

# Think College REPORTS



## Profile of Students Attending Cohort 2 TPSID Programs: Enrollment and Completion by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

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2,021 students entered TPSID programs for the first time between 2015–2020

The 2018–19 academic year saw the highest student enrollment in the 5-year period (486 first-year students)



### AGE

Average age

**20.6**

Students ranged in age from **15–49**

98% were under age **30**



### GENDER

Male

**61%**

(n=1223)

Female

**39%**

(n=793)

Other

**.2%**

(n=4)



### RACE / ETHNICITY

White  
**60%**

Black or African American  
**26%**

Asian  
**6%**

American Indian or Alaska Native  
**1%**

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
**1%**

Unknown  
**9%**

Hispanic / Latino / a / x  
**12%**



## INTRODUCTION

Postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disability (ID) steadily increased between 2015 and 2020, in part due to a federal model demonstration program called the Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID). This program, implemented by the Office of Postsecondary Education, commenced in 2010 and was funded again in 2015, when 25 grants were awarded to institutions of higher education to create, expand, or enhance high-quality, inclusive higher education experiences leading to positive outcomes for individuals with ID. This report highlights student-level characteristic data from Cohort 2 TPSID programs between 2015 and 2020.

## METHODS

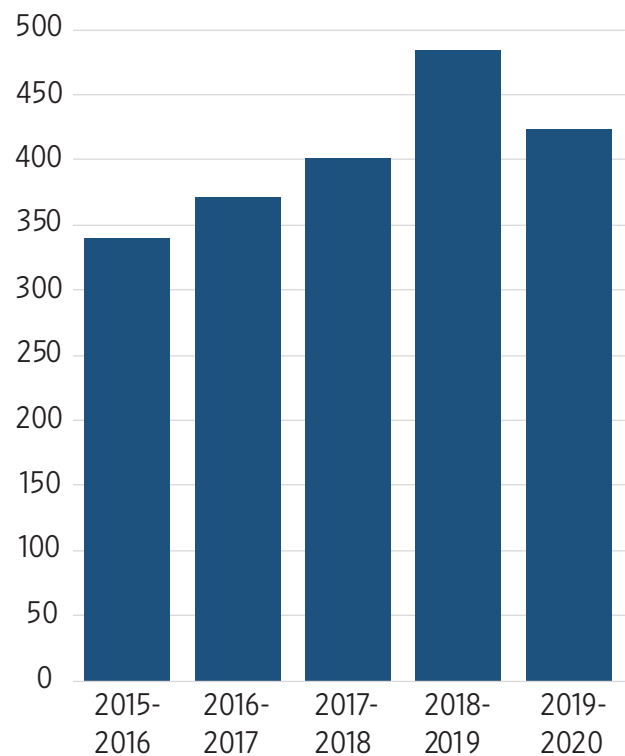
The Think College National Coordinating Center (NCC) at the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston oversees evaluation of TPSID model demonstration programs. We collect program data annually, including student enrollment information, as part of the program evaluation process. Program staff report data via an evaluation protocol programmed into a secure online database using Quickbase. Data analyzed for this report are inclusive of all students who enrolled at TPSID programs for the first time between 2015 and 2020. We analyzed the data using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

## FINDINGS

### Enrollments by year

The number of students who entered TPSID programs for the first time between 2015 and 2020 was 2,021. The 2018–2019 academic year saw the highest student enrollment in the 5-year period ( $n = 486$  first-year students, see Figure 1). The majority of student enrollments were in 4-year institutions of higher education (82%), with only 19% of enrollments occurring at 2-year institutions of higher education.

Figure 1. Number of First Year Students by Year



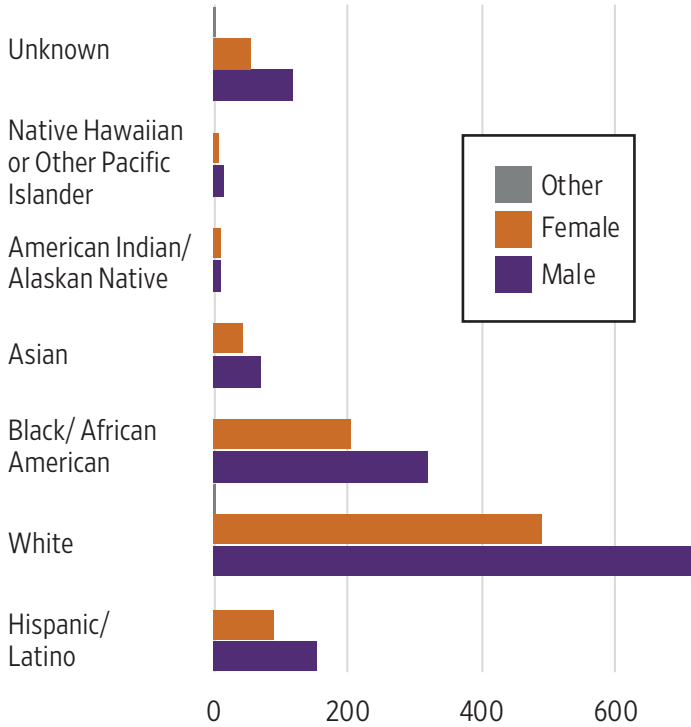
### Demographics

The average age of students enrolled in a TPSID program was 20.6 years old (ranging from 15–49). Almost all students (98%) were under age 30 when they enrolled in a TPSID program. The most frequent age at which students began attending a TPSID program was 19 years old ( $n = 520$ ). This is congruent with national trends for college students with and without disabilities across the country (Education Data, 2021).

More students were male (61%,  $n = 1223$ ) than female (39%,  $n = 793$ ) or other gender (.2%,  $n = 4$ ). Gender was missing for 1 student.

More than half of students were White (60%,  $n = 1206$ ), 26% of students identified as Black or African American ( $n = 523$ ), 6% identified as Asian ( $n = 114$ ), 1% as American Indian or Alaskan Native ( $n = 24$ ), and 1% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ( $n = 24$ ). For 9% ( $n = 171$ ) of students, their race and ethnicity were listed as unknown. Forty-one students indicated more than one race. In terms of ethnicity, 12% ( $n = 243$ ) were Hispanic/Latino/a/x. Figure 2 shows the race and ethnicity of students by gender. Most students from Hispanic/Latino/a/x backgrounds were male ( $n = 154$ ).

**Figure 2: Gender of Cohort 2 Students by Ethnicity and Race**



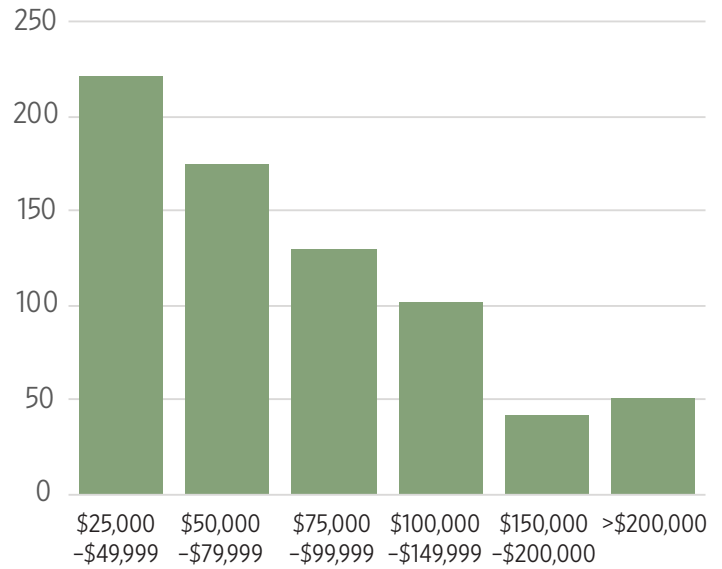
Note: n for Hispanic/Latino = 2011; n for all gender categories = 2020

The gender and race of enrolled students was relatively equal across 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education, though 2-year colleges reported a slightly higher enrollment rate for Hispanic/Latino/a/x students (18% at 2-year institutions of higher education vs. 10% in 4-year institutions of higher education).

Data regarding annual household income were reported for 721 students. The most frequently reported annual household income was between \$25,000-\$49,999 (31%, n = 221) followed by \$50,000-\$79,999 (24%, n = 175), \$75,000-\$99,999 (18%, n = 130), \$100,000-\$149,999 (14%, n = 102), \$150,000-\$200,000 (6%, n = 42), and >\$200,000 (7%, n = 51). See Figure 3.

It is important to note household income data for 1,300 students (64% of all students) were not reported and therefore these findings are not representative of the average annual household income of all students enrolled at TPSID programs.

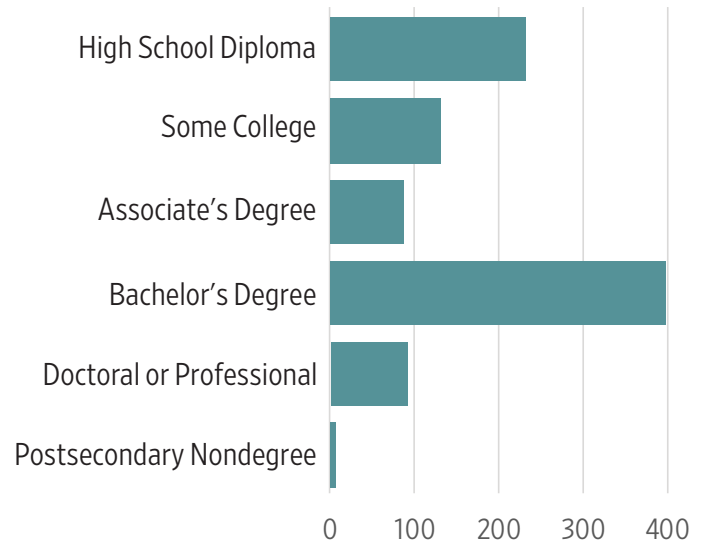
**Figure 3: Household Income of Cohort 2 Students**



Note: n = 721. Data were missing for 1,300 students

Data on parent levels of education were reported for 952 students. The most frequently reported level of parent education was a bachelor's degree (n = 397), followed by a high school diploma or equivalent (n = 232), some college (n = 133), doctoral or professional degree (n = 93), associate degree (n = 90), and postsecondary non-degree award (n = 7). Data were missing for more than half of students (n = 1,069). See Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Parent Education Level for Cohort 2 Students**



Note: n = 952. Data were missing for 1,069 students

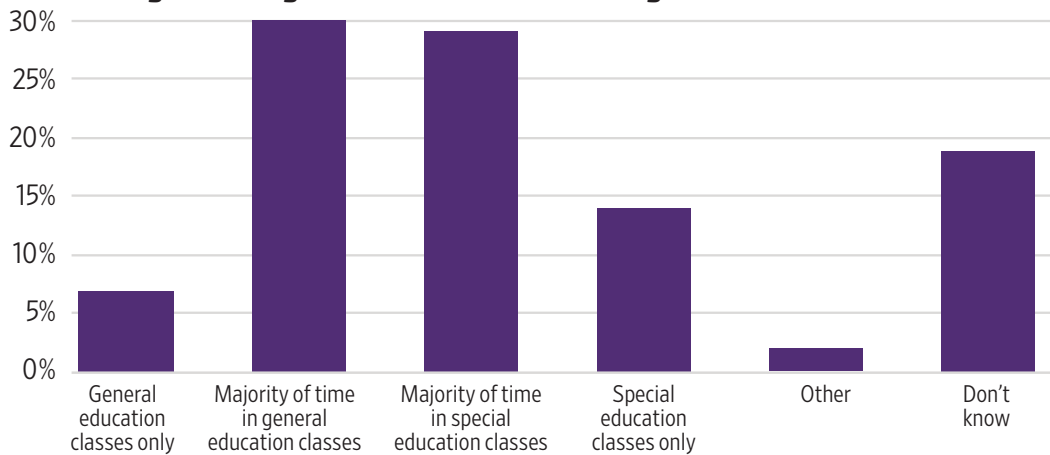


## Student high school experiences

Prior to enrolling in TPSID programs, students attending Cohort 2 TPSIDs either spent the majority of their time in high school in general education classes (30%, n = 604) or spent the majority of their time in special education classes (29%, n = 582). Fourteen percent (n = 272) attended special education classes only, 7% (n = 133) were fully included in general education and attended no special education classes, 2% (n = 36) indicated another type of setting, and 19% (n = 378) indicated “don’t know.” See Figure 5.

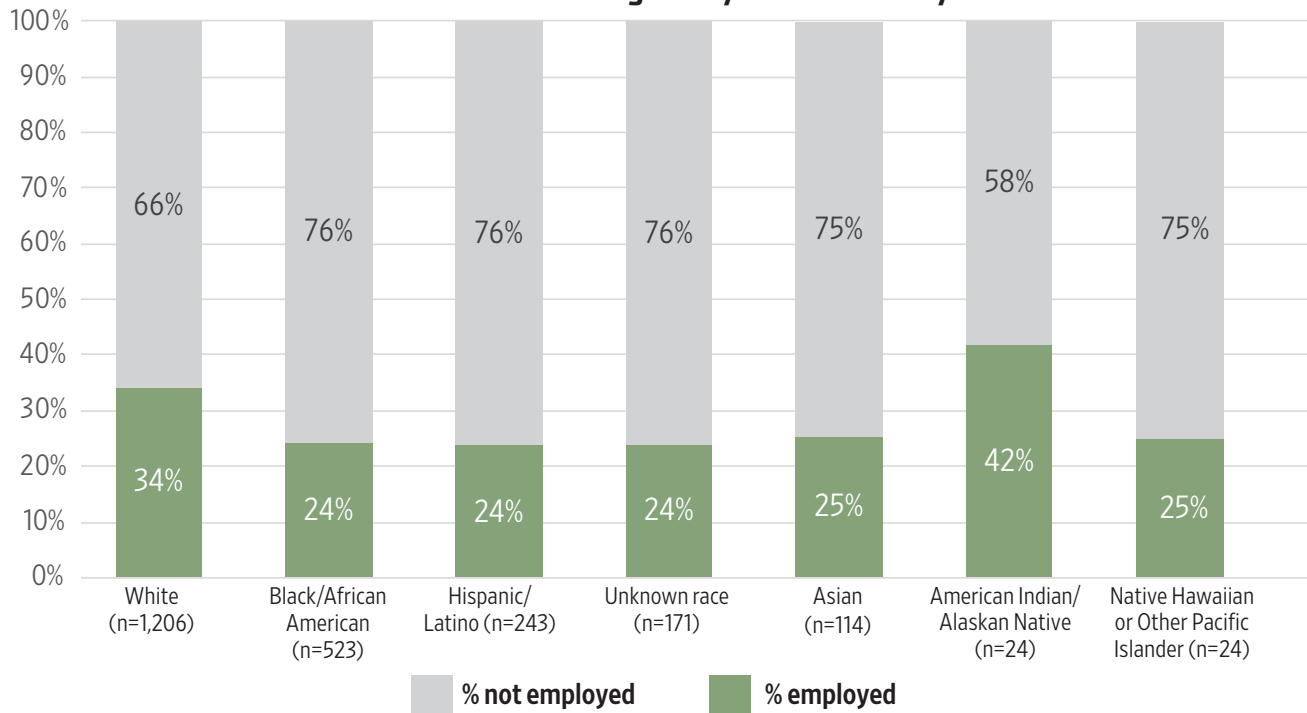
The majority of students lacked previous employment experience prior to entering Cohort 2 TPSIDs. Slightly more than two-thirds (68%; n = 1,383) of students did not have previous employment experience, 30% (n = 610) were or had been employed at or above minimum wage, and .3% (n = 6) indicated “don’t know.” Forty two percent of American Indian/Alaskan Native students and 34% of White students were employed prior to entering the TPSID program compared with around a quarter of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Other

**Figure 5: High School Education Setting of Cohort 2 Students**



Note: n = 2,021

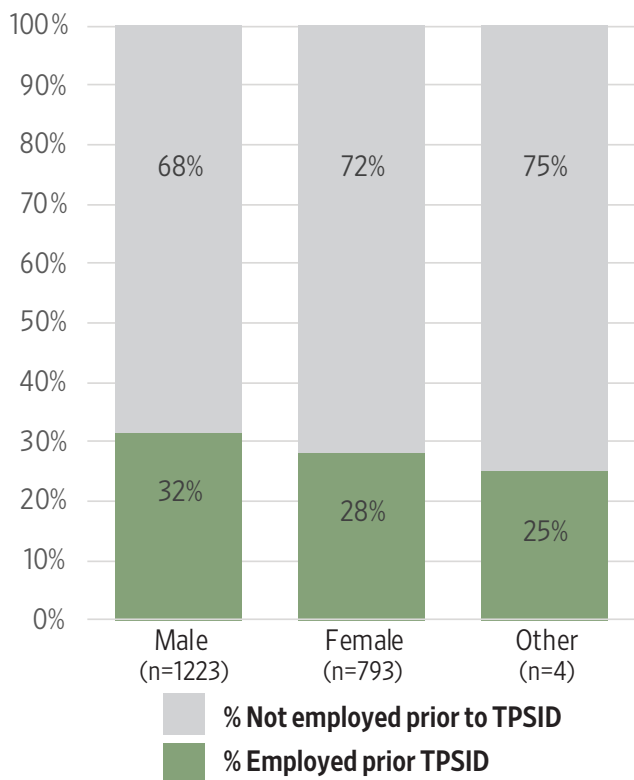
**Figure 6. Percentage of Cohort 2 Students Employed at or above Minimum Wage Prior to TPSID Program by Race / Ethnicity.**



Note: n = 2021 students. Figure includes 41 students from two or more races and 243 of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity

Pacific Islander students and students for who race was unknown (see Figure 6). Slightly more male students (32%) were employed prior to the TPSID program than female students (28%) or students of other genders (25%; See Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Percentage of Cohort 2 Students Employed at or above Minimum Wage Prior to TPSID program by Gender.**



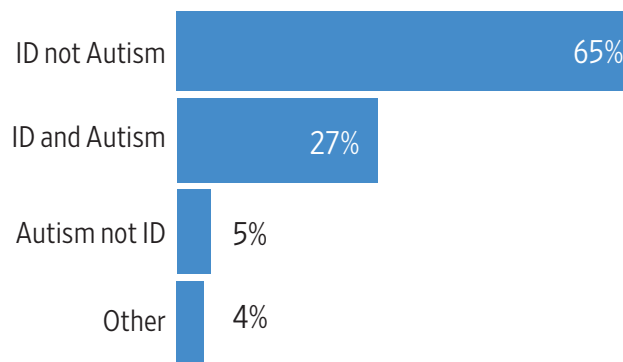
**Disability and benefits**

Most students attending Cohort 2 TPSIDs had intellectual disability (91%, n = 1,847). The type of documentation used to confirm ID diagnosis was provided for 59% of students (n = 1,099) but not indicated for 41% of students (n = 748). Types of documentation used to confirm ID diagnosis were a physician’s documentation (66%, n = 1,218), a neuropsychological or psychological examination report (15%, n = 273), another form of documentation (15%, n = 268), an individualized education program (2%, n = 31), or Social Security Administration disability determination (4%, n = 64).

Students attending Cohort 2 TPSIDs were also reported to have disabilities including autism (32%, n = 638), developmental delay (13%, n = 251), other health impairment (12%, n = 232), and specific learning disability (11%, n = 222).

Almost all students (96%, n = 1,941) had either ID and/or autism. Of those students, 65% (n = 1,303) had ID but not autism; 27% (n = 544) had both ID and autism; and 5% (n = 94) had autism but not ID. The remaining 4% (n = 80) had disabilities other than ID or autism. See Figure 8.

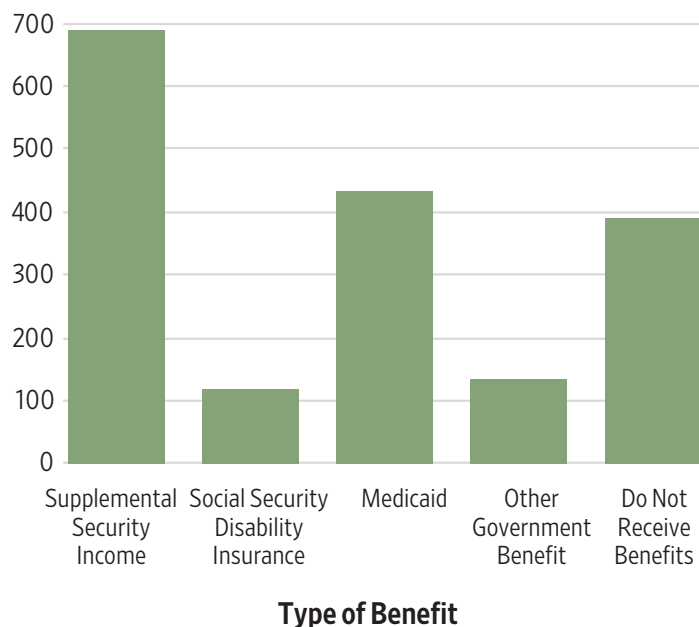
**Figure 8: Percentage of Cohort 2 Students with ID, Autism, or Other Disabilities**



Information on government benefits was provided for 64% of students (n = 1,288) but missing for 36% (n = 733). Students who attended Cohort 2 TPSID programs received the following government benefits (see Figure 9):

- Supplemental Security Income - 34% (n=688)
- Social Security Disability Insurance - 6% (n=117)
- Medicaid - 21% (n=432)
- Other Government Benefit - 7% (n=135)
- Did not receive benefits - 19% (n=389)

**Figure 9: Number of Cohort 2 Students Receiving Each Type of Government Benefit**



Note: n = 1,288. Data were missing for 733 students.

## Length of attendance and program completion

Up to and including the 2019–2020 academic year, 37% (n = 738) students attended their TPSID program for just one year, 44% (n = 880) of students attended for two years, 12% (n = 249) of students attended for three years, 7% (n = 140) of students attended for four years, and .7% (n = 14) students attended for five years. Note these numbers include students who attended a program but did not complete it.

Students who attended 2-year colleges typically spent either one or two years enrolled (83%, n = 313), though 17% (n = 66) of students were enrolled between three and five years. Similarly, 80% (n = 1310) of students who attended 4-year colleges or universities spent either one or two years enrolled and 20% (n = 332) of students were enrolled for between three and five years.

A total of 1,410 students exited their TPSID program between 2015–2020. Of the students who exited, 76% (n = 1068) completed the TPSID program and earned at least one credential. This is slightly higher than the national credential achievement rate (71%) for all adult-aged individuals who exited postsecondary programs in 2020 (US Department of Labor, 2021).

Among the 342 students who did not complete a program, the most common reasons given for exit were: no longer wanting to attend the program (n = 166), transferring to another postsecondary program (n = 93), being dismissed from the program (n = 66), and unknown reasons (n = 30). Students who did not complete programs also exited for various other reasons, such as: health and financial issues, offers of employment, or the student moved from program location. Thirteen students listed more than one reason for exit.

For students in Cohort 2 who started in 2015–2016 or later and completed a TPSID program in 2019–2020 or earlier (n = 958), the average number of years attended was 2.21 (ranging between 1–5 years). Students who completed programs at 2-year institutions (n = 191) attended for an average of 2.07 years, and students who completed programs at 4-year institutions (n = 767) attended for an average of 2.25 years.

## CONCLUSION

Over 2,000 students with intellectual and other disabilities were enrolled in 65 colleges and universities participating in the TPSID model demonstration program between 2015–2020. These students came with varying levels of previous experience accessing inclusive academic education and engaging in paid employment in high school. The gaps in previous experience often required additional supports by TPSID staff to help students succeed in inclusive college courses and to attain competitive integrated employment (Grigal et al., 2019). The most common student profile was a White, male student with an intellectual disability attending a 4-year university. Most students attended their program for two years and completed their program attaining a credential. Comparing the TPSID enrollment in 2019–2020 to the national undergraduate profiles (US Census Bureau), there is a slightly higher enrollment of White students and Black students in the TPSIDs and fewer Hispanic students. Enrollment of Asian students was similar across both groups. The high proportion of White, non-Hispanic students in both TPSIDs and all undergraduates demonstrates the continued need for efforts to support access to inclusive higher education for Black students, Hispanic students, Asian students, and other students of color.

Enrollment in 2-year or community colleges was notably low. This has been attributed to issues connected to the request for proposals for the TPSID model demonstration program, which awarded more points if an applicant offered residential services; a characteristic more commonly offered by 4-year institutes of higher education.



To ensure a more prepared group of future students enrolled in the TPSID programs, educators in high school could focus on expanding access to the general curriculum and providing paid employment experiences while students are enrolled in high school. College and universities could also expand diversity of the students enrolled in TPSIDs by addressing this issue in their recruitment efforts and cultivating program development at colleges and universities with more diverse student bodies as well as Alaskan Native- or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Serving Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Native American Non-Tribal Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities.



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### RECOMMENDED CITATION

Choiseul-Praslin, B., Papay, C., & Grigal, M. (2022). Think College Reports: Profile of Students Attending Cohort 2 TPSID Programs: Enrollment and Completion by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity . Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.

This report is a publication of the Think College National Coordinating Center, a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education (Grant No. P407B200001). The opinions contained in this document are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.



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