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Employment Outcomes for Students in Inclusive College Programs

When looking at inclusive college education programs, career preparation is an important consideration. Students and their families want to know how well a particular college program prepares a student for a career or competitive job opportunity.

Inclusive college programs offer students the opportunity to explore various career paths in paid and unpaid roles (such as internships) and complete career planning exercises with the expectation that they will realize competitive employment upon completion of the program. According to Think College*, a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability, only half of students enrolled in an inclusive college program have held a paying job prior to entering college. Once in college, however, 93 percent of students are engaged in paid employment or meaningful career development activities. And, students who obtained a paid job while enrolled in college were almost 15 times more likely to have a paid job at the end of their college program than those who did not have a paying job while attending college.

The following are examples of paid employment held by students or alumni of inclusive college programs:

- New Parent Outreach Assistance at a nonprofit advocacy organization
- Central Sterile Processing (CSP) Technician at a hospital
- Veterinary Assistant at an animal clinic
- Caregiver at a nursing home
- Educational Aide at an elementary school
- Physical Therapy Aide at a hospital
- Host at a restaurant

Adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities who completed college programs had much higher competitive employment rates (93 percent) than the general population of adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (18 percent).

If you're looking for ways to best prepare your family member for competitive employment, consider an inclusive college program. Achieva can help you plan! Contact Karen Oosterhous koosterhous@achieva.info or 412.995.5000 x606 for more information.

** Data in this article is from the annual report of Think College (ThinkCollege.net), Year Four Annual Report of the TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (2018–2019).*