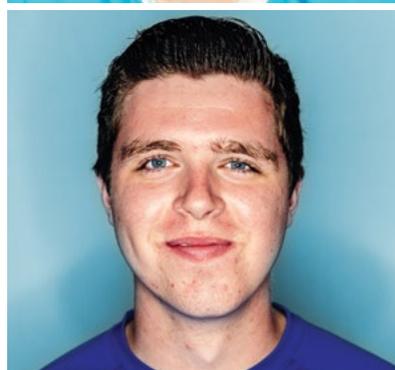




**BUILD
YOUR
FUTURE**



**COLLEGE
STEPS**SM



PROGRAM OVERVIEW



COLLEGESM STEPS

WELCOME!

This document outlines frequently asked questions and provides general information on roles and expectations as well as the services College Steps offers to students. For more specific information on College Steps, please contact our team at:

contactus@collegesteps.org

Thank you for your interest in College Steps!

Sincerely,

College Steps Leadership Team



As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), College Steps' mission is to provide personalized college support for students with learning and social challenges in college, work and life.

OUR PROGRAM



WHY HAVE I RECEIVED THIS PACKET?

This packet is designed to provide you with overarching information about College Steps. Each college partnership College Steps manages differs slightly in the type of students supported and programs offered. For specific questions, please email us at contactus@collegesteps.org. We welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you.



WWW.COLLEGESTEPS.ORG

OUR MODEL



ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Research has consistently demonstrated the value of personalized planning in predicting the success of youth living with cognitive, developmental, or learning disabilities. This is evidenced in higher graduation rates and gainful employment within personalized models of care. Therefore, as a first step of our support process, College Steps staff work with each student to help the student design an Individualized College Plan (ICP). The ICP outlines areas of need as well as tracks progress throughout a student's college experience and includes; Academic Enrichment, Social Involvement, Independent Living Skill Advancement, Pre-Employment Training.



College Steps provides a personalized model of peer-based mentorship and support on the college campus. College Steps' campus-based professional staff are present on campus to support the navigation of each student's college plan and supervise the delivery of the peer mentorship model. College Steps is not an academic support program.

HOW WE SUPPORT



WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT DOES COLLEGE STEPS PROVIDE?

College Steps is a comprehensive transition provider. Our model is based upon the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model which is an evidence-supported practice for improving the progress and outcomes of youth and young adults with learning, behavior, and developmental challenges. College Steps' model is influenced by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework which seeks to optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. College Steps personalizes supportive transition activities within the college setting in alignment with each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), should they have one in place.

Students enrolled in College Steps first meet with the Program Coordinator to discuss their college and career aspirations. Students then work with the College Steps Program Coordinator and supported by feedback from the larger support team (e.g., IEP team, school leadership, and caregivers) to devise an Individualized College Plan (ICP) that includes the following core components:



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Each semester, College Steps' transition students have the option of taking college courses either "for credit", "noncredit" or "for audit". College Steps transition students are afforded full access to campus support services as needed (Accessibility Services, library access, computer labs). Academic enrichment is customized to the student's preferences and needs (e.g., study skills, time management, test-taking strategies, note-taking, etc.).



SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

Social and extracurricular involvement is supported by College Steps' Peer Mentors and an Instructional Coordinator. Peer Mentors help link College Steps students to the social element of college life via introduction to new clubs or activities, social groups, extracurricular events, and summer activities. The Instructional Coordinator delivers College Steps' unique curriculum of classroom and community-based social skills supports.



INDEPENDENT LIVING

Promotion of self-advocacy and independent living skills are key components to this element of our support. This promotion is coordinated by College Steps' Instructional Coordinator who manages College Steps' weekly- and fully-integrated, independent living course called, "Community."

Community pulls upon local professionals (e.g., nutritionists, finance experts, personal trainers, etc.) to present on their area of expertise for the benefit of College Steps' students and the campus community at large.



PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Professional, skill development is honed within College Steps' pre-employment training program. Here, students learn everything from the basics of resume writing to more advanced skills such as job interviewing and managing professional relationships within the work setting. In addition, students take part in one or more work experiences, which are organized by the Program Coordinator (see below for additional detail).

OUR STUDENTS



WHAT IS COLLEGE STEPS' TARGET POPULATION?

College Steps offers college support for students living with social, communication, or learning challenges. We offer programs for three primary categories of students:

1. Transition students with **Individual Education Programs**, ages 16-22, interested in continuing their IEP transition goals, who have completed their academic requirements to graduate.
2. **Enrolled college students** who are entering into or already operating within the college setting but for whom navigating college is challenged by social, academic, or independent living barriers.
3. Students with **certificate based career tracks**, under the age of 26 years, interested in post-secondary education.



OUR STAFF



HOW IS COLLEGE STEPS STAFFED?

Each College Steps partnership is staffed by a college campus-based team. In most locations, this team includes a full-time, on-campus, Program Coordinator, an Instructional Coordinator, and Peer Mentors. As a first line of support, all communication about College Steps services should be conveyed to the Program Coordinator and/or Instructional Coordinator at the campus with which you work.

ROLE OF PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The primary role of the Program Coordinator is to support the academic and social success of College Steps students on campus and coordinate with faculty and staff about student related matters. The Program Coordinator develops the students Individualized College Plan (ICP) and tracks progress throughout their college experience utilizing our four pillar model. Any questions about College Steps services on campus should be directed to the College Steps Program Coordinator.

ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL COORDINATOR*

The primary role of the Instructional Coordinator is to support peer mentors on each campus. This individual serves as the first line of support for supervision of peer mentors and ensures College Steps' quality standards for its peer mentorship program are maintained. In addition, this individual leads the weekly Community course which meets 1-2 times per week and is the central focus of College Steps' independent living skills curriculum.



* Note, dependent upon the size of a given program, a Program Coordinator will also serve the role of an Instructional Coordinator.

OUR PEER MENTORS



ROLE OF PEER MENTOR

Peer Mentors are enrolled undergraduate students who are also paid employees of College Steps. Peer Mentors are trained and supervised by College Steps' Instructional Coordinators* to provide appropriate supports for College Steps students both in and out of the classroom.

WHAT PEER MENTORS DO:

- Space permitting, accompany College Steps students to class to provide appropriate supports* *
- Assist students with appropriate social engagement within the classroom and on campus
- Encourage and support communication between College Steps students, faculty, and fellow students
- Provide appropriate modeling of classroom etiquette
- Support student to advocate for accessibility of course material – as relevant
- Assist with executive functioning, organization, time management, study skills, test taking skills, assistive technology, taking parallel notes to compare to student's after class
- Provide connections to relevant campus supports

WHAT PEER MENTORS DO NOT DO:

- Serve as a note taker
- Assist the student with taking exams
- Complete assignments on behalf of the student
- Interface with faculty or staff on behalf of the student without the student present
- Advocate for the student without the student's permission and presence

* Note, dependent upon the size of a given program, a Program Coordinator will also serve the role of an Instructional Coordinator.

** Based on student area of current need and the level of support they receive, classroom-based peer mentorship may not be provided in every class.

OUR COMMUNICATION



HOW COLLEGE STEPS COMMUNICATES WITH THE COLLEGE AND FACULTY.

Each institution of higher education (IHE) with which College Steps partners enters into an Operating Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with College Steps. As a component of these agreements, the IHE provides to College Steps a point of contact and liaison from the IHE's central administration to work with College Steps leadership to ensure regular communication and partnership. The respective leadership teams meet frequently on an informal basis and more formally on a quarterly basis.

In addition, prior to each academic year, and as a component of the Operating Agreement the IHE signs with College Steps, the IHE distributes at least two campus wide emails (once in the spring and once in the summer) describing the College Steps partnership. In addition, the IHE maintains priority space on its website for information about College Steps.

To support a deeper understanding of College Steps' role on campus, when applicable, Program Coordinators set up meetings with instructors who are scheduled to have College Steps students in their classroom. During these meetings, the Program Coordinator leads a conversation about the role of College Steps on campus and gathers information about the course components. If relevant, this information is then used to help devise the College Steps support plan for the student. The Program Coordinator follows up from the initial contact with the instructor with periodic outreach to check in on the student's progress and support plan. Faculty are asked to complete a survey on their impression of and feedback for College Steps at the end of each semester.

College Steps provides peer mentor support for some but not all college courses the student takes. Decisions on if and when a peer mentor will attend a class with a student depends on the student's needs, preferences, and available support time. College Steps provides peer mentor support based on areas of priority identified in the student's ICP.

Of note, all students enrolled in College Steps are asked to provide reciprocal releases allowing College Steps' professional staff to access relevant academic data in support of the student. This release also covers release of relevant academic data that pertains to support provided by College Steps staff.

In partnership with College Steps, our colleges enhance their overall services, promoting inclusion and increasing the potential of students.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

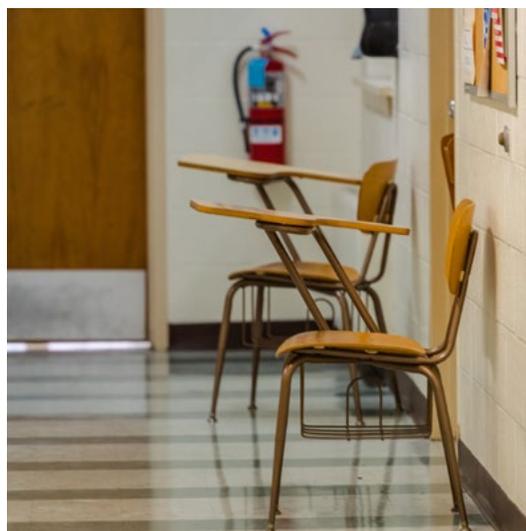


HOW MUCH TIME DOES COLLEGE STEPS SUPPORT STUDENTS PER WEEK?

College Steps provides students with 5, 15, 20, or 20+ hours of support per week.

WHAT IS COLLEGE STEPS' PRIMARY OUTCOME?

The primary goal of College Steps is to prepare students for meaningful careers and autonomy after graduation from college. Therefore, College Steps places a strong emphasis on self-advocacy, pre-employment training, and independent living skills as components of our service.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS



HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN EACH COLLEGE STEPS COHORT?

The size of College Steps cohorts vary; however, to provide the individual supports necessary for optimal learning, our cohort size typically ranges from 10 – 20 students per year.

WHEN DID COLLEGE STEPS BEGIN PROVIDING SERVICE?

College Steps began offering its service to consumers in 2011 and currently operates on college campuses throughout the East Coast. **For a complete listing of our current programs, please visit our website: www.collegesteps.org/locations.**

WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING/SUPERVISION DO PEER MENTORS RECEIVE?

College Steps carefully recruits and trains each cohort of peer mentors that we employ. Peer Mentors are selected, in part, based on their commitment to service and past leadership experience on-campus. Prior to acceptance as a Peer Mentor, candidates undergo thorough assessments by College Steps staff and are screened via State and Federal criminal background checks. Once accepted, Peer Mentors undergo training including mandated reporter training, training on student-centered planning, and a host of other topics. Peer Mentors are paid by College Steps for the support they provide and closely supervised by the Program Coordinator or Instructional Coordinator.



APPLYING



HOW DOES ONE APPLY?

Applications for next fall are currently being reviewed. A rolling admission process will occur until all slots are filled. To submit your application, please visit our website at <http://www.collegesteps.org/apply>.

WHAT ARE COLLEGE STEPS' ADMISSION CRITERIA?

Our admission process is based on careful assessment of each student's level of need and professional aspirations. Our primary admissions criteria are (1) professional documentation of disability (e.g., social, communication or learning disability) and accompanying IEP (if relevant), (2) readiness to follow the participating college's student code of conduct (3) interest in exclusively pursuing academic instruction via partnering college campus, and (4) aspirations of independent living and vocational autonomy after graduation.

HOW MUCH DOES COLLEGE STEPS COST?

College Steps offers several cost options based on the level of support an individual may need. Whenever available, College Steps helps to provide funding for students to augment or fully support the cost of the program. Funding is not guaranteed and varies by location. For specific questions on which rate is right for you, please contact us today or visit our website www.collegesteps.org/apply.



CONTACT US



WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE STEPS?

We love talking about our program and are eager to answer all your questions! Call us, write to us, reach out to speak directly to our team, anytime. We look forward to helping build your future!



1-888-732-1022



CONTACTUS@COLLEGESTEPS.ORG



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