities (such as taking regular college courses or internships alongside peers without disabilities) (34 C.F.R. § 668.231). CTP programs also provide individualized advising and a structured curriculum tailored to the learning needs of students with ID, focusing on academic enrichment, socialization, career development, and life skills in a college environment (PACER Center, 2023). Students must meet the definition of “student with an intellectual disability” under federal law to enroll (34 C.F.R. § 668.231), ensuring these programs serve the intended population.

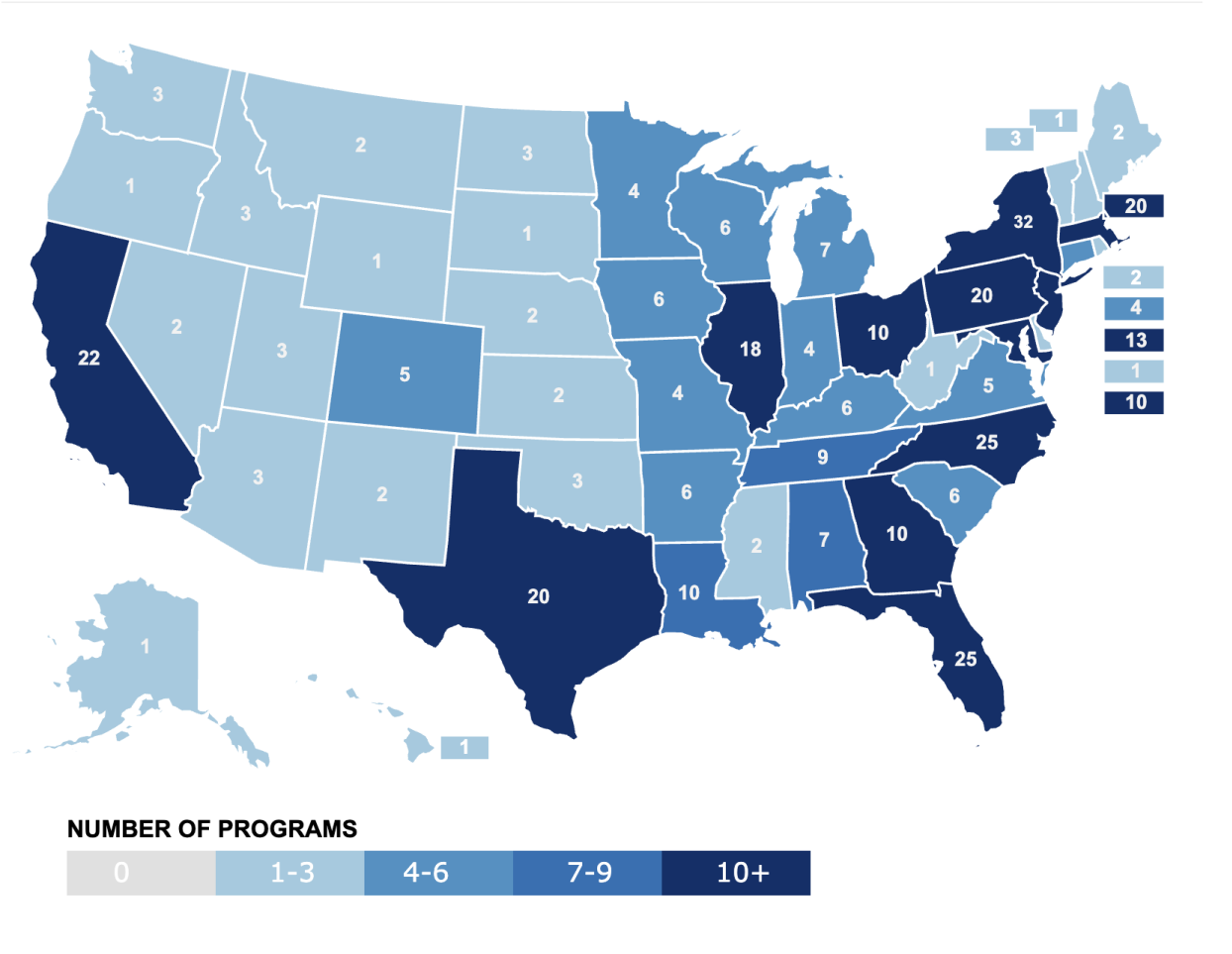
A key feature of CTP designation is eligibility for federal student aid. Before 2008, individuals with intellectual disabilities who were not pursuing a degree or who lacked a

standard high school diploma were categorically ineligible for federal college aid. The Higher Education Opportunity Act changed that. Now, students with ID enrolled in an approved CTP can access certain Title IV financial aid, including Federal Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Federal Work-Study (VanBergeijk, E. O., & Cavanagh, P. K., 2012). This financial aid access is transformative: it lowers the cost barrier and allows students with IDD and their families to invest in college attendance much like any other student (Weir, 2022). However, federal student loans remain close to these students to prevent excessive debt.

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs are often confused with two other terms. Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) designates a federal grant program, not a credential or a permanent program type. TPSID grants were created by the same 2008 law that authorized CTP status. They provide competitive, time-limited funds for colleges or consortia to launch or improve inclusive postsecondary initiatives for students with intellectual disabilities. A college may use a TPSID grant to build a program that aligns with CTP principles (inclusive academics, internships, person-centered planning), yet TPSID funding alone does not confer ongoing student-aid eligibility. Many TPSID-funded programs later obtained CTP approval, while some CTPs were created without ever receiving TPSID dollars. Think College, the federally funded National Coordinating Center, supports both TPSID sites and other colleges, documenting how TPSID demonstration grants seeded model programs nationwide (Inside Higher Ed, 2023).

Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) is the broader field that fully integrates students with intellectual or developmental disabilities into regular college classes and campus life. The landscape has expanded rapidly: in 2004 the United States had only about 25 inclusive postsecondary programs, while by 2023 there were roughly 310 (Inside Higher Ed, 2023). CTPs represent the federally recognized subset of IPSE programs that meet specific quality and aid-eligibility criteria. Now, more than 160 programs across community colleges, public and private universities, and minority-serving institutions have secured CTP approval (Think College Search, 2025). This is about 45% of all inclusive programs nationwide.

Figure 2 the scale of CTPs nationwide



Note. From *Think College*. (2025). *College Search* [Infographic]. https://thinkcollege.net/college-search

2. Why CTP Programs Excel Compared With Other Interventions

CTPs respond to the two biggest barriers that keep youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) out of competitive work: a shortage of market-aligned credentials and persistent social exclusion. Studies show that college participation dramatically improves job rates and earnings for this population and can even generate long-term public savings by reducing reliance on benefits (Project 10, 2014).

Six features make CTPs especially attractive to mission-driven funders and impact investors:

- **Multi-stakeholder engine.** CTPs are built on coordinated partnerships among higher-education faculty, families, K-12 districts, vocational-rehabilitation

agencies, disability nonprofits, and local employers. Advisory boards, co-taught courses, and joint service plans align classroom learning with real labor-market needs and pool resources well beyond any single grant (Weir, 2022).

- **Community alignment.** Because each program is anchored in a college, it can tailor coursework and internships to its region, health-care pathways in rural areas, corporate placements in major cities, and so on. Campuses become demonstration hubs that raise community expectations for what adults with IDD can achieve, and those attitudinal shifts endure long after students graduate (Inside Higher Ed, 2023).
- **Platform for innovation.** Access to university research labs and assistive-technology centers turns many CTPs into living laboratories. Programs pilot mobile apps, smart-home tools, and Universal Design for Learning strategies, then share outcome data with Think College and other networks to accelerate what works (PACER Center, 2023).
- **Public-private leverage.** Federal CTP approval unlocks Pell Grants, work-study funds, and, in many states, Medicaid waiver or VR dollars. Philanthropic gifts therefore top up, rather than replace, public financing; each donated dollar is effectively matched by federal aid and institutional support, creating a clear path to long-term sustainability (Weir, 2022; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).
- **Systemic empowerment.** CTPs shift disability services from a charity model to a rights-based, empowerment approach. Students live and study beside nondisabled peers, earn recognized credentials, and build adult identities grounded in choice and self-advocacy, changes that ripple through campuses and workplaces alike (PACER Center, 2023).
- **High need and high return.** Fewer than 3% of young adults with IDD enroll in any college, yet follow-ups show that 74% of CTP graduates are in paid, competitive jobs one year after completion; post-secondary education also raises wages by roughly 50% and offsets disability-service costs within two to three years (Think College National Coordinating Center, 2025). The field is therefore both under-served and demonstrably high-yield for social investors.

Other successful existing interventions such as supported-employment services and Project SEARCH deliver valuable job coaching and internships. But they are typically time-limited, tied to single worksites, and do not grant academic credentials. Micro-enterprise programs empower a few individuals yet seldom scale or reach mainstream wage levels. By contrast, CTPs combine multi-employer internships with accredited coursework, use existing

college infrastructure for scale, and channel stable public funding streams. CTPs produce a broader, more durable impact for every dollar invested.

SROI As A Impact Measurement Tool

1. Definition

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an evaluation framework for quantifying the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of a program by translating them into monetary terms (Nicholls et al., 2012). It extends the concept of traditional return on investment to include social value that is not captured in financial statements, allowing organizations to calculate how much social impact (in dollar terms) is generated for each dollar invested. The result is typically expressed as a ratio. For example, an SROI of 3:1 indicates that every $1 invested yields about $3 in social value. This approach helps capture the full range of benefits a program provides, from tangible economic gains to intangible improvements in quality of life.

2. Principles

SROI analysis is guided by eight core principles (Nicholls et al., 2012):

- Involve stakeholders
- Understand what changes
- Value the things that matter
- Only include what is material
- Do not over-claim
- Be transparent
- Verify the result
- Be responsive

3. Steps

Conducting an SROI evaluation involves a standardized process with six key steps (Nicholls et al., 2012):

- Establish scope and identify stakeholders.
- Map outcomes.
- Evidence outcomes and assign values.
- Establish impact.
- Calculate the SROI.

- Report, use, and embed.

4. Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

SROI captures a broad spectrum of value that traditional evaluations might overlook. By assigning financial values to outcomes like improved well-being or social inclusion, it provides a more complete picture of a program's impact (North Lanarkshire Council, 2013). The SROI process is also highly participatory, engaging stakeholders such as program participants, families, community members, and partner organizations in the evaluation. This inclusion helps ensure that the outcomes being measured are relevant and credible, as those who experience the change help define and validate it (Banke-Thomas et al., 2015). Additionally, SROI produces a clear metric (a dollar-valued return) that can be easily communicated to decision-makers and funders, helping them compare the social impact of different initiatives and make informed investment decisions (Forti & Calhoun, 2017).

Limitations

Implementing SROI can be resource-intensive. It requires extensive data collection and rigorous analysis to establish credible counterfactuals (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of the program) and to isolate the program's contribution to observed outcomes. Many social outcomes are difficult to quantify in monetary terms, so the use of financial proxies can involve subjective judgments. The resulting SROI ratio, while useful for summarizing impact, simplifies complex social changes into a single number. If the underlying assumptions (for example, the estimated deadweight or attribution) are not well-founded and transparent, the results can be misinterpreted or overstated. In practice, organizations must be careful to accompany the SROI ratio with context and explanation to avoid overstating their impact and to make clear what the number does and does not include.

5. Technical Requirements

Conducting a robust SROI evaluation requires several key components and resources:

(1) Clear objectives and scope. A well-defined focus for what will be measured, including specific outcomes of interest and the population served. Typically, this involves developing a detailed Theory of Change that maps how program activities are expected to lead to those outcomes (Siegal, 2022). This provides a conceptual foundation for the analysis.

(2) Robust outcome data and counterfactuals. Reliable data must be gathered on the outcomes achieved by the program, as well as data for a baseline or comparison group to determine what would have happened without the intervention. Techniques for estimating deadweight and attribution are needed to isolate the program's true impact (Nicholls et al., 2012). In other words, strong monitoring and evaluation data systems are necessary to feed the SROI model.

(3) Monetary/financial proxies for outcomes. The analysis requires identifying appropriate financial proxies to value outcomes that do not have a direct market price. This often involves research or consulting stakeholders to estimate the economic value of intangible benefits. For example, an improvement in health might be valued by the avoided medical costs or increased productivity associated with that outcome (North Lanarkshire Council, 2013). Choosing credible proxies is critical for the integrity of the SROI.

(4) **Stakeholder engagement.** Involving stakeholders throughout the SROI process is important for both data collection and validation of results. Participants, their families, program staff, and even external partners can provide insights into which outcomes are most significant and can help assign realistic values to those outcomes. Engaging stakeholders also builds buy-in and ensures the analysis reflects multiple perspectives (Banke-Thomas et al., 2015). This participatory approach aligns with the SROI principle of involving stakeholders.

(5) Analytical rigor and verification. Skilled analysts and appropriate tools are needed to perform the calculations and conduct sensitivity analyses on key assumptions. Every assumption (such as the percentage of outcomes attributable to the program) should be documented clearly to maintain transparency. It is also recommended to have the SROI analysis independently reviewed or audited to verify the results (Nicholls et al., 2012). Such verification increases the credibility of the findings and confidence among funders and other stakeholders that the SROI is accurate.

5. Relevance to CTP Evaluation

(1) **For CTP program stakeholders.** SROI offers a structured way to evaluate and communicate the impact of Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs on youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). By using a Theory of Change approach, SROI maps how program interventions lead to meaningful outcomes like competitive employment, greater independence, and improved social participation for graduates (Siegal, 2022). Crucially, SROI allows these often non-financial outcomes to be quantified in dollar terms, providing a

comprehensive view of the program's value that goes beyond traditional metrics (North Lanarkshire Council, 2013). The participatory nature of the SROI process means that students, families, educators, and employers are involved in defining what success looks like and in measuring the outcomes. This helps ensure that the evaluation reflects the real needs and priorities of the people the program serves, lending greater legitimacy and accuracy to the findings (Banke-Thomas et al., 2015).

(2) **For funders and impact investors.** SROI provides a clear, standardized metric to gauge the social returns on investments in CTP programs. This helps donors and grant-makers compare the impact of CTP initiatives with other funding opportunities and prioritize those programs that deliver the greatest benefit for their investment (Forti & Calhoun, 2017). By translating complex outcome data into accessible financial metrics, SROI makes it easier for funders to understand and communicate the value created by their contributions. Moreover, SROI highlights long-term, systemic changes that CTP programs can produce, such as reduced reliance on public assistance, improved quality of life for participants, and greater community inclusion. These broader outcomes are exactly the kinds of transformative impacts that mission-driven funders are looking to achieve with their support (Nicholls et al., 2012). In essence, SROI speaks the language of both social impact and financial accountability, which is highly appealing to those managing philanthropic capital.

(3) **Bridging CTP and impact philanthropy.** Overall, SROI serves as a bridge between CTP programs and impact-focused philanthropy by providing a transparent, evidence-based method to assess and articulate social value. It links the objectives of CTP practitioners (empowering individuals with IDD to achieve independence, employment, and social inclusion) with the expectations of funders (obtaining measurable and lasting social returns on their investments). By quantifying both financial and non-financial outcomes and emphasizing stakeholder collaboration, the SROI approach creates a common language of impact for program evaluators and funders alike. This alignment helps ensure that investments in CTP programs are directed toward strategies that maximize positive outcomes for individuals, families, and communities, thereby supporting sustainable, long-term social change.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to evaluate the social impact of Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). SROI is an internationally recognized framework that measures social outcomes in monetary terms and compares them to investment costs, yielding a ratio of social value per dollar invested. We followed standard guidelines set by Social Value International, emphasizing stakeholder involvement and transparency in assumptions. Our evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative methods: stakeholders first identified key outcomes, then financial and outcome data were collected to quantify these results.

Research Steps

- September 2024 -February 2025: A literature review and initial expert interviews established our Theory of Change (ToC) and logic model, detailing activities, inputs, outputs, and outcomes.
- March -April 2025: Second-round expert interviews and an anonymous survey identified key variables, indicators, and preliminary data needed for the SROI calculation.
- April 2025: Additional data collection through web scraping.
- April 2025: Final SROI calculation and triangulation using literature reviews and database queries.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in three stages:

First Stage

We developed an initial Theory of Change and logic model through a literature review, validated by semi-structured expert interviews. We obtained contact information from Think College Search, sending two rounds of invitations to approximately 185 program directors or coordinators. Ultimately, 13 in-depth interviews were completed. Respondents were mainly program leaders holding advanced degrees in education or public administration. Interviews lasted 30-45 minutes via video call, recorded and transcribed for analysis. Questions covered perceived benefits, unquantifiable outcomes, implementation challenges, and survey clarifications.

Second Stage

We conducted a national structured survey, reaching out three times to the same 185 managers. The online questionnaire collected quantitative data including program features, annual budgets, staffing, enrollment size, provided services, and student outcomes. It also gathered data on unpaid resources (volunteer hours, transportation support) and graduate follow-ups. We received complete responses from 30 projects (16% response rate). These diverse responses formed the main quantitative dataset for our SROI calculation.

Third Stage

Web scraping collected publicly available characteristics of all 185 national CTP projects not accepting high school students. Data was self-reported through the Think College platform, providing high-quality validation and supplementation of the survey data. Additionally, we reviewed secondary sources for benchmarks and to fill information gaps, including IDD-focused literature, project evaluations, and public data from sources like the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Sample and Sampling Strategy

Our sample included CTP projects and their stakeholders, intending broad inclusivity. Our initial survey invited all known CTP projects (185 total), effectively a purposeful census sampling approach. Although responses (30 projects) were not random, they represented a broad spectrum geographically, institutionally, and in terms of scale. For qualitative interviews, we used purposive sampling, selecting projects demonstrating strong employment outcomes or notable volunteer engagement. Despite potential selection bias toward projects willing to share detailed data, the diversity of our sample supports exploratory SROI analysis.

Inputs and Outcomes Variables

Inputs (Investments)

We applied a True Cost Accounting (TCA) strategy to comprehensively capture project costs, including direct expenditures, indirect administrative costs, volunteer labor, and facility usage.

- **Direct Project Expenditures.** Collected from survey respondents, including personnel salaries, benefits, and direct support expenses.
- **Indirect Costs.** Estimated as 15% of direct costs to cover administrative and facility support.
- **Volunteer Labor.** Valued using Independent Sector's 2025 estimate ($34.79/hour). Volunteer hours provided weekly were annualized to reflect total support.

- **Facilities and Housing.** Classroom and office space were estimated at an additional 15% of direct costs. Non-residential projects were assigned an annual proxy cost of $10,181 per student for housing.

Outcomes

Outcomes reflected meaningful changes experienced by participants and stakeholders, quantified with credible indicators:

- **Improved Employment Rates.** Increased employment opportunities for CTP graduates compared to peers not attending CTP programs. Valued annually per participant at approximately $9,781.
- **Increased Tax Contributions.** Estimated annual additional tax revenue of $350 per employed graduate.
- **Reduced Public Assistance Costs.** Savings calculated at approximately $7,402 annually per employed participant due to reduced public benefit dependence.
- **Enhanced Independent Living.** Reduced caregiving burden on families, quantified at $19,046 annually per participant.

Social and Community Engagement: Documented qualitatively, given difficulties in precise monetary valuation.

SROI Estimation Process

We applied a multi-site, non-experimental case-study approach, calculating individual project SROI ratios then aggregating overall results. The calculation involved:

- **Benefit and Cost Aggregation.** Adjusted annually per participant to derive total social value.
- **Impact Adjustments.** Factored specific deadweight, attribution, and negligible displacement effects. For example, there is a 17% deadweight, 60% attribution and no displacement for employment outcomes.
- **Timeframe and Discounting.** Used a five-year outcome timeframe with an annual 15% decay rate and a 3% discount rate for future values.

Limitations

Several limitations must be considered:

- **Response and Selection Bias.** Only 30 of 185 invited projects responded to the survey, creating potential bias towards programs that were more successful, better organized, or more inclined to share data. This limits generalizability.
- **Data Quality and Accuracy.** Reliance on self-reported survey and interview data introduces potential inaccuracies due to recall bias or incomplete records.

Variations in data collection quality across programs also pose risks to consistency.

- **Attribution Uncertainty.** Determining the exact proportion of outcomes directly attributable to CTP programs rather than external factors remains challenging and is based largely on subjective estimates.
- **Exclusion of Non-Monetizable Outcomes.** Valuable outcomes such as improved self-esteem, social integration, and overall quality of life improvements were difficult to quantify monetarily and thus are not captured fully by this analysis.
- **Limited Long-Term Data.** The study's five-year evaluation period might not fully reflect long-term impacts, potentially underestimating ongoing benefits or overestimating sustained employment and independence.
- **Small Qualitative Sample Size.** The limited number of qualitative interviews (13) may have omitted important perspectives, such as employer views or broader community insights, affecting the comprehensiveness of the impact assessment.

Given these limitations, findings should be interpreted with caution regarding broader applicability, though the insights gained still provide valuable guidance on the potential impact of CTP programs.

Results

Interview Insights

SROI Principle #1 Involve Stakeholders

After drafting a literature-based Theory of Change, we conducted thirteen semi-structured video interviews with CTP program directors and senior staff drawn from nationwide. A general overview is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3.


Overview of 13 Comprehensive Transition Programs
Core Outcomes
13 out of 13 programs emphasized employment outcomes as a primary goal
8 out of 13 programs allowed students to take college classes with traditional students
9 out of 13 programs incorporated a peer mentorship
6 out of 13 programs identified transportation as a barrier area needing support
9 out of 13 programs focused independent living skills development as part of their curriculum
7 out of 13 programs offered residential options
10 out of 13 programs concentrated on social skills development in addition to employment
8 out of 13 programs track employment outcomes after program completion
Common Features
• Career readiness and employment are core outcomes in all Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs.
• Peer mentorship is a critical success factor.
• CTP programs are under constant financial pressure, regardless of academic setting.
• Independent living, social integration, and academic success are valued as much as employment.
• There is no uniform model for CTP programs — flexibility and campus integration greatly vary.

The summaries below represent each interviewee's lens on transformation, key resources, signature activities, and distinctive strengths or challenges within their program. For more detailed insights from these interviews, please see Appendix A, and for biographies of the interviewees, please see Appendix B. The question template for the interviews conducted can be found in Appendix C.

Interviewee 01. Christina Ruffatti (Executive Director of UNC GOAL, Colorado)

Christina Ruffatti believes her comprehensive transition program has delivered meaningful change by fostering self-determination and independent living skills in students. She emphasizes inputs like a structured residential learning community and peer mentors who provide daily life-skills programming (e.g., meal planning, cooking, laundry), which build "soft" skills that ultimately lead toward employment. The program's activities center on full campus inclusion (students are regular UNC students first) supplemented by individualized supports focused on autonomy and skill growth. As a result, outcomes such as greater independent living capability and work readiness are evident, though Ruffatti notes a persistent challenge in managing external expectations. Families often fixate on the lack of a traditional degree, undervaluing the non-degree transformations their students achieve.

Interviewee 02. Dr. Kristin Johnson (Executive Director of ASU HOWL, Arkansas)

Dr. Kristin Johnson is cautiously optimistic about her program's transformative impact. She acknowledged successes like graduates gaining employment or pursuing further degrees, yet pointed out that "we're not quite there yet" in achieving all ideal outcomes. She highlighted inputs related to program accessibility and funding: for example, her team is partnering with minority-serving institutions (HBCUs) to broaden student diversity and is working to make the program Medicaid-billable to ease the financial burden. The program itself provides inclusive academic and vocational experiences aimed at true outcomes of independence and equity in opportunity. Dr. Johnson champions strengths like high expectations and continuous improvement in inclusion while recognizing challenges such as the high cost ("a boatload of money") and the need for greater institutional support and standardized definitions of success across campuses.

Interviewee 03. Amanda Tapp (Program Director of Life Prep GOAL, Texas)

Amanda Tapp asserts that her program largely achieves the outcomes laid out in the logic model: students improve in independent living and often secure jobs. However, she notes that long-term employment retention remains a struggle beyond the program's control. She stresses inputs like on-campus life-skills training and community internships that her team provides to prepare students, as well as collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission to connect

graduates with job placements. The program's activities blend employment preparation (resume building, interview practice, work internships) with robust independent living education (teaching students how to live on their own and navigate daily tasks). Tapp identifies post-program support as a challenge area: many graduates need ongoing help with transportation and family buy-in to maintain employment, and the program is working to secure better community and employer engagement to sustain the meaningful transformations begun on campus.

Interviewee 04. Kaelin Rubenzer (Executive Director of UT Austin LLwF, Texas)

Kaelin Rubenzer describes their inclusive post-secondary program as a nimble, innovative model that achieves meaningful personal growth for students in ways traditional programs might not. A key input they leverage is flexible funding and design. The program isn't strictly bound by state-defined vocational metrics, allowing her to incorporate professor-led custom courses and enrichment activities (supported by grant writing and adapting to funding language as needed). Core services include specialized classes created by university faculty (rather than only auditing existing courses), intensive volunteer support from University of Texas students, and a curriculum emphasizing social inclusion and intellectual stimulation in addition to job skills. She values outcomes like increased confidence, higher education aspirations, and genuine community inclusion for her students, and she backs this with over a decade of survey data from families and participants showing positive changes. A notable strength of her approach is its family-informed perspective and adaptability. The corresponding challenge is operating "ahead of our time": navigating funding expectations that favor narrow employment stats while proving the broader transformative impact on quality of life.

Interviewee 05. Anita Lang (Program Director of TAMU Aggie ACHIEVE, Texas)

Anita Lang reports that Aggie ACHIEVE, the comprehensive transition program at Texas A&M, creates meaningful transformation by giving students a real college experience and equipping them for meaningful employment. She underscores the importance of inputs like sustainable funding and industry-aligned curriculum: the program's high cost (most students "private pay") has been a barrier, so Lang's team is working closely with the Texas Workforce Commission and other partners to secure financial support and incorporate recognized credentials into the program. ACHIEVE's activities mirror those of traditional college students: participants take classes toward a certificate in interdisciplinary studies, engage in campus life, and now complete additional internships and job training modules after a recent program redesign. The outcomes students achieve include greater independence, genuine academic achievement, and improved job prospects. "The fruits of that labor is a good job," Lang describes. A notable challenge has been aligning with external expectations (for instance, adding certifications so that state agencies will fund students), but a key strength of the program remains

its commitment to treating students as capable young adults and not prolonging a high-school-style environment.

Interviewee 06. Susan Barbisan (Former Transition Teacher (retired) of USU Aggie Elevated, Utah)

Susan Barbisan offers a broader, critical perspective on whether CTPs deliver meaningful change, cautioning that current programs may fall short for some students. Drawing on her experience in a high-achieving school district, she notes many parents value the college experience for their adult children with disabilities, but she questions the end results: What happens after the "college" experience, and are students truly better off in the long run? She emphasizes the need for inputs that expand access and equity: she observes that many programs are expensive and inaccessible to those from less affluent families or to students with behavioral challenges, potentially leaving these groups behind. While acknowledging that inclusive college programs can be "fabulous" for those who attend, she urges a stronger focus on concrete outcomes such as sustained employment and independent adult life, rather than just a temporary inclusive experience. She highlights a challenge for the field: ensuring that comprehensive transition programs are adequately funded, inclusive of diverse learners, and truly oriented toward long-term transformation, not just a feel-good opportunity for a select few.

Interviewee 07. Dr. Stephanie MacFarland (Director of UA Project FOCUS, Arizona)

Dr. Stephanie MacFarland believes her program, Project FOCUS, demonstrates meaningful transformation by fully including young adults with intellectual disabilities in the college environment during their final years of secondary education. She points to outcomes such as students developing self-advocacy and life skills on par with their typically-developing peers. For example, Project FOCUS participants learn to independently schedule social and extracurricular activities and form genuine friendships on campus. Key inputs enabling this success is a philosophy of total inclusion (no separate classes, participants attend regular university courses with support). The program's activities center on person-centered planning, academic inclusion, and natural campus experiences (club involvement, peer mentoring, etc.), which collectively build readiness for adult life. Dr. MacFarland acknowledges that funding is an ongoing challenge in sustaining such a fully inclusive model, but she cites the program's strengths in social outcomes and skill gains as evidence that it is well worth the investment: students leave with stronger independence, a robust social network, and a clear path into adult services or further education.

Interviewee 08. Dr. Carrie Shockley (Director of CUNY Unlimited, New York)

Dr. Carrie Shockley highlights that the CUNY inclusive higher education initiative is producing meaningful change at a systemic level, primarily by leveraging partnerships and scale to serve students across New York City. She emphasizes inputs such as collaborative funding arrangements. For example, CUNY's program works with a nonprofit partner (AHRC NYC) and taps state agencies like the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities to fund support services, and is actively pursuing vocational rehabilitation dollars to enhance its sustainability. The program's services span 26 CUNY campuses, integrating young adults with intellectual disabilities into college courses and campus life, and providing additional support (through specialized staff and peer mentors) rather than creating separate tracks. Dr. Shockley notes that most students come directly from the NYC public school system's 18 -21 transition programs, and CUNY aims to carry them forward into college experiences that lead to greater independence and employability. Key outcomes include graduates obtaining competitive employment and a reduced reliance on public assistance. These goals align with the program's mission of empowerment and inclusion. A strength of the CUNY approach is its breadth and inclusion within a major urban university system, though Dr. Shockley also identifies challenges in aligning disparate funding sources and policies (given that outcomes and supports can vary widely by state and agency). Overall, she advocates that demonstrating strong employment and social outcomes will be crucial for maintaining the broad base of support needed for a program of this scope.

Interviewee 09. Ryan Morrison (Program Coordinator of Winthrop LIFE, South Carolina)

Ryan Morrison is confident that Winthrop University's LIFE program is effecting significant positive change, as seen by a steady stream of graduates entering the workforce and gaining life skills. He underscores a game-changing input in South Carolina: a new state-funded scholarship of $10,000 per year (with additional need-based grants) for in-state students with intellectual disabilities, which has "gone gangbusters" in boosting enrollment and access to his program. Within the program, key activities include inclusive academic participation (students audit courses and even partner with a local technical college to earn certifications), on-campus residential living with support (students live in suites alongside paid peer mentors who assist with daily routines), and structured employment preparation (volunteering, internships, and career coaching are mandatory elements). These inputs and activities drive outcomes like improved independent living capabilities and meaningful employment. Morrison especially stresses the importance of job retention, not just placement, noting that many alumni attain jobs but may need continued support to keep them. A notable strength of the Winthrop program is this comprehensive support infrastructure (academic, residential, and vocational) combined with strong public financial backing, which together make transformation attainable for students who might otherwise lack such opportunities. In terms of challenges, Morrison is candid about

operational tweaks (for instance, he plans to change how mentors are compensated to improve accountability, after finding that upfront housing stipends led some to disengage over time) and the need to ensure the program prioritizes those who truly cannot succeed in college without these supports. Even so, he sees the social return clearly: students leaving with jobs, greater self-reliance, and reduced long-term dependency, validating the program's model.

Interviewee 10. Michelle Mitchell (Associate Professor & Program Director of Lehigh Carbon Community College SEED, Pennsylvania)

Michelle Mitchell reports that SEED has been highly successful in delivering intended outcomes, with about 96% of recent graduates either securing competitive employment or continuing their education soon after completion. She attributes this meaningful impact to inputs like an embedded support model and flexible "tracks" that meet students at their level of need: SEED is structured so that some students enroll in a designated CTP career track with intensive coaching, while others who become more independent transition into regular for-credit certificate or degree pathways at the college. All students can receive person-centered support as needed. The program's activities include a summer bridge orientation, individualized goal planning, ongoing academic tutoring and life-skills instruction (often delivered by faculty from the college's counseling and education departments), and facilitated campus involvement, ensuring participants are fully integrated into classes and student life rather than isolated. Mitchell highlights outcomes such as increased self-confidence, job skills, and nearly universal placement into either jobs or further college coursework; she also notes that these young adults are leaving with the same college experiences and social networks as their peers, which is an important aspect of their transformation. One challenge she acknowledges is tracking longer-term impacts (beyond that immediate 96% placement statistic), as gathering alumni data over years can be difficult, but in the short term the program's strengths, deep integration into the college community and a scaffolded support approach, clearly translate into meaningful transformations in students' employment prospects and independence.

Interviewee 11. Dr. Orley Templeton (Manager of Misericordia University Integrated Studies Program, Pennsylvania)

Dr. Orley Templeton attests that the Integrated Studies Program at Misericordia University is yielding significant positive change for its students through a blend of targeted support and inclusion. An important input is the program's specialized curriculum, informed by Templeton's background in occupational therapy: every semester, students in this two-year certificate take two exclusive courses (on topics like career exploration, college learning strategies, and personal finance) designed to build the foundational skills needed for employment and adult life, with extra time and repetition as necessary. At the same time, participants audit

two mainstream university courses per semester, fully joining their non-disabled peers in classes to practice autonomy and social integration in a real college setting. This combination of activities (tailored skill-building classes plus inclusive academics) prepares students for outcomes such as gainful employment, greater self-sufficiency in daily living, and improved social and communication skills. Templeton even notes that some of the practical life-skills content her team teaches would benefit the general student population - underscoring the inclusive ethos that students with disabilities are not the only ones learning, but can also contribute to wider campus understanding. The strengths of the Integrated Studies approach lie in its balanced design: students receive plenty of support (e.g., dedicated instructors and peer mentors) without being segregated, increasing their confidence and competence in typical environments. While resource coordination and ensuring broad campus buy-in can be challenging, Templeton sees her program as "spot on" in aligning with best-practice logic models and equipping students to transition into the workforce or further education with tangible skills and experiences.

Interviewee 12. Daniel Cain (Director of GSU EAGLE Academy, Georgia)

Daniel Cain strongly believes in the meaningful transformation his program is creating, particularly by filling a critical gap for students in Georgia who age out of K -12 services with limited options. He stresses inputs that make the program accessible and future-oriented, notably a mix of funding streams (students in his program can utilize federal Pell Grants, the state's HOPE grant, and Georgia vocational rehabilitation funds, alongside a major grant that supports program operations) which ensures the opportunity isn't limited to those with financial means. Cain's program emphasizes a two-year progression of activities: in the first year, students integrate into Georgia Southern coursework (earning actual college credits that could count toward an associate's degree) to build academic and social skills, and in the second year the focus shifts to career development, with each student aiming to secure a paid, community-based or on-campus job before graduation. He illustrates the program's outcomes through success stories. For example, students not only find employment but also grow in self-advocacy, with some even joining him in state-level advocacy efforts (he took students to the Georgia Capitol to help lobby for ending sub-minimum wage for workers with disabilities, reflecting how empowered they've become). A clear strength of Cain's approach is this comprehensive view of inclusion: it's not just about getting a job, but also about civic engagement, personal growth, and using college as a springboard to an adult life of purpose. In terms of challenges, he notes that the program's reliance on grants means continually demonstrating its value to maintain funding, and that the evolving landscape of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives can influence support. Nevertheless, he remains focused on ensuring each student leaves meeting "societal and

community needs" as well as their own, evidence that the program is achieving a real social return on investment.

Interviewee 13. Kyle Closen (Director of BGSU Clark Inclusive Scholars Program, Ohio)

Kyle Closen shows his program producing measurable transformation, with roughly 80% of its alumni currently in the workforce. This is a success rate he finds very encouraging. He credits a unique input for this achievement: a private family foundation that funds the program, allowing students to pay only a token tuition (about $1,000/year) and giving the program latitude to focus on quality services rather than survival. With this support, Closen's team (a full-time director and career coordinator, plus several part-time peer mentors) provides intensive activities geared toward employment outcomes, including a first-year curriculum of career exploration (exposing students to a range of jobs and industries they might not have considered) and a second-year emphasis on internships and direct job placement in the local community. Since BGSU Firelands is a commuter campus with no dorms, the program focuses on daily independent living skills in context. Students practice navigating campus, managing their schedules, and engaging with peers all day, which builds some independence even without a residential component. The key outcomes for graduates are entry-level jobs and active community participation. Closen notes that while not all are in full-time roles (due to personal capacity or family preferences), the paramount goal is that they are "out in the community, working," which most achieve. A strength of this model is its affordability and individualized approach (small cohorts of 10 students get substantial guidance in finding a career path that fits them), underwritten by a flexible private funding source. Closen admits it can be difficult to follow graduates' wage growth or long-term job stability with limited staff, but the immediate post-program impact is clear. Overall, the program's privately funded, career-centric approach has proven effective in moving students from high school to employment and semi-independent adulthood, validating its theory of change.

An Ideal Model of CTPs

SROI Principle #3 Value the things that matter

Drawing on insights from our 13 in-depth interviews, we distilled the four recurring elements that practitioners themselves identified as indispensable: career coaching and professional development, credential or certification pathways, life-skills training with peer mentorship, and residential immersion on or near campus.

We codified these into an Ideal CTP Model for two reasons. First, the elements now anchor our evolving theory of change and logic model: by specifying the inputs and activities most likely to trigger the desired independence, employment, and social-inclusion outcomes, the

model provides a common causal spine that underlies otherwise disparate programs. Second, because our forthcoming Social Return on Investment analysis must cover dozens of diverse CTPs nationwide rather than a single site. An idealized, evidence-grounded template lets us standardize cost and benefit assumptions, compare programs on the same yardstick, and highlight transferable practices each campus can emulate. In short, the Ideal Model transforms rich but varied qualitative testimony into a coherent framework that both guides cross-program learning and enables rigorous, scalable SROI estimation.

Ideal Elements of CTP Programs

- Students receive career coaching and access to professional development
- Students receive a credential or certification
- Students receive life skills support and peer mentorship
- Students live in residence on or near campus

Career Coaching and Professional Development

Work experience and career development are integral components of CTP programs. Examples include structured internships, on-campus jobs, career coaching, and career workshops. Career preparation activities help students develop essential skills leading to higher employment rates. One interviewee shared a success story. “I think one example was recently they had to attend a sales career fair, and so we just received an email today from Reynolds and Rentals saying that our students did such a great jon that they want to partner with us and see how they could offer potential internships or jobs to our students” (EE05). This highlights the value of real world exposure to students in CTP programs and employer engagement.

Sub-elements:

- Networking, online networking training, such as Instagram and LinkedIn
- Access to the career centers, resume building, and interview training
- Attending industry conferences

Typical quote from interviews:

“I think one example was recently they had to attend a sales career fair, and so we just received an email today from Reynolds and Rentals saying that our students did such a great job that they want to partner with us and see how they could offer potential internships or jobs to our students.” (Interviewee 05)

Inclusive Academic and Credential Pathway

Obtaining a certification offers several key benefits for students, particularly those in comprehensive transition programs. Certifications enhance employment opportunities by making students more competitive in the job market and demonstrating their skills to potential employers. They often lead to increased earning potential, as certified individuals can access higher-paying jobs. Additionally, certifications provide formal validation of a student's abilities, boosting their confidence and credibility. This recognition can open doors to career advancement and growth opportunities. Beyond professional benefits, earning a certification is a significant personal achievement, fostering a sense of accomplishment and motivation.

Sub-elements:

- Inclusive courses
- Credentials

Typical quote from interviews:

"We've got a program here that's achieve, where they earn a certificate program. It's a certificate program, and get on the job training, and they get support with like social skills." (Interviewee 06)

Residence On or Near Campus

Students who live on campus during their CTP program have increased independence and autonomy when graduating. CTP programs empower students with IDD to become visible members of college campuses and local communities. Social integration through friendships, club participation, and campus events breaks down long standing barriers and stereotypes. Reciprocal learning models educate both students with disabilities and their neurotypical peers, fostering empathy and broadening social networks.

Sub-elements:

- Peer mentor groups
- Access to all student facilities such as the REC and dining halls.
- Attending student activities

Typical quote from interviews:

"Yes, they do. They have access to all the amenities, and that's something else that we encourage them to participate in. And so when they do that again, that confidence level increases. It also helps the Texas A and M community, because they get to see the students all

over campus doing everything that everyone else does, receiving those same benefits and services.." (Interviewee 05)

Life Skills Development, Coaching, and Peer Mentorship

Improved life skills among IDD students lead to more balanced home environments and empower parents and caretakers to lead more balanced personal lives. Quantitative metrics, such as "caregiver hours saved" and reductions in stress levels, help capture both immediate relief and long-term benefits.

While complete financial independence is rare, incremental gains in employment and earnings can help decrease the need for both public support and support needed from caretakers. Furthermore, family outcomes highlight the mixed emotions families experience as their young adults enter higher education. This highlights the significant social value these students bring to their communities.

Sub-elements:

- Family support programs
- Navigating guardianship
- Social development support
- Sexual education

Typical quote from interviews:

"A parent highlighted that I can not take my kids everywhere - they are 18 -22, how will they get places? So learning the bus system or using our paratransit systems here in Tucson… we teach those skills." (Interviewee 07)

"The other thing that is incredibly successful [with] our students is that they volunteer more than the average college person, and then when they're finished, they continue volunteering more than the average adult, and so they are completely immersed within their community." (Interviewee 02)

Theory of Change and Logic Model

Our logic model went through a four-generation iterative development process. First, an initial model was drafted based on insights from the literature review, outlining presumed resources, program components, and outcomes. Second, feedback from 6 Stage-1 stakeholder interviews was incorporated. This led to adjustments in the model's content (such as clarifying activities and adding family-related outcomes) and structure. Third, a revised model was then presented in 7 Stage-2 interviews, whose input further refined the activities and outcomes, aligning the model more closely with on-the-ground experiences. Fourth, an additional literature

review focused on causal evidence (including RCTs and longitudinal studies) was conducted to validate each activity's link to outcomes. This evidence-based review confirmed which program activities should remain/remove/revise. Through these four stages, the logic model evolved from a theory-driven first generation to a stakeholder-validated second and third generation, and finally to a fourth-generation model grounded in causal evidence. This iterative process ensured the final logic model is both empirically sound and informed by practitioner and expert experience.

Logic Model

About

A comprehensive transition & postsecondary program empowers young adults (ages 18 - 25) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to achieve independence and employment, creating lasting social value by fostering inclusion, reducing reliance on public support and contributing to a diverse workforce through education, training and skill development.

Need

Young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often lack opportunities for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living after high school. This disparity can result in social isolation, unemployment, and underemployment, highlighting the critical need for programs that facilitate their transition into adulthood and foster inclusion.

Target Beneficiary

Young adults (ages 18 -25) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who have completed high school and aim to enhance their skills for independent living and employment.

Activities

- Life skills support and peer mentoring
- Inclusive academic and credential pathway
- Career coaching and professional development
- Live in residence or near campus

Core Inputs

- Financial - tuition, fees, grants, scholarships, governmental support, and other monetary support
- Human Resources - paid staff and volunteer hours

Core Outputs

Total number of students completing a comprehensive transition & postsecondary program.

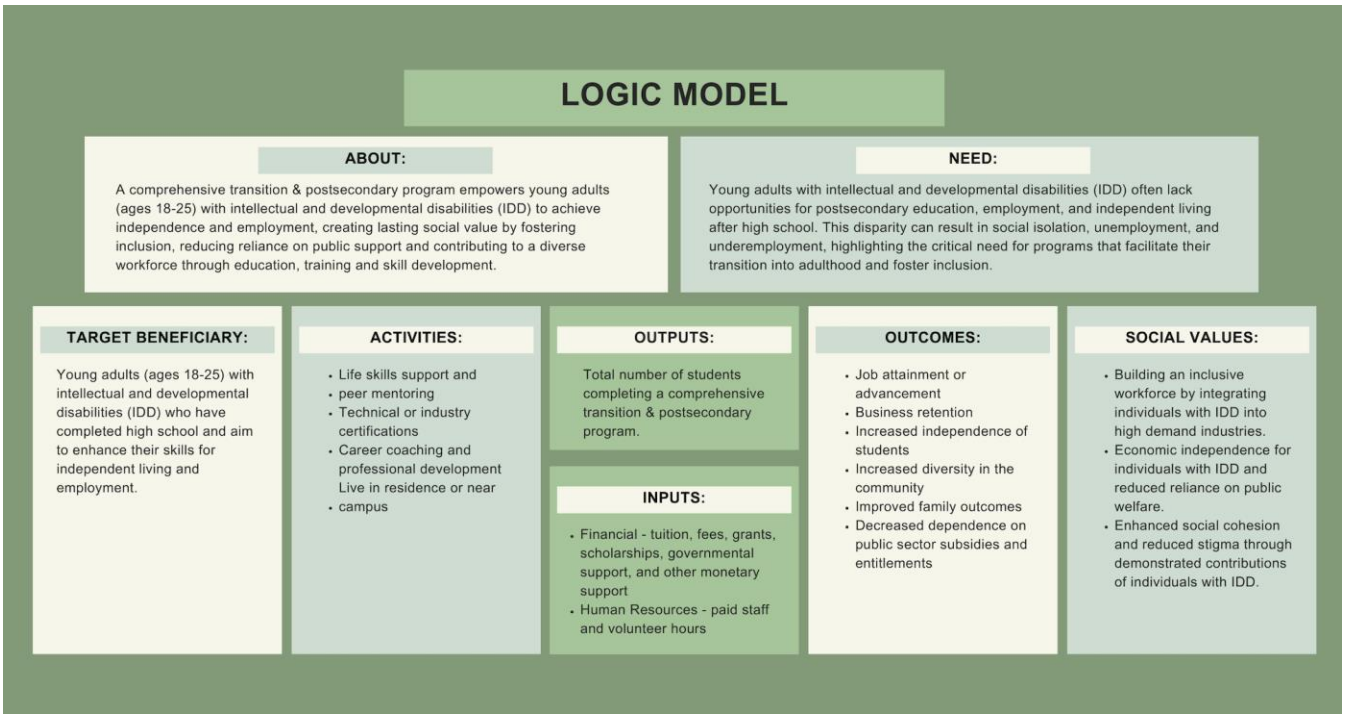
Core Outcomes

- Job attainment or advancement
- Business retention
- Increased independence of students
- Increased diversity in the community
- Improved family outcomes
- Decreased dependence on public sector subsidies and entitlements

Social Impacts

- Building an inclusive workforce by integrating individuals with IDD into high demand industries.
- Economic independence for individuals with IDD and reduced reliance on public welfare.
- Enhanced social cohesion and reduced stigma through demonstrated contributions of individuals with IDD.

Figure 4.



Literature Evidences

SROI Principle #2 Understand what changes

Beyond validating the ideal CTP model through our interviews, we also carried out a second round of literature review aimed at locating evidence from rigorous causal studies, such as randomized controlled trials and longitudinal research, to show that each key element of the ideal model truly drives outcomes. This evidence likewise serves as an attribution reference for our SROI analysis.

For life skills support and peer mentoring

Table 1. Evidence on Life Skills Training and Peer Mentorship

Study	Intervention	Outcomes	Key Findings
Carter et al. (2016, 2017) - High school students with severe disabilities Randomized or controlled trials (multi-school)	Peer support arrangements in inclusive classes (peers trained to assist socially/academically)	Social interaction frequency; friendships; academic engagement	Peer-mediated support led to large increases in peer interactions and friendships for students with IDD. Peers helped include students in conversations/activities, resulting in new reciprocal friendships and improved social competence.
Sandjojo et al. (2019) - 17 adults with moderate ID One-group longitudinal (12-month)	Self-management life skills training (individual goals in daily living skills)	Goal attainment; Independence level; Support needs	Significant attainment of personal independence goals and reduced support needs after training ($p<0.01$). Participants needed less caregiver/staff assistance in daily tasks post-intervention.
Wehmeyer & Palmer (2003) - Students with cognitive disabilities Quasi-experimental (2-year post-high school follow-up)	Self-determination training in high school (e.g. "Whose Future Is It?" curriculum)	Adult outcomes after school (employment, living status)	Students who received self-determination training had better post-school outcomes, including higher rates of employment and independent living, compared to those who did not. (as inferred from broader self-determination research).
UNCG ICS Program (2011 -2014 grads) - 13 graduates of 4-year inclusive program Post-program survey (compared to national data)	Life skills & independence curriculum + peer mentors for support (residential program)	Independent living status; financial skills; community participation	At follow-up, 53.8% of graduates were living independently or with roommates (not with family), and over 75% handled personal finances (own checking accounts, etc.). Additionally, >92% participated in community activities and volunteer work. These rates exceed those of same-age adults with IDD in national samples, indicating greater independent functioning and inclusion.

Note: The UNCG Integrative Community Studies (ICS) program data is compared to NLTS2 national statistics for context.

For inclusive academic and credential pathway

Table 2. Evidence on Credentials/Certifications and Post-Program Outcomes

Study	Intervention	Outcomes	Key Findings
Zafft et al. (2004) - 40 young adults (college program vs none) Quasi-experimental (matched groups)	"College Career Connection" certificate program (2 years) vs no college	Job type, hours, wages, support needs	College certificate grads: 100% in integrated employment vs 43% of non-college group. Higher wages (above minimum) and fewer support services needed for college group. Non-college group had more in sheltered workshops.
Sheppard-Jones et al. (2018) - 19 alumni vs matched NCI group Quasi-experimental (matched on demographics)	Participation in inclusive higher ed program (with certificate upon completion)	Community employment rate (post-college)	37% of inclusive program alumni in competitive employment vs 13% of matched peers who did not attend. Although modest in absolute terms, alumni were nearly three times as likely to have jobs as similar individuals without PSE.
Moore & Schelling (2014) - subset comparing program types Quasi-experimental (matched)	Inclusive program (offers inclusive coursework for credit) vs specialized program (certificate of completion)	Employment rate; earnings at exit	Both program types conferred an advantage over no program, but differences emerged: Inclusive-program grads had the highest earnings and more non-traditional jobs (in diverse industries), while specialized program grads had a slightly higher raw employment rate but in more sheltered roles.

Note: NCI: National Core Indicators (Adult Consumer Survey data used for comparison group).

For career coaching and professional development

Table 3. Evidence for Career Development Supports Improving Employment Outcomes

Study	Intervention	Outcome	Key Findings

Wehman et al. (2017) - 49 youth with ASD/ID Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)	Project SEARCH + job coaching vs. usual services	Competitive job attainment and retention	Treatment: 90% employed/3 months, 87%/12 months; Control: 6%/3mo, 12% /12mo. Clear evidence that intensive internship & coaching caused higher employment.
Migliore & Butterworth (2008) - 1,223 VR clients with ID Quasi-experimental (matched groups)	Postsecondary education services as part of VR plan	Employment at VR exit; Weekly earnings	48% employed with PSE vs 32% without; average weekly wages $316 vs $195. Participation in career-focused education increased job placement by 26% and wages by 73%.
Moore & Schelling (2014) - 34 students with ID (two programs) Quasi-experimental (matched NLTS2 comparison)	3-year inclusive campus program vs. specialized program vs. no program	Employed at program exit	73% employed in inclusive program vs 37% in no-program group. (Specialized program had 91% employment at exit, but inclusive grads had higher earnings and more diverse jobs. Both program groups far exceeded comparison, underscoring the benefit of any structured career preparation.
Grigal, Papay et al. (2019) - 686 TPSID students Longitudinal cohort (multi-site)	Varied CTPs; analyzed predictors of employment	Employed at exit from program	Identified paid work during the program as top predictor (15× higher odds of employment). Also found staff facilitation of internships and career counseling were common features in programs with high job outcomes.

Note: PSE: postsecondary education. VR: Vocational Rehabilitation. NLTS2: National Longitudinal Transition Study 2.

For live in residence or near campus

Causal studies directly isolating the residential component are rare. Ethical and practical reasons make random assignments to “live on campus” vs “live at home” difficult. However, the combination of quasi-experimental outcome differences, high post-program independence stats, and stakeholder attestations provides a strong case that residential immersion is a vital element of an ideal CTP.

Several program outcome studies suggest high independent living success for those who experienced campus residency. Kelley & Westling (2017) examined a fully inclusive 2-year transition program with an on-campus residential requirement. They reported that 80% of the program’s graduates secured competitive employment after exiting. and many were living outside their family homes. Another study (Ryan et al. 2019) following 25 graduates of a residential 2- or 4-year program found 84% were employed at follow-up, with most working 20-

39 hours/week, and a majority had achieved some level of independent living (e.g. living with roommates) post-program.

Comparative analyses also indicate that residential inclusive programs may promote greater independence than non-residential ones. Sheppard-Jones et al. (2018) found that alumni of inclusive higher ed programs were more likely to have community jobs than similar individuals who did not attend. The programs in that study were fully inclusive (no separate facilities or segregated housing). Similarly, Moore & Schelling (2014) observed that graduates of an inclusive campus program (with dorm living) had higher independent earnings and more diverse employment than graduates of a non-campus, specialized program, despite both yielding better outcomes than no program.

Variables of Interest

Inputs

SROI Principle #4 Only include what is material

Using a True Cost Accounting (TCA) approach, the input side of the SROI analysis is broken down into five key components (see Table 1). This framework ensures that all resources invested in Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTPs) are captured, including in-kind support. This frame can reflect the full "real" cost of running the program. By accounting for volunteer labor, facility use, and other indirect contributions, we align the input measure with the true economic resources consumed, rather than just the cash budget. Table 1 lists and defines each input element. Notably, some one-off inputs like specific vocational rehabilitation (VR) contracts or donated professional services are inconsistently reported across programs and thus are not uniformly included.

Table 4 TCA-Based Input Components and Definitions

Input Component	Definition and Treatment
Per-student Annual Operating Budget	● The average annual program expenditure per student, covering all direct costs of operating the CTP. This is derived from each program's total reported annual budget divided by its enrollment. It includes salaries, benefits, instructional costs, materials, etc., funded by the program. ● This forms the baseline financial input and avoids double-counting any expense already in the budget (e.g. if a job coach is paid from the budget, that cost stays in this category and is not added again elsewhere).

Per-student Value of Volunteer Time	● The monetized value of unpaid labor that supports the program, allocated per student. Many CTPs rely on peer mentors, volunteers, or unpaid interns. These contributions, while not appearing in budgets (no cash exchanged), are counted by assigning a dollar value to the hours volunteered. ● We use a proxy hourly wage (about $34.79/hour based on the Independent Sector national volunteer rate for 2025) to value volunteer labor. For each program, total volunteer hours per year (from survey or estimates) are multiplied by this rate to produce an annual volunteer contribution, then divided by the number of students to get a per-student figure. ● This ensures that the human resource inputs provided at no cost are recognized as part of the total investment.
Indirect Cost Proxy (15% Overhead)	● An overhead allowance to account for indirect support from the host institution, set at 15% of the operating cost. This proxy represents in-kind contributions like classroom space, utilities, administrative support, and university services that CTP programs often receive without charge. ● Since universities typically incur facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, we assume a conservative mid-range overhead of 15% of the program's direct budget to capture these hidden costs. (If a program explicitly pays rent or admin fees, those would already be in the operating budget, so this proxy covers only unbudgeted support.) ● Including this indirect cost proxy aligns with TCA by valuing the facilities and infrastructure inputs that enable the program.
Housing Cost Imputation ($10,181 /year)	● A standardized housing expense per student to reflect room and board costs for programs with a residential component. Many CTP students live on campus or in program-arranged housing, which entails significant cost typically borne by students or other sources, not by the program's own budget. ● To incorporate this, we use $10,181 per student per year as the housing cost proxy, based on the average dormitory housing+meal plan rate gleaned from 139 CTP program websites (web-scraped data). This figure is added for commuter-only programs. (Programs where students reside on campus or in program housing would have this value excluded or set to $0 for those students.) ● By including a housing proxy, we acknowledge the living support costs associated with attending the program that contribute to its outcomes, even though those costs are often external to the program's budget.

Time-adjusted Weighting Factor	• A normalization coefficient combining program length and graduation rate to annualize the input per student across programs of varying durations. This factor adjusts the per-student cost to account for how long the program runs and what portion of students complete it. • Essentially, it distributes the total investment over the expected time a student is in the program (and adjusts if not all students graduate). For example, if a program is 2 years long with a 75% graduation rate, the factor = 2.31, meaning we spread the total per-student cost over 2.31 "student-years" to reflect that some students do not complete. • This factor is not a financial input itself, but a scaling tool applied to the above cost components so that inputs are expressed on a comparable per-student-per-year basis across 2-year, 3-year, or 4-year programs. It ensures that longer programs or those with higher attrition are appropriately weighted in the SROI model.

Gathering these input values required overcoming data limitations. Many CTPs are embedded within larger colleges/universities, making it difficult to obtain disaggregated budgets for the program alone. To address this, the research team conducted an anonymous national survey (targeting 185 programs) to collect standardized data on total annual budgets, student enrollments, and graduation rates. Only a subset of programs provided complete responses (e.g. 30 programs responded, of which 28 were CTP-designated), so the team supplemented the survey with other sources. This included mining data from federal TPSID reports, scraping information from program websites, and even reviewing IRS Form 990 filings and audit reports for a few independent programs. Because no single source contained all the needed variables and many university-based programs declined to share detailed cost files, a multiple-source triangulation approach was used. For instance, where a program did not report a particular input, data from similar programs or national averages were used to fill the gap. Public financial disclosures (GuideStar 990s) were examined to see if line items like volunteer services or facility use appeared, and generally these in-kind contributions were not explicitly reported, confirming that our input proxies (volunteer time, overhead, housing) needed to be added externally. This multi-pronged data collection (survey, web scraping, databases, TPSID national data, interviews) ensured a reasonably robust estimate of each input component while mitigating the impact of any one program's missing data.

Each input component in Table 1 was included for a specific reason, grounded in the TCA methodology and the realities of CTP program operations. Because detailed line-item budgets were rarely available, we intentionally incorporated proxies for major non-monetary inputs that programs rely on. For example, volunteer support (such as peer mentors) is a critical resource that doesn't show up in budgets, so we valued it using 2025 Nation Volunteer Value

$34.79/hour (Independent Sector, 2025) to reflect its true cost. Likewise, free or subsidized facilities and administrative support from host institutions are common, so a 15% overhead proxy was added to represent this institutional contribution. We arrived at 15% as it lies in the typical range of indirect cost rates (often 10 -20% in higher education for basic space and admin support) . This is a conservative middle-ground assumption. Housing costs were included because many programs offer a residential experience integral to student outcomes; we scraped housing fee data from 139 program websites to derive an average of $10.2k per student-year as a proxy. In the survey, we obtained a difference of $8,000 (the difference between the median per capita budget for projects with and without housing) for this item. To comply with the SROI principle of "do not over claim," we used the higher estimate for housing costs, $10,181, from the CTP population dataset. Doing so increases the input and lowers the SROI ratio, but it provides a more robust estimate.

We also clarify that the time-adjusted weighting factor is purely a normalization tool . It adjusts for program length and completion rates so that a two-year program with only half its students graduating, for example, doesn't understate the cost per successful outcome. In other words, the factor scales up per-student costs if a program is longer or has attrition, but it is not itself a dollar cost. It simply allows us to compare programs on an equal annualized basis.

All these assumptions and proxy values were chosen conservatively (erring on the low side of estimates) to avoid inflating the input costs. The use of TCA in this way provides a full but fair picture of investment: starting with actual budget expenditures and then adding the monetized value of any essential resources not captured in those budgets.

Table 5 below details how each input was measured, the data sources used, key assumptions, and any financial proxies applied. This outlines the practical methodology for quantifying each component in the SROI model.

Table 5: Input Indicators: Measurement Methods, Sources, and Assumptions

Indicator	Measurement Method	Information Source	Key Assumptions

Annual Operating Budget (per student)	Collected via survey and reports: each program's total annual budget divided by the number of students to yield a per-student annual cost.	Anonymous national CTP survey (budget question) and TPSID data. Nonprofit program financial reports as a reference.	Assumes the reported budget covers all direct expenses for the program year. Missing data for a few programs were excluded. No adjustment needed if an expense is already included (avoids double counting). All programs are treated equally (no weighting by size in this per-program average).
Volunteer Time	Multiply the total volunteer hours contributed to the program per year by a standard hourly wage rate, then allocate per student.	Survey(n=30). National volunteer hour value(Independent Sector, 2025).	Assumes an average volunteer rate of $34/hour as the proxy value of time. Assumes volunteers supplement (or replace) staff roles. Without them, paid staff or contractors would be needed, justifying counting their time as part of cost.
Indirect Overhead (15%)	Calculate a flat 15% of the program's annual operating budget as an additional input. This is added on top of each program's reported budget to represent indirect costs. (For example, if a program's budget per student is $10,000, add $1,500 as overhead.)	Not directly reported by programs. Derived from typical institutional support levels. Sources include higher-ed administrative cost norms and any qualitative mentions of in-kind support (e.g. "free use of classrooms").	Assumes host institutions provide facilities and admin support equal to roughly 15% of direct costs. This falls in a common range for facilities & admin overhead in education (10 -20%). Assumes all or most programs benefit from some uncharged infrastructure (if a program actually paid its own overhead, those costs would already be in the budget and the proxy would be adjusted down). This proxy is a conservative average. It may overestimate for some small programs and underestimate for programs with significant unreported support, but 15% is used uniformly for consistency.

Housing Cost Imputation	If the program does not include a residential component (on-campus housing or arranged apartments), include an annual housing cost per student. This was measured by taking the average yearly dormitory/meal plan cost from program materials and using that as a proxy for each student in residential programs.	Program websites and catalogs (published housing rates for inclusive programs). Think College program directory information on residential options (web-scraped data from 139 CTP sites).	Assumes $10,181 per student per year as the average housing & board cost for those in residential programs (based on the mean of collected data). Only applied to commuter programs. For where students live on campus or in housing as part of the program experience, this is excluded (or effectively $0). Assumes that this cost accurately represents the typical room & board expenses borne either by students/families or third-party funding for housing. (It does not assume the program itself pays this cost, only that it is a necessary expense for a residential student.) The figure of $10,181 is treated as an average. Actual costs at a given campus might be higher or lower, but we use one standard value for all to simplify and because individual data was not uniformly available.
Time -adjusted Weighting Factor	Compute a factor for each program = (Program length in years) ÷ (graduation rate). This factor is then used to annualize and adjust the per-student cost. For example, if a program is 2 years long and 80% of students graduate, factor = 2 / 0.8 = 2.5.	Program self-reported data on program duration (length of curriculum) and graduation/completion rate (from the survey). TPSID National Coordinating Center data on program lengths and retention rate as a reference.	Assumes that program length (in years) and graduation rate are the key determinants of how an individual student's participation is distributed over time. Graduation rates were reported in the survey. The factor essentially inflates the cost for programs with lower completion rates (since not all who start will finish) and longer durations. This assumes that non-completing students still incur cost but yield less outcome, so the cost per successful outcome is higher. This is an important normalization for SROI. This factor is used for normalization only; it does not have a monetary unit. It simply adjusts the inputs for comparability. We do not treat it as an additional cost or benefit.

Outcomes

SROI Principle #5 Do not over claim

The SROI for the Ideal CTP focused on tangible outcomes like employment gains, earnings increases, and reduced public benefit usage, while outcomes such as business retention,

community diversity, and family well-being, although envisioned in the logic model, were not directly quantified in the final analysis. All four core program activities contribute to multiple outcomes, but only the measurable outcomes (e.g. job attainment, independence leading to cost savings, and reduced public support reliance) were included in the SROI calculations The other outcomes were acknowledged qualitatively but excluded from the quantitative SROI measurement.

Table 6 Core Activities of Ideal CTP Model Mapped to Final Outcomes

Core Input (Activity)	Intended Final Outcome	Measurable
Career coaching and professional development	Job attainment or advancement: More graduates securing employment (competitive jobs) and achieving higher wages.	Yes
	Business retention: Improved retention of employees by businesses hiring CTP graduates.	No
	Contribution of IDD youth through (required by program) volunteer / community service	Yes
	Graduates' wages, once spent locally, generate additional economic output through an estimated 1.3× local-economic multiplier.	Yes
	Decreased dependence on public subsidies/entitlements: Reduced reliance on benefits (e.g. SSI disability payments).	Yes
Credential or certification pathways	Job attainment or advancement: Credentials leading to jobs or career progression for participants.	Yes
	Business retention: Greater likelihood that certified participants remain employed.	No
	Decreased dependence on public subsidies/entitlements: Participants with industry credentials needing less public assistance due to better employment.	Yes
Life skills support with peer mentoring	Increased independence of students: Higher ability of graduates to live and work independently (e.g. needing fewer support hours).	Yes
	Improved family outcomes: Positive impacts on families (e.g. reduced caregiver burden, parents able to pursue work or other activities).	No

Residential arrangement	Increased independence of students: Gains in self-reliance and daily living skills from living on/near campus.	Yes
	Improved family outcomes: Relief for families as students live more independently (less day-to-day dependency on family).	Yes
	Increased diversity in the community: Greater inclusion of individuals with IDD in campus and local community.	No
	Decreased dependence on public subsidies/entitlements: Lower long-term need for government support (due to independent living and community integration).	Yes

CTP programs aim to generate a range of social outcomes for their students. In the SROI, we focus on those outcomes that can be measured and monetized with reasonable confidence. Table 7 summarizes each key outcome indicator, how it's measured, the data sources, key assumptions (e.g. about what would have happened without the program, attribution of outcomes to the program, and financial assumptions like wage levels and benefit offsets), and the financial proxy used to value it.

Notably, the most significant outcomes of CTPs are in employment and independence. For instance, participation in a CTP substantially improves the likelihood of competitive employment for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. We capture the value of such outcomes through proxies like increased earnings and reduced public support costs. At the same time, we acknowledge there are important qualitative outcomes (improved confidence, social networks, etc.) that are not easily quantified; those are discussed in narrative form but not included in the SROI financial calculations. The table distinguishes measurable outputs that feed into the SROI model from those intangible benefits.

Table 7 Output Indicators: Measurement, Sources, Assumptions, and Proxies

Indicators	Measurement / Sources / Assumptions / Financial Proxy

1. Graduate earnings	● How measured:73% of graduates in competitive employment (139 samples for 72.7%,30 sample for 72.5%) × $12.68/hr×18 hr/wk × 48wks ● Key sources: Employment rate 73 % from survey, web-scraping and national TPSID follow-up (Think College NCC, 2023). Average weekly hours = 18 reported for employed leavers (Think College NCC, 2012, p. 21). National IDD competitive-job wage $12.68/hr (NCI, 2023). ● Dead-weight: 17% baseline competitive-employment rate and 13 hr/wk for adults with IDD (NCI, 2023). ● Attribution：65% of incremental earnings credited to CTP (derived from 37% vs 13% employment contrast in Sheppard-Jones et al., 2018). ● Proxy: no financial proxy used.
2. SSI cash-benefit reduction	● How measured: Monthly earnings from Indicator 1 (12.68×18×48/12= $913) applied to SSI formula: first $85 ignored, remaining $828÷2= $414 benefit cut, $414×12=$4,968 yr per worker (SSA, 2024). ● Key sources: SSI earnings-offset rule & 2024 FBR (SSA, 2024). Assumptions: 100 % of participants received SSI pre-program; 15% dead-weight (some would have reduced SSI anyway). 65% attribution to CTP. ● Proxy: Government savings: =$5k per working graduate per year*(employed - dead-weight) × 65%.
3. Family caregiving time saved	● How measured: Care drops 40 hr /wk (= 70 % of 57 hr baseline(The Arc, 2018)) starting at enrollment. 40×52 = 2,080 hr/yr. ● Key sources: Baseline caregiving 57 hr/wk (The Arc, 2018). Independence gains (Sheppard-Jones et al., 2018). Replacement-cost wage $15.50 hr for personal-care aides (BLS, 2023). ● Dead-weight: 15% (NLST-2, 2011). ● Attribution: 100 % to CTP. ● Proxy: personal-care aides (PCA) salary as shadow pricing.
4. Credential wage premium	● How measured: 83% has credential (30 sample for 83%,139 sample for 90%) Weekly uplift $114 (= 50 % over no-credential peers) ×52 = $4,920/yr (Migliore & Butterworth, 2009). We adopt 10%. ● Dead-weight: 0 % (counterfactual wage captured in Indicator 1). ● Attribution: 100 % to credential effect. ● Proxy: none.

5. Local economic multiplier	● How measured: (Total graduate wages)×(μ -1). μ=1.3 (NASPO, 2019). ● Dead-weight: 0 % (multiplier applied only to incremental wages). ● Attribution: 65 % to CTP-generated wages. ● Proxy: Additional $0.30 local output per wage dollar.
6. Volunteer & community service	● How measured: Participation rate × average hours × national volunteer-hour value. ● Key sources: Participation: survey of 30 programs: 87 % of students volunteer at least occasionally. Hours: inclusive-college studies show = 5.5 h/wk; UNC-Greensboro requires 100 h/semester (6-7 h/wk). Adopt 5 h/wk (conservative). 5 h × 32 wk = 160 h/yr per volunteering student. Shadow wage: national value of volunteer time $34.79 /h (Independent Sector 2025) ● Dead-weight: Only 14 % of adults with IDD volunteer weekly without specialized programs (NCI-IDD 2023). Use 15 % dead-weight. ● Attribution: Volunteer opportunities largely arranged by CTPs; credit 80 % of incremental hours to the program. ● Financial proxy: $34.79 /hr value of volunteer time.

SROI Computation Logic

Our SROI study rests on a two-step evidence base:

Step 1 Investment inputs.

A nationwide program survey (30 complete responses) supplies granular budget and staffing data.

For each program we convert those figures into a full-program, per-student cost, i.e. the total resources required for one student to enroll, progress and graduate, whether the course lasts two, three or four years.

Step2 Outcome evidence and attribution.

Web-scraped and cleaned information from 139 CTP websites captures outcome patterns (employment rates, independent-living options, etc.) that inform the attribution factors applied in the SROI model.

Because responding programs display wide variation in scale and design, we compute SROI separately for every program and then summarize results with the national median. The full 95 % spread of program-level SROI ratios is carried forward to the sensitivity analysis.

SROI Estimation

Inputs

1. Per-student Annual Operating Budget

Final Value

$10,688

Equation

Yearly Value = self-reported organization budget ÷ enrolled students

Total Value = Year Value × time-adjusted weighting factor

Proxy or assumption

time-adjusted weighting factor $= \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{1}{(1-\frac{1-completion\%}{k})^i}$

k = program length completion rate = 75%

1-year program: 1.33, 2-year program: 2.31, 3-year program: 3.30, 4-year program: 4.30

- The final graduation rate came from two data sources, survey and TPSID Report 2023, both of which were 75%. The web crawl sample reported a 91% first-year retention rate, but we chose the lower 75% to ensure that we did not overestimate the final SROI rate.

Computation

Results vary between programs.

- Median per-student budget = $10,688
- 95% Range across programs: $2,812 - $55,556
- n = 23 (out of N = 30 programs)
- 1-year: $14,215, 2-year: $24,689, 3-year:$35,270, 4-year: $45,958

---

2. Per-student Value of Volunteer Time

Final Value

Values for this indicator differ across programs and are not represented by a single summary statistic.

Equation

Yearly Value = weekly volunteer hours × hourly volunteer value × academic weeks

÷ enrolled students

Total Value = Year Value × time-adjusted weighting factor

Proxy or assumption

- hourly volunteer value = $34.79 per hour (Independent Sector, 2025)
- academic weeks = 32 weeks per year, 16 weeks per semester × 2 semesters

Computation

Results vary between programs.

- Median per-student value of volunteer time = $0
- Mean per-student value of volunteer time = $1,267
- 95% Range across programs: $0 - $22,266
- n = 23 (out of N = 30 programs)

---

3. Housing Cost Imputation

Final Value

$10,181 (only for commute programs)

Equation

Yearly Value = average annual room & board fee (*only for commute programs)

Total Value = Year Value × time-adjusted weighting factor

Proxy or assumption

1. We checked the 990 form and audited financial statement of an nonprofit organization *The Horizons School, Inc*..It is a residential postsecondary program for young adults with learning and developmental disabilities. It does charge students for housing and meals as part of its program fees, and those transactions are clearly reflected in its financials. We assume those residential programs also include their housing-related expenses in their budgets.

2. Since we consider the provision of residences to be an indispensable component in forming an ideal CTP model, we will impulate a residence-related budget differential averaged to each student for the commuter programs.

3. A two-tailed unequal-variance t-test on the 23 programs that reported complete budget data shows a statistically significant difference in average per-student costs between residential and commuter CTPs at the 95 % confidence level (t = -2.08, df = 12.5, P = 0.059 two-sided, n=23). Residential programs spend, on average, $9,968 more per student per year than non-residential programs (mean $20,296 vs $10,327). In the larger 139-program dataset the 72 sites that publish a room-and-board figure report a mean of $10,181 and a median of $10,240. Because this housing cost closely matches the mean budget gap from the t-test, we treat $10,181 as a reasonable per-student imputed housing cost to add to commuter programs when modelling the "ideal" residential CTP in our SROI analysis.

```
. ttest budg_per_stud, by(q5_hous) unequal

Two-sample t test with unequal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. err.	Std. dev.	[95% conf.	interval]
No / com	11	10327.49	1212.427	4021.167	7626.033	13028.95
Yes / on	12	20295.55	4641.115	16077.29	10080.52	30510.57
Combined	23	15528.22	2658.131	12747.95	10015.59	21040.84
diff		-9968.057	4796.866		-20374.36	438.2435

```
    diff = mean(No / com) - mean(Yes / on)                        t =  -2.0780
H0: diff = 0                     Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom =  12.4886

    Ha: diff < 0                 Ha: diff != 0                 Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.0295         Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0589          Pr(T > t) = 0.9705
```

Computation

Housing cost imputation = $10,181 per student per year

*only for commute programs, n = 11 (out of N = 30 programs)

---

4. Indirect Cost Proxy (15% Overhead)

Final Value

Values for this indicator differ across programs and are not represented by a single summary statistic.

Equation

Yearly Value = (*Per-student Annual Operating Budget* + housing cost imputation)× 15%

Total Value = Year Value × time-adjusted weighting factor

Proxy or assumption

1. We reviewed the Form 990 filings and audited financial statements of 3 post-secondary programs on the GuideStar database. What is not visible in the financials, while clearly borne by the host institution, is the bundle of shared services that keeps the campus running: utilities, maintenance, IT, security, insurance, central administration, depreciation, and other “management & general” functions.
2. Across the sample, these overhead items consistently represented about 13-17% of total functional expenses, aligning with the nonprofit norm that 10- 20% of direct costs is a reasonable allowance for indirect support. For comparison, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Guidance permits a 10% de-minimis rate for small education grants, while negotiated university facilities-and-administration (F&A) rates often exceed 20%.
3. Anchoring on the midpoint of the observed range, the SROI model therefore applies a 15% indirect-cost factor to every program’s direct operating budget. This adjustment captures the real economic value of shared campus infrastructure without overstating overhead, ensuring the analysis reflects the full resource commitment behind each student’s comprehensive transition experience.

Computation

Results vary between programs.

- Median per-student budget = $2,802
- 95% Range across programs: $423 - $8,333
- n = 23 (out of N = 30 programs)

= =

Outcomes

1. Graduate Earnings (Increased Income from Competitive Employment)

Final Value

$4,324

Equation

Yearly Value = (employment % × weekly wage × weekly working hours × working weeks
− deadweight employment % × deadweight weekly wage
× deadweight weekly working hours × working weeks)
× attribution

Total Value = $\sum_{\square=1}^{5}$ Year Value × drop-out factor ÷ PV factor

Proxy or assumption

- employment rate: We obtained very close results from three data sources: 72.5% from survey, 72.7% from web crawling and 74% from TPSID Report 2023. This is important evidence of the validity of our sampling. Finally, we chose 73% as the value for the employment rate.
- We use the same wage level as the deadweight weekly wage. Because we do not have any credible source of data on the magnitude of wage increases, we tend to stay at their original wage level.
- TPSID annual reports contain only three explicit follow-up figures on graduates' weekly work hours: 17 hours/week in the Year-One report (Grigal et al., 2012), 18 hours/week in the Cohort-2 Year-Four report (Think College NCC, 2016), and 17.6 hours/week in the Cohort-3 Year-One report (Think College NCC, 2022). We choose 18 hours per week as the weekly working hours of graduates.
- During CTP enrollment, many students hold campus or program-facilitated jobs (e.g. work-study positions, internships, dining services jobs). While these in-program jobs do provide wages to participants and can have value (skill-building, income, usually at the federal min wage level and averagely 11.3 hours per week), including their income in an SROI requires caution. On-campus employment is often heavily supported by the program or funded through VR support (e.g. wage subsidies or job coaching). If we were to count those wages as a "benefit" of the program, we must ensure we're not double-counting benefits that are actually an input to the program.
- deadweight employment % = 17%

  deadweight weekly wage = $12.68

  deadweight weekly working hours =13

  All these three data come from the National Core Indicators (NCI-IDD) 2022 -23 in-person survey. $12.68 is the wage ceiling for IDD youth to be competitively employed in the community.
- Working weeks =48. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that the mean number of paid work-weeks for full-time wage-and-salary employees is 49 weeks once vacation and holidays are deducted (BLS Employee Benefit Survey, 2023). The U.S. Department of Labor's Current Population Survey micro-tables show that employed adults with disabilities logged 46 -48 weeks of paid work in 2022.
- Attribution = 65%. A George Mason University comparison study showed that 37 % of inclusive-college (not only IDD & CTPs) graduates secured competitive jobs versus 13 % of similar adults who relied only on standard Vocational Rehabilitation, so about (37 - 13) ÷ 37 = 65 % of the employment gain is attributable to the CTP itself (Sheppard-Jones et al., 2018).

Computation

After intervention: 73% × $12.68/hrs × 18 hrs/wk × 48 wk =$7,998

Deadweight: 17% × $12.68/hrs × 13 hrs/wk × 48 wk =$1,345

Difference: $7,998 − $1,345 = $6,653

Yearly Increased Income: $6,653 × 65% = **$4,324**

---

2. Credential Wage Premium (Incremental Earnings from Obtaining a Certificate)

Final Value

$552

Equation

Yearly Value = credential attainment % × *Graduate Yearly Earnings* × uplift % × attribution

Total Value = $\sum_{□=1}^{5}$ Year Value × drop-out factor ÷ PV factor

Proxy or assumption

- Credential attainment = 83% This rate is reported from the survey (19 0f 23). The TPSID report shows a very high rate at 97%. We choose the lower choice 83% to make sure the result will not be over claimed.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures show median weekly earnings of about $935 for individuals with “some college, no degree” (a category that includes many certificate holders), versus $853 for high school graduates. This means approximately a 10% (935 / 853=1.096) uplift rate of wage because of credentials. Urban Institute also analyses that isolated certificate holders find similar or larger gaps (= 13-20 %).
- The attribution is 100% here because VR or other career services cannot provide credentials for IDD youth.

Computation

Yearly Credential Wage Premium = 83% × $6,653 × 10% × 100% = **$552**

---

3. Local Economic Multiplier Effect (Indirect Community Value from Wages Earned)

Final Value

$2,357

Equation

Yearly Value = (local multiplier - 1) × *Graduate Yearly Earnings* × attribution

Total Value = $\sum_{\square=1}^{5}$ Year Value × drop-out factor ÷ PV factor

Proxy or assumption

- In economic impact analysis, multipliers capture the spillover benefits of increased employment or earnings on the broader community. A commonly accepted multiplier for labor income in the U.S. is around 1.5. We apply a local labor-income multiplier of 1.3 in the base SROI model, reflecting the mid-point of documented ranges (1.2-1.4) for consumer spending in U.S. county-level input-output studies (NASPO, 2019).
- We use the same 65% attribution as Graduate Earnings here.

Computation

Yearly local economic multiplier effect = (1.3 − 1) × \$6,653 × 65% = **\$1,297**

---

4. SSI Cash Benefit Reduction (Government Savings from Reduced Benefits)

Equation

Yearly Value = employment % × ((gross monthly-wage − \$85) ÷ *2*) × 12 months
× attribution

Total Value = $\sum_{\square=1}^{5}$ Year Value × drop-out factor ÷ PV factor

Proxy or assumption

- Under the 2024 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) earned-income rules, the first \$20 of any income and the next \$65 of wages are completely disregarded; every remaining dollar of wages then reduces the monthly SSI check by 50 cents. For a typical CTP graduate earning \$12.68 an hour, 18 hours a week, four weeks a month (= \$913 in gross monthly wages), the calculation is: \$913 - (\$20 + \$65) = \$828 in "countable earnings," and \$828 ÷ 2 = \$414 is deducted from the federal SSI benefit. Because the 2024 Federal Benefit Rate is \$943, the graduate would still receive about \$529 in SSI each month, but the cash payment is reduced by \$414 monthly, or roughly \$4,970 a year. These dollar-for-dollar offsets (after the \$85 exclusion) come straight from Social Security's official SSI income policy, so each working graduate at this wage level yields almost \$5 000 in annual federal savings.
- Attribution: 73% employment rate × 65% attribution.

Computation

Yearly SSI Reduction = 73% × (($12.68 ×18 hr/wk × *48* wk ÷12 months − $85) ÷ *2*)

× 12 months × 65%

= **$2,357**

---

5. Family Caregiving Time Saved (Replacement Value of Reduced Care Hours)

Final Value

$24,664

Equation

Yearly Value = replacement cost per hour × weekly saved hours × working weeks

× (1−deadweight) × attribution

Total Value = Year Value × program length + $\sum_{□=1}^{5}$ Year Value × drop-out factor ÷PV factor

Proxy or assumption

- Most young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) who remain at home are supported by a hybrid care model. Families typically use an HCBS waiver (or private funds) to pay a personal-care assistant (PCA) for about 20-30 hours per week, often hiring a relative under consumer-directed options, and then fill the gap with unpaid family care so that total support reaches roughly 57 hours per week (The Arc FINDS Survey, 2022). Those hours cover both personal activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, eating and instrumental tasks such as managing money, shopping, and arranging transportation. National Core Indicators data confirm the intensity of that load: 76% of adults with IDD living at home need “a lot of help” scheduling, shopping, or handling finances,41% need substantial assistance with personal care (NCI-IDD, 2023).
- When a student enters a residential Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP), the daily supervisory burden shifts to campus residence-life staff and peer mentors, while structured life-skills instruction further reduces long-term dependence on family oversight, even if the graduate later moves back home. Because only about 15% (NCI-IDD, 2023) of similar adults would achieve that level of relief without an inclusive-college pathway, we apply a 15% dead-weight factor. Vocational-Rehabilitation services rarely cover routine caregiving, so 90% of the burden reduction is attributed to the CTP. Consequently, our SROI model begins counting the caregiving benefit from the first day of enrollment, valuing each hour of parental time saved at the prevailing PCA wage of $15.50 per hour and tapering it in later years according to the standard drop-off and discount assumptions.

Computation

Hours saved per week: 70% × 57 = 40 hrs/wk

$$\text{Yearly Family Caregiving Saved} = (100\% - 15\%) \times \$\ 15.5 / \text{hr} \times 40\text{hrs/wk} \times 52\ \text{wks} \times 90\%$$

$$= \$24{,}664$$

---

6. Community Service and Volunteering (Value of Time Donated by Students)

Final Value

$3,206

Equation

$$\text{Yearly Value} = (\text{reported volunteer \%} - \text{deadweight volunteer \%}) \times \text{volunteer hours per week} \times \text{hourly volunteer value} \times \text{academic weeks} \times \text{attribution}$$

$$\text{Total Value} = \sum_{□=1}^{5} \text{Year Value} \times \text{drop-out factor} \div \text{PV factor}$$

Proxy or assumption

- Percentage of participation in volunteer activities or community service is reported at 87% in the survey.
- CTPs routinely weave community service into the student experience, and the available evidence suggests participants donate meaningful time each week: a study of inclusive-college students reported an average 5.5 volunteer hours per week, while the UNC-Greensboro program, for example, requires 100 hours per semester, about 6 -7 hours weekly, for its certificate. By contrast, national baseline data show that volunteering is uncommon among adults with IDD who lack such programs: only 14-16% report volunteering even once a week, and more than one-fifth report no community activity in a typical week. Longitudinal research on transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities similarly found that just 13% logged any volunteer time over an entire year. Taken together, these figures imply that the bulk of the 5-to-7 volunteer hours contributed by CTP students each week represent net new social value, not activity that would have occurred anyway. Accordingly, the SROI model treats the difference as a program-generated benefit and applies the baseline 15% participation rate as the dead-weight adjustment.
- Volunteer hours per week = 5 hrs, hourly volunteer value = $34.79 per hour (Independent Sector, 2025), academic week = 16 wks/semester × 2 semesters = 32 wks, according to the TPSID report 2023.
- Attribution = 80%. Other influences may include friends, parent networks, outside clubs, VR counsellors.
- We count the volunteer hours from the moment the student enrolls, not just after graduation. Service-learning and community-service requirements are built into most

CTP curricula: students begin volunteering in their first semester and local nonprofits start receiving the benefit immediately. Because these hours represent real, unpaid labor delivered to the community during the program years, they legitimately belong on the "benefit" side of the SROI as soon as they are performed.

Computation

Yearly Volunteer Service Value = (87% − 15%) × 5 hrs/wk × $34.79 /hr × 32 wks × 80%

= $3,206

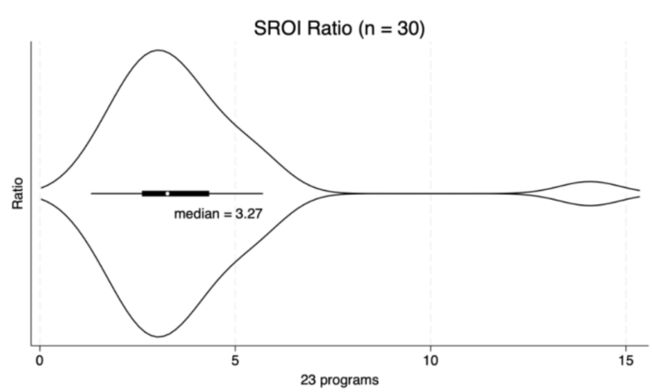
= =

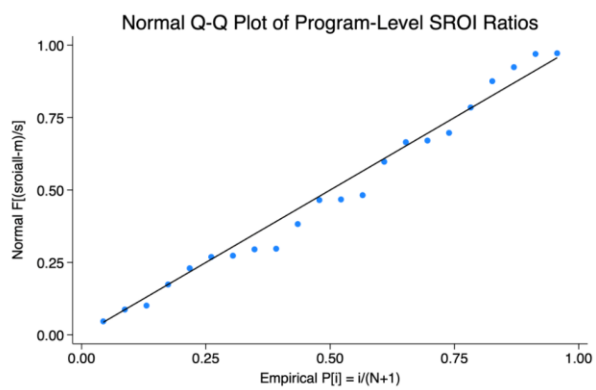
SROI Ratio

Final Value

Before outlier removed: **3.27 for all programs,** 95% Range across programs: 1.31 - 14.8

After outlier removed: **3.25 for all programs,** 95% Range across programs: 1.31 - 5.70





- We calculated SROI on a per-project, per-graduate basis, using each project's full program length and cost structure. This approach reflects the total social value generated by an ideal student who completes the entire program, divided by the total resources required to support that student throughout their time in the program.
- After excluding the lone extreme value, the 22 remaining SROI ratios line up in a near-bell-shaped curve, meaning most programs deliver a tightly clustered, predictable return while only exceptionally rare cases stray far from the norm. Giving the results cluster so neatly, the SROI ratio becomes a straightforward yard-stick: investors can set clear performance cut-offs, compare projects on equal terms and gauge downside risk with confidence.

Equation

$$SROI_{program} = \frac{Total\ 5\text{-}year\ outcome\ value\ per\ graduate}{Total\ Cost\ per\ graduate\ (across\ full\ program\ duration)}$$

Computation

1. Yearly Input per Student = Per-student Annual Operating Budget
   + Per-student Value of Volunteer Time
   + Housing Cost Imputation
   + Indirect Cost Proxy (15% Overhead)

mean = $24,724 median = $22,000 95% CI: $4,104 - $63,889 n=23

* Not adjusted by completion rate.

2. Per student inputs during the whole program length:

Input per Student = Yearly Input per Student × adjusted length years

mean = $70,217 median = $71,320 95% CI: $17,648 - $147,583 n=23

3. For all students of each program per year:

Input per program = Input per Student per Year (Adjusted) × Enrolled Student Number

mean = $729,593 median = $549,302 95% CI: $70,591 - $3,767,183 n=23

---

4. Yearly marginal outcome per student = $36,400

Note: We express results as annual marginal benefits here, the incremental value created in each 12-month period, because the two streams that begin on day one (family-care hours saved and student volunteer service) accrue continuously, while program lengths vary from one to four years. Presenting the benefit "per year" therefore gives a common denominator across all sites. At this stage we report those annual figures undiscounted and without adjusting for student attrition; dropout rates and the 3% discount factor are applied later, when we convert each multi-year stream to its present-value contribution in the final SROI model.

For the overall outcomes during the whole program length (per student):

Outcome per Student = Yearly Outcome per Student × adjusted length years

+ Family Caregiving Saved Outcome during the Program

+ Community Service and Volunteering Outcome during the Program

1-year: $165,635 2-year: $192,947 3-year: $220,539 4-year: $248,409

Conclusion and Discussion

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the methodology is primarily qualitative and exploratory in nature. Although secondary data sources were rigorously selected, no primary longitudinal or experimental data collection was conducted. Second, expert and stakeholder input, while invaluable, introduces subjectivity that may not fully capture the diversity of CTP experiences nationwide. Third, the SROI calculation relies on assumptions and proxy measures, and actual realized outcomes may vary across programs and populations.

Implications

Despite these limitations, the phased methodology provides a robust framework for initial evaluation and sets the foundation for future empirical research and more detailed SROI modeling.

The positive SROI outcome for the Comprehensive Transition Program can help philanthropic strategy and decision-making in several fields. Fundamentally, it signals that philanthropic dollars directed to CTPs are leveraged into multiple dollars of social value, making this an attractive investment for donors focused on high impact.

Proof Value to Stakeholders

A SROI of 3.3:1 provides foundations and donors a compelling evaluation about the effectiveness of their grantmaking. It quantifies the return in a financial language. This responds to boards, finance committees, or social investors who demand accountability. Our data-driven validation can enhance a funder’s confidence in continuing or expanding support for CTP initiatives. The ratio can also be used in communications and fundraising. For example, "each $1 we invest in Comprehensive Transition Programs education yields $3.3 in social benefits," can inspire further giving and partnerships.

Advocate Resource Allocation

The list of benefits offers insight into which program components or outcomes drive the most value. For instance, if the analysis shows that employment outcomes constitute the largest share of monetized benefits, a funder might decide to channel additional resources specifically into strengthening the vocational training aspect of CTPs or scaling that component. Alternatively, significant public sector savings could motivate a foundation to use the SROI results to advocate for public co-investment or policy support. That means showing government stakeholders that for every dollar they put in, there is a fiscal return to society in addition to

social gains. In that sense, philanthropic actors can use this evidence to leverage matching funds or policy changes.

Scale Up

High SROI can justify efforts to replicate or scale the CTP model. Philanthropic organizations often look to pilot innovative programs and then expand those that demonstrate success. With quantifiable impact established, a foundation may seek to replicate the best-practice CTP elements in new regions. The analysis might also highlight best practices. For example, the importance of a residential component or strong employer partnerships. Funders can incorporate these findings into grantmaking criteria, favoring programs that include the high-impact components identified. In the case of Philanthropy Southwest and its members, the results can inform a regional strategy to invest in inclusive postsecondary programs across multiple states, focusing on communities where the need is great.

Emphasize Long-Term Commitment

The SROI results underscore that many benefits (employment, independence) accrue over the long term. This shows that a long-term commitment of philanthropic funding is important. Instead of one-year grants, multi-year funding commitments may be more aligned with the model in which social returns unfold, thus maximizing the eventual SROI.

In summary, Comprehensive Transition Programs represent a high-impact investment opportunity for philanthropy. With SROI evidence, funders can justify increased allocation to such programs, influence public policy, encourage replication of successful models, and ultimately contribute to systemic change where young adults with disabilities have opportunities to participate in college, work, and community life. The SROI case thus becomes a catalyst for strategic action and informed philanthropy in the disability inclusion space.

Conclusion

This project provides a comprehensive, evidence-informed estimation of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) generated by Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through a structured, phased methodology that included literature review, expert interviews, stakeholder surveys, logic model development, and outcome valuation modeling, we created a generalized framework capable of capturing the complex and multifaceted impacts of CTP participation.

The findings indicate that CTP programs generate substantial positive returns on investment. Conservative estimates suggest that CTP participation results in significant improvements across multiple domains: competitive integrated employment, independent living

skills, transportation autonomy, increased social participation, self-advocacy, and reduced family caregiving burden. These outcomes, when monetized using financial proxies from credible secondary sources such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Social Security Administration, demonstrate that the cumulative social value generated exceeds the initial program investments.

The process of mapping outcomes and applying impact adjustments , including deadweight, attribution, displacement, and drop-off , allowed for a conservative estimation that enhances the credibility of the resulting SROI ratios. Preliminary analyses suggest that even under the most cautious assumptions, the return on investment remains strongly positive, reinforcing the strategic value of investing in inclusive postsecondary programs.

Expert input played a critical role in validating the assumptions embedded in the logic model. Interviews with program directors, disability advocates, and inclusion specialists confirmed that CTP outcomes extend beyond employment metrics, encompassing broader quality-of-life improvements, social integration, and enhanced self-determination. Stakeholder surveys further corroborated these findings, offering qualitative narratives and quantitative confirmations of program impact across academic, vocational, and independent living domains.

Importantly, the evaluation highlights that CTPs produce not only direct participant benefits but also broader societal gains. Increases in individual earnings lead to higher tax contributions; reductions in reliance on public benefits decrease demands on social safety nets; and enhanced independence and social inclusion contribute to community resilience and economic diversification. These externalities underscore the importance of adopting a societal perspective when evaluating the value of CTP investments.

While the results are promising, several limitations must be acknowledged. The reliance on secondary data sources introduces a degree of approximation into outcome valuations. The absence of long-term longitudinal tracking data limits the ability to fully capture outcome sustainability over the lifespan. Additionally, the variability in program design, resource availability, and state-level policy environments among CTPs introduces heterogeneity that may affect generalizability. Future research should seek to address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, refining outcome measurement standardization, and conducting program-specific SROI analyses.

Despite these limitations, the methodology employed in this project offers a replicable model for future evaluations. By integrating stakeholder perspectives, grounding financial valuations in conservative assumptions, and maintaining methodological transparency, the analysis provides a strong foundation for strategic decision-making. It demonstrates that SROI frameworks are not only applicable but highly valuable in assessing initiatives that produce both

tangible economic outcomes and critical intangible impacts such as autonomy, community engagement, and quality of life.

In conclusion, this project affirms that Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs represent a high-value investment opportunity for funders, policymakers, and institutional leaders seeking to promote educational access, workforce participation, and social inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The positive SROI estimation supports the case for continued and expanded investment in CTP initiatives and offers an analytically grounded tool for advocating for greater public and philanthropic support. By translating program impacts into measurable social value, this evaluation contributes to a growing evidence base that recognizes inclusive education not only as a civil right but also as a driver of economic and community vitality.

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Appendix A

Summary of Interviews

Summary of Interviews

Input 1: Funding

Common Themes

- High Costs: Inclusive higher education programs are expensive to operate and attend. Costs, often tens of thousands of dollars per student annually, are largely passed on to families through tuition and special fees.
- Patchwork Funding: Programs commonly combine student fees with grants, donations, and government support. Many rely on short-term federal or state grants to launch their programs, but sustaining funding remains a major challenge.
- Access to Federal Aid: Only programs with federal Comprehensive Transition Program approval can offer federal aid (e.g., Pell Grants, federal loans), which many non-degree programs cannot access, creating a significant barrier.

Differences by Program/State

- State Support Variability: Some states provide strong public funding (e.g., Georgia programs with state scholarships, vocational rehab, and Pell Grants), resulting in low or no out-of-pocket costs. In contrast, states without such support force programs to rely heavily on private pay, sometimes charging up to $48,000 per year.
- Institutional Influence: University-based residential programs typically charge comprehensive fees (tuition, room, board, plus extra fees), while non-profit or community-based programs can often keep costs low through intensive fundraising.
- Local Advocacy: Some programs benefit from proactive local efforts, like lobbying for state scholarships, while others continue to struggle with inconsistent funding sources.

Unique or Characteristic Responses

- Cost Concerns: Several interviewees noted that high costs exclude many students, especially those with limited personal resources, and described the fees as “a boatload of money” or “pretty expensive.”
- Innovative Funding Approaches: Some programs have creatively combined different funding sources (e.g., using Medicaid for services and vocational rehab for educational costs) or rely on donor support to keep fees minimal.
- Equity Issues: There is widespread concern that inadequate funding models risk excluding low-income students or those with more significant support needs.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Granular Funding Analysis: Future analysis will distinguish among stable institutional funds, short-term grants, tuition/fees, and external supports (like VR or Medicaid).
- Funding Accessibility & Equity: Metrics will be included to assess the availability of needs-based aid and the percentage of students receiving external support.
- Funding Stability: Programs will be categorized by whether their funding is sustainable or subject to fluctuations.
- Financial Value Justification: The analysis will also consider how programs justify their costs to funders through outcome reports or cost-benefit analyses, linking financial inputs with long-term sustainability and social return.

Input 2: Human Resources (Staff & Volunteer Time)

Common Themes

- Lean Staffing & Volunteer Reliance: Programs generally operate with very few full-time staff who juggle multiple roles (administration, teaching, student support), relying heavily on volunteers and peer mentors to extend their capacity.
- Quality Challenges: Although volunteers are essential, maintaining quality and accountability is difficult. Some programs prefer paying peer mentors to ensure consistent, reliable support.

Differences by Program/State

- University-Based vs. Community-Based: University-based residential programs often have specialized roles (e.g., residential mentors provided with housing and meals), while non-residential or community programs use existing college staff or partner with external agencies to cover staffing needs.
- Staffing Models: Some programs opt to hire and compensate peer mentors to improve accountability, whereas others depend on volunteers, which can lead to inconsistent engagement due to varying commitment levels.

Unique or Characteristic Responses

- Extreme Volunteer Dependence: One program is managed by just two co-founders who successfully run the full curriculum by leveraging many volunteer instructors and mentors, illustrating both agility and vulnerability if volunteer engagement drops.
- Paid Mentorship Model: Another example involves a program that pays peer mentors hourly, favoring a model that avoids the pitfalls of lump-sum payments and volunteer drop-off.
- Commitment to Quality: A director explicitly stated that managing a large volunteer workforce would be a "nightmare," emphasizing a strong preference for paid support to maintain quality.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Disaggregate Staffing Types: Future analysis will separately track full-time paid staff, part-time staff, and volunteers/peer mentors.
- Evaluate Quality & Training: Include measures for the training and supervision of peer mentors and volunteers to assess support quality.
- Assess Workload & Role Distribution: Examine if responsibilities are overly concentrated among a few individuals, which could indicate burnout risks.
- Link HR Inputs to Outcomes: Compare different staffing models (paid vs. volunteer-heavy) to determine their impact on student outcomes.
- Highlight Innovative Practices: Identify creative staffing solutions (e.g., housing stipends for mentors or agency partnerships) that might serve as best practices for future analyses.

Input 3: Work Experience and Opportunities

Common Themes

- Structured Work Experiences: Programs integrate internships, on-campus jobs, volunteer assignments, and career workshops as core components. Many require internships or volunteer hours as part of the curriculum.
- Career Preparation: In-class activities, such as résumé building, interview practice, and attending career fairs, help students develop both soft and hard skills essential for employment.

Differences by Program/State

- Job Hunting Support: Some programs expect graduates to find jobs independently, while others work with workforce agencies or vocational rehabilitation counselors to secure placements.
- Curricular Adjustments: Certain programs redesign their curricula to include additional work experiences to meet state funding requirements for vocational outcomes.
- Volunteer vs. Paid Emphasis: There is variation in how programs balance volunteer work and paid opportunities; some stress volunteer service for community contribution, while others focus on internships that may lead to paid roles.

Unique Insights and Examples

- Direct Employer Engagement: One director noted that a campus career fair led to an employer offering internships, showcasing the value of real-world exposure.
- Creative Role Mix: Some programs use both paid and unpaid roles to ensure students gain a variety of work experiences.
- Beyond Job Skills: Work opportunities also boost self-confidence and expand professional networks, reinforcing the value of these experiences.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Disaggregate Work Experiences: Future analyses will differentiate between paid internships, unpaid placements, and volunteer work rather than treating them as a single category.
- Measure Qualitative Benefits: Incorporate an intermediate outcome, such as "confidence gained through work experience."
- Consider Job Development Support: Factor in differences in post-program support, as some programs rely on external agencies while others provide integrated assistance.
- Acknowledge Contextual Factors: Recognize that employer willingness, local transportation, and funding environments can significantly influence both the quality and quantity of work experiences.

Outcome 1: Employment and Income Gains

Common Themes

- Critical Employment Outcome: Programs aim to secure employment for graduates, yet while many find jobs, retaining them remains challenging due to factors like poor transportation and insufficient ongoing support.
- Modest Earnings: Even when employed, graduates often earn low wages, frequently necessitating continued financial assistance.

Differences by Program/State

- Immediate vs. Extended Focus: Some programs, especially in Texas, emphasize rapid job placement, while others balance job attainment with further education.
- Support Models: Certain programs partner with state vocational rehabilitation services for job placements, whereas others expect graduates to find jobs independently.
- Geographical Influences: Graduates in rural areas typically face more transportation hurdles compared to their urban counterparts.

Unique Insights and Examples

- Transition Gaps: One coordinator noted that while programs help with résumé building and interview preparation, they do not assist in actually securing the job.

- Transportation as a Linchpin: Another interviewee stressed that unreliable transit is often a key factor in job loss.
- Realistic Earnings: A director remarked that most graduates realistically earn between $20,000 and $30,000 per year, not the higher salaries sometimes expected.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Separate Job Attainment and Retention: Future analyses will differentiate between getting a job and keeping one.
- Include Further Education Outcomes: Consider additional outcomes like enrollment in further education or vocational training.
- Adjust Income Proxies: Reflect incremental wage increases or reduced reliance on public support rather than assuming full financial independence.
- Incorporate Support Factors: Account for elements such as transportation support and ongoing job coaching that are critical to maintaining employment.

Outcome 2: Independent Living and Activities of Daily Living

Common Themes

- Skill Development: Programs focus on building independent living skills through residential settings or structured life-skills classes covering tasks like cooking, cleaning, budgeting, personal hygiene, and navigating transportation.
- Support Continuum: While the goal is complete independence, most graduates still require some support post-graduation.

Differences by Program/State

- Residential vs. Non-Residential: Programs with on-campus housing offer intensive hands-on training in daily living, whereas community-based programs emphasize skills like public transit use and digital literacy.
- Guardianship Variations: Some programs require students to be their own legal guardians to foster self-determination, while others allow parental guardianship, which can sometimes limit full independence.

Unique Insights and Examples

- Daily Routine Practice: One director shared that students rotate tasks, grocery shopping, cooking, laundry, to build practical life skills.
- Practical Learning: Examples include staff riding along with students to teach bus navigation.
- Relative Independence: A director noted that “independent living” is relative, emphasizing that complete independence is rare, and even learning skills like driving isn’t always without risk.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Specific Domain Breakdown: Define independent living skills into clear categories (e.g., cooking, cleaning, transportation, financial management) rather than using a broad term.
- Measure Autonomy: Use measures that capture reduced dependency or increased autonomy instead of a binary independent/non-independent outcome.
- Proxy Metrics: Include indicators like the percentage of students who can perform key daily activities without assistance or who change their living arrangements (e.g., moving from a family home to independent living).
- Qualitative Narratives: Incorporate case studies or narrative elements to capture qualitative improvements in daily living and self-advocacy.

- Regional Adjustments: Adjust financial proxies to reflect differences between residential and non-residential program models.

Outcome 3: Quality of Life and Social Well-Being

Common Themes

- Enhanced Quality of Life: Programs are designed to boost overall well-being by developing friendships, increasing community participation, improving self-confidence, and fostering a sense of belonging.
- Campus Engagement: Participation in campus events, clubs, and volunteering is seen as essential for building self-esteem.
- Structured Social Interaction: Programs often use peer mentoring and organized social activities to facilitate meaningful connections.

Differences by Program/State

- Structured vs. Organic Integration: Some programs engineer social outcomes with formal activities and mentoring, while others allow natural integration through everyday campus life.
- Cultural Context: In regions with stronger disability stigma, programs work actively to educate the community and reduce bias.
- Sensitive Topics: Some programs openly address issues like romantic relationships and sexual well-being, whereas others focus on general social and community participation.

Unique Insights and Examples

- Life-Changing Relationships: One director shared an example of two students who met during the program, fell in love, and got engaged.
- Normalization Through Participation: Another director highlighted a student's remark, feeling "normal" after engaging in typical college activities like attending games and socializing.
- Family Impact: Improved social well-being often positively affects family dynamics, as families witness increased independence and social engagement in their children.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Specific Outcome Indicators: Incorporate metrics such as the number of new friendships, frequency of community activities, and self-reported life satisfaction.
- Qualitative Data: Use case studies or testimonials to capture the nuances of confidence and social inclusion.
- Broader Impact: Expand the analysis to consider effects on family and community (e.g., reduced isolation, increased civic engagement).
- Monetary Proxies: Where possible, use survey data or internal assessments to assign proxy values to improvements in social well-being.
- Differentiated Social Outcomes: Clearly distinguish between outcomes achieved through structured program activities (like peer mentoring) and those emerging organically from campus life.

Outcome 4: Educational Attainment and Skill Development

Common Themes

- Alternative Credentials & Hands-On Learning: Programs emphasize skill-building and practical learning over traditional degrees. They award certificates, internal transcripts, or

micro-credentials while having students audit regular classes alongside specialized courses.
- Core Skill Development: The focus is on improving essential skills, such as communication, self-advocacy, and technology use, that boost both academic and vocational readiness.

Differences by Program/State

- Program Structure: Some operate as two-year certificate programs with internal transcripts; others partner with community colleges for formal credentials, though few lead to a full degree.
- Course Offerings: Variability exists, with some programs offering a broad range of electives (from STEM to liberal arts) and others concentrating on vocational training.
- Faculty Adaptation: In some settings, faculty are specially trained to support non-traditional learners, while other institutions simply have students audit mainstream courses.

Unique Insights and Examples

- **I**n-House Transcript: One program creates a unique record of achievement for students who audit courses.
- Parental vs. Employer Expectations: There is often a tension between parents' desire for a formal degree and employers' preference for practical skills.
- Innovative Adaptation: Some programs train faculty to modify courses for students with intellectual disabilities, enhancing both student success and academic inclusivity.
- Bridging Pathways: A portion of students use their program credentials as a stepping stone to further education or additional certifications.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Broaden Success Definitions: Include achievement of certificates, completion of non-credit courses, and progression to further education, not just traditional degrees.
- Measure Skill Development: Capture improvements in practical skills like communication, digital literacy, and self-advocacy.
- Recognize Alternative Outcomes: Focus on outcomes such as internal transcripts, certificates, and micro-credentials, which contribute to lifetime earnings even without a degree.
- Track Continued Education: Add indicators for graduates who pursue further education or training post-program.
- Refine Financial Proxies: Adjust financial measures to reflect the incremental income gains from non-degree credentials and vocational training rather than relying solely on the earnings premium of a traditional degree.

Outcome 5: Family Outcomes (Caregiver Time and Stress Relief)

Common Themes

- Mixed Emotions: Families feel both relief and anxiety as their young adults enter inclusive higher education. While parents worry initially, they soon experience relief when students learn to navigate daily life independently.
- Reduced Caregiving Burden: As students gain independence (e.g., using public transit or rideshares), parents no longer need to provide constant supervision or transportation.
- Emotional Benefits: Parents feel reassured and happier when their children build friendships and engage in campus life, easing the longstanding overprotectiveness.

- Expectation Management: Many families invest heavily, both emotionally and financially, and may expect traditional outcomes (like degrees or jobs). When benefits are more about personal growth (confidence, social skills), clear communication is needed to demonstrate long-term value.

Differences by Program/State

- Residential vs. Commuter:
    - *Residential Programs:* Students live on campus and often act as their own legal guardians, leading to greater caregiver relief despite initial adjustment challenges.
    - *Commuter/Dual-Enrollment Programs:* Students typically remain at home, keeping day-to-day parental involvement higher.
- State Funding Variability:
    - In states with dedicated scholarships or support funds, the financial burden on families is lower, reducing stress.
    - In states where families pay upfront (e.g., some Texas programs), higher costs contribute to increased financial strain.
- Cultural and Regional Priorities:
    - Some regions emphasize the overall college experience and social integration, while others focus more on employment outcomes, influencing how families define success.

Unique or Characteristic Responses

- Real-Life Impact:
    - One family's story highlighted a father who quit his career to become a full-time caregiver, illustrating the significant economic and personal sacrifices families can make.
- Practical Relief:
    - Examples include students learning to use public transit or rideshares, relieving parents from daily driving and constant supervision.
- Enhanced Family Dynamics:
    - Improved life skills among students lead to more balanced home environments and empower parents to eventually "let go," trusting their child's independence.
- Advocacy and Adjustment:
    - Some families, after witnessing their child's growth, become advocates for expanded services, while others need clear evidence of the program's long-term benefits to justify the investment.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Quantitative Metrics:
    - Incorporate measures such as "caregiver hours saved" and reductions in stress levels (using well-being surveys or opportunity cost analyses).
- Broaden Outcome Scope:
    - Capture both immediate relief (e.g., less daily supervision) and long-term benefits (e.g., improved family quality of life and reduced future care needs).
- Scenario-Based Analysis:
    - Present varying returns (e.g., avoided costs of social isolation versus increased earnings) to address different family expectations.
- Family Stakeholder Perspective:

- Develop a dedicated section translating results into family impact language (e.g., "On average, parents reported X% reduction in stress and Y extra hours per week of personal time"), ensuring the SROI reflects both tangible and intangible benefits for families.

Outcome 6: Public Sector Savings

Common Themes

- Indirect Savings: Transition programs can lower long-term public costs by reducing reliance on government benefits such as disability income, Medicaid services, and adult day programs.
- Incremental Gains: While complete financial independence is rare, even partial increases in employment and earnings help decrease public support needs.
- High Upfront Investment: These programs require substantial funding (for staff, housing, and services), but the long-term savings, through reduced benefit payments and increased tax revenue, can justify these costs.
- Collaborative Funding: Partnerships with state agencies (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid) are crucial to integrate funding streams and enhance overall public savings.

Differences by Program/State

- State Policy Variability:
  - Some states (like South Carolina) provide direct financial support (e.g., $10,000 per student annually), catalyzing savings through higher enrollment and job placement.
  - Others (e.g., Texas, Colorado) rely more on private funding, making public savings more incidental.
- Funding Integration: The ability to bill Medicaid or secure VR contracts varies widely, affecting how savings are calculated.
- Outcome Tracking: Some states have coordinated data systems to quantify outcomes (e.g., reduced Medicaid dependency), while others rely on case studies and anecdotal evidence.

Unique or Characteristic Responses

- Creative Cost-Sharing: One interviewee detailed a model where Medicaid covers service costs while VR funds the educational component, illustrating innovative public cost-sharing.
- Realistic Employment Impact: Practitioners noted that graduates often earn modest incomes (around $20 -30K), reducing benefits partially rather than eliminating them entirely.
- Economic Ripple Effects: Beyond direct savings, programs can free caregivers to re-enter the workforce, boosting tax revenue and economic productivity.
- Policy Success Stories: For instance, a South Carolina scholarship led to a significant enrollment increase, demonstrating how public investment can multiply savings over time.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Quantify Specific Offsets:
  - Incorporate estimates of reduced disability payments, Medicaid expenditures, and increased tax contributions.
  - Factor in earnings differentials between program graduates and non-participants.

- Include Caregiver Benefits: Assess the economic impact of enabling caregivers to resume or increase work.
- State-Specific Scenarios: Develop sensitivity analyses to reflect state-by-state variations in funding and outcome tracking.
- Dual Perspective Reporting: Present separate ROIs from a government perspective (public cost savings) and a broader social perspective (including qualitative community benefits).
- Case Study Integration: Use real-world alumni examples with estimated dollar impacts to substantiate the model.
- Broaden Value Metrics: Beyond hard savings, include measures for enhanced inclusion, volunteerism, and community engagement that contribute to long-term public benefits.

Outcome 7: Community Diversity Improvement

Common Themes

- Enhanced Visibility and Inclusion: Programs enable individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become active, visible members of college campuses and local communities.
- Social Integration: Students form friendships with neurotypical peers, join clubs, and participate in campus events, breaking down the longstanding stereotypes.
- Reciprocal Learning: Structured peer mentoring and reverse inclusion models educate both students with disabilities and their neurotypical counterparts, fostering empathy and broadening social networks.
- Cultural Shift: Over time, community attitudes evolve, from viewing disability as a limitation to recognizing the full potential of these students in academic, social, and workplace settings.

Differences by Program/State

- Integration Models:
    - *Fully Inclusive Programs:* Students live on campus, attend regular classes, and interact daily with the broader student body, yielding widespread diversity gains.
    - *Hybrid or Separate Cohorts:* Programs with specialized classes or dual-enrollment models may have a more limited but focused diversity impact, primarily through volunteer interactions.
- Regional and Cultural Context: Urban or progressive areas typically display greater acceptance, whereas communities with a history of segregation might witness more dramatic attitude shifts once inclusive programs are introduced.
- Community Engagement Extent: Some programs build robust community partnerships and require regular off-campus volunteering, while others are more campus-centric, affecting the scale of diversity improvements.

Unique or Characteristic Responses

- Transformative Personal Stories: One director recounted how community perceptions shifted from expecting institutionalization to embracing full college lives, including students driving or starting businesses.
- Mutual Benefits: Programs employing “reverse inclusion” have neurotypical volunteers learning alongside students with disabilities, resulting in mutual enrichment and lasting friendships.

- Equity in Inclusion: Some practitioners emphasized the need to diversify the participant pool, expanding outreach to HBCUs, MSIs, and underserved communities, to ensure that inclusion spans across race and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Amendments to the Original Analysis Plan

- Quantitative and Qualitative Metrics:
    - Introduce indicators such as the number of peer mentors and volunteers, participation in community training sessions, and pre/post surveys on attitudes toward disability.
    - Incorporate proxy measures for social capital, such as the average number of new friendships or community engagements per student.
- Mapping Broader Impacts:
    - Link program outcomes to institutional changes (e.g., adoption of Universal Design for Learning or diversity training for faculty) and community-level diversity indicators (employment diversity, civic engagement).
- Focus on Underserved Populations:
    - Recommend expanding programs to community colleges and minority-serving institutions to multiply inclusion benefits and ensure equitable access.
- Document Ripple Effects:
    - Use case studies and qualitative data to capture long-term cultural shifts and the broader impact on community attitudes, even when these benefits are not easily monetized.

Appendix B

Bios of our interviews

Christina Ruffatti, M.A., CRC

Christina Ruffatti is the Executive Director of the GOAL (Go On and Learn) Program at the University of Northern Colorado. With a background in rehabilitation counseling and vocational support, she leads one of Colorado's pioneering inclusive higher education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), promoting academic inclusion, career development, and self-advocacy.

Dr. Kristin Johnson, Ph.D.

Dr. Kristin Johnson is the Executive Director of the RESTORE Hub and an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Arkansas State University. With over 20 years as a practicing school psychologist, she directs transition programs that support students with IDD in achieving academic, vocational, and independent living goals, while advancing inclusive education initiatives at A-State.

Amanda Tapp

Amanda Tapp is the Life Prep Program Director at Green Oaks Education and Support, Inc. in Arlington, Texas. She oversees the Green Oaks Life Prep program, a two-year Christian higher education initiative that prepares adults with intellectual disabilities for employment, independent living, and community participation through vocational training and apartment living experiences.

Kaelin Rubenzer

Kaelin Rubenzer is the Executive Director of Lifelong Learning with Friends (LLWF) at the University of Texas at Austin. With a background in neuroscience and a personal connection to the disability community, she leads LLWF's reverse-inclusion model where adults with IDD learn alongside neurotypical college students, promoting academic engagement and social inclusion.

Dr. Anita Lang

Anita Lang is the Program Director for Aggie ACHIEVE at Texas A&M University. With nearly two decades of experience in disability services, she oversees individualized academic, employment, and independent living support for students with IDD, fostering an inclusive college experience in a leading comprehensive transition program.

Dr. Stephanie MacFarland, Ph.D.

Dr. Stephanie MacFarland is an Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Arizona and Director of Project FOCUS. With over 40 years of experience in special and general education, she specializes in supporting students with complex disabilities and leads efforts to enhance inclusive education, communication development, and self-determination.

Dr. Carrie Shockley, Ed.D.
Dr. Carrie Shockley is the Interim University Assistant Dean for Student Inclusion Initiatives at the City University of New York (CUNY) and Director of the John F. Kennedy, Jr. Institute for Worker Education. She has been a leader in expanding college access for students with intellectual disabilities through initiatives like CUNY Unlimited.

Ryan Morrison
Ryan Morrison is the Program Director of WinthropLIFE at Winthrop University. With experience across multiple student support areas, he leads efforts to foster academic, employment, and independent living success for students with IDD, contributing to inclusive education initiatives and strategic planning at Winthrop.

Michelle L. Mitchell
Michelle L. Mitchell is a Professor and Disability Learning Specialist at Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) and Program Director of the SEED (Success, Engagement, Education, Determination) Program. She has led SEED's development into a model of inclusive postsecondary education, providing academic coaching, vocational training, and mentoring for students with IDD.

Dr. Orley A. Templeton, OTD, OTR/L, CAS
Dr. Orley Templeton is an Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy at Misericordia University and Manager of the Integrated Studies Program. She directs the U.S. Department of Education-approved CTP, supporting young adults with autism and intellectual disabilities in achieving inclusive academic, career, and independent living goals.

Daniel Cain
Daniel Cain is the Program Director of EAGLE Academy at Georgia Southern University. With over 16 years of higher education experience, he leads one of Georgia's comprehensive transition programs for students with IDD, focusing on workforce development and inclusive college experiences.

Kyle Closen, M.Ed.
Kyle Closen is the Director of the Clark Inclusive Scholars Program (CISP) and an Assistant Teaching Professor at Bowling Green State University Firelands. He leads a two-year certificate program focused on academic engagement, career development, and full college participation for students with IDD.

Susan Barbisan
Susan Barbisan is a retired special education teacher from Utah with extensive experience in supporting students with disabilities through the transition to adulthood. She was consulted to provide background and historical context on the development of transition services and disability advocacy practices.

Appendix C

List of Questions

Topic 1: Overall Impression

- Question: We've presented you with a logic model for a potential intervention to increase employment for people with childhood-onset intellectual and developmental disabilities. What are your initial thoughts?

Topic 2: Social Benefit

- Question: What kinds of social benefits do you see resulting from this type of intervention?

Topic 3: Cost and Resource Needs

- Question: What would you expect this intervention to cost or require in terms of resources?

Topic 4: Suggestions for Improvement

- Question: Do you have suggestions for improvements to our intervention or to the logic model itself?

Topic 5: Recommendations for Further Input

- Question: Do you have suggestions for other people we should ask about this logic model?

Appendix D

Survey Overview

Survey Distribution Overview

The survey was distributed to a targeted sample of 187 individuals affiliated with Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs across multiple states. Participants included CTP program staff, alumni, family members, and community partners. Recruitment primarily relied on outreach through Think College directory contacts, supplemented by snowball sampling based on expert interviewee recommendations.

To encourage candid participation and protect respondent privacy, the survey was administered anonymously, and no identifying information (such as participant names or program affiliations) was collected.

A total of 30 responses were received, representing a response rate of approximately 16%.

Appendix E

Survey Questions

1. Which of the following best describes your project? (Select all that apply)
    a. TPSID Project: Received federal TPSID demonstration funding.
    b. CTP Project: Approved as a Comprehensive Transition Program, enabling students to receive federal financial aid.
    c. Both TPSID and CTP: The project has both TPSID funding and CTP approval.
2. How many students are currently enrolled in your program?
3. How many students completed or graduated from your program in the past year? (Numeric response)
4. Typically, how long do students participate in your program?
5. Does your program offer on-campus housing options?
6. What was the total annual operating budget of your program for the past fiscal year? (Numeric response in US dollars; if uncertain, please provide an estimated amount, as this is very important to our project.)
7. How many paid staff members work in your program? Please indicate the full- and part-time staff separately:
8. What is the average number of volunteer hours per week?
9. Which types of courses and/or credentials does your program offer?
10. Does your program offer internships, work-based learning, or similar job-related experiences?
11. Do your students participate in mainstream campus extracurricular activities (e.g., clubs, student organizations)?
12. Approximately what percentage of graduates are in paid employment in the open labor market?
(Numeric response as a percentage, e.g., “about 75%”)
13. What percentage of graduates are able to live independently or semi-independently (e.g., in community-based settings) after completing your program?
(Numeric response as a percentage)
14. How does your program support independent transportation?
15. Have families experienced a reduction in caregiving time as a result of student participation in your program?
16. Does your program include any components that involve or support parents/guardians (e.g., parent training sessions, support groups)? If so, please describe these elements and their impact on family dynamics.

17. Do your students participate in community volunteer work or public service activities?

18. Anything else you'd like to share with us? Success stories? Something we didn't capture? Something that works particularly well?

Appendix F

Selected Relevant Legal Frameworks

Selected Legal Frameworks

This appendix provides a brief overview of key legislative acts referenced throughout the report. These laws form the foundational legal context for Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) programs and broader efforts to promote educational access, equity, and inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance, including colleges, universities, and vocational programs. It laid the groundwork for subsequent disability rights legislation and continues to serve as a critical foundation for accessibility and accommodations in higher education.
(Citation: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794.)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including employment, education, transportation, and access to public and private spaces open to the general public. Title II and Title III of the ADA are particularly relevant to postsecondary education, requiring colleges and universities to provide reasonable accommodations and ensure equal access for students with disabilities.
(Citation: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) designed to meet their unique needs. The 2004 reauthorization strengthened requirements for transition services, mandating that individualized education programs (IEPs) include postsecondary goals and planning by age 16. IDEA lays the foundation for preparing students with disabilities for life after secondary education, including postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.
(Citation: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.)

Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 and introduced several provisions aimed at expanding access to postsecondary education for

students with intellectual disabilities. Specifically, HEOA created the federal Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) program designation, enabling students enrolled in approved CTP programs to access certain forms of federal financial aid, including Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), and Federal Work-Study funds, even if they are not pursuing a traditional degree.
(Citation: Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-315, 122 Stat. 3078.)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) modernized the nation's workforce development system and placed greater emphasis on competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. WIOA strengthened collaboration between vocational rehabilitation services and education systems, enhancing transition planning and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities , including those participating in Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary programs.
(Citation: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-128, 128 Stat. 1425.)