

# HEATH Resource Center Newsletter

National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities  
Winter Edition 2010

## Dr. Ed O'Leary Shares Perspective on Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

Dr. Ed O'Leary travels across the country consulting states and school districts on how to meet transition requirements based on Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004 (IDEA). He has thirty years of experience in the field of special education. He has built quite a diverse background in education such as being a secondary special education teacher, special education consultant, transition specialist, work experience coordinator, program specialist, VR counselor and program director. His project, Transition Outcomes Project, has been implemented in 27 states and over 1,500 school districts. Through the Transition Outcomes Project, school systems and states have been able to improve or meet the federal transition requirements under IDEA 2004. The HEATH Resource Center sought to interview Dr. O'Leary because of his substantial knowledge on transition and understanding of what is required from states and school districts under IDEA. In

addition to the above, he is in the unique position of being able to observe what currently works and is needed for schools to continue to meet the transition requirements under IDEA 2004.

### **1. Have you seen any new problems or concerns that have arisen from IDEA 2004 in carrying out transition planning for students with disabilities?**

Yes, the 'new problems' have to do with people not knowing for sure what the new requirements mean and what they should look like in an IEP. For instance, for the past decade or more, teachers and IEP teams have included in student IEP's 'post school outcome or vision statements'. What these included and the areas they addressed varied from state to state and district to district. Now under IDEA 2004 we must have 'measurable post secondary goals' for 1. Education/training; 2. Employment and, if appropriate, 3. Independent living. The concept is similar to a post school outcome or vision but the criteria and what a

measurable post secondary goal must include is different. The ‘not knowing for sure what this is or how to write it’ has been a problem. That is especially so since this new requirement is a part of the new Indicator 13 requirement. Meaning that schools are now held accountable for this being in IEPs – not so for the ‘vision or post school outcome’. Just creates a little more anxiety. This has also shown to be the case for ‘age appropriate transition assessments’.

New problems or concerns regarding the transition planning process vs. specific content in the IEP – not really any new problems. The ‘old problems’ of people not knowing or understanding the importance of including the student in the planning process and the problems associated with continuing to run IEP meetings where transition is treated as an ‘add-on’ or just another page vs. driving the IEP planning and decision making process continues to be a ‘problem’. Changing old practices and paradigms does not occur overnight nor without some real shifts in values and beliefs.

## **2. There were a few changes from IDEA 1997 to IDEA 2004 such as**

- **initiation of transition services moved from age 14 to age 16,**
- **moving from an outcome-oriented process to a results-oriented process,**
- **provision regarding the summary of performance,**
- **importance of student demonstrating progress in the general education curriculum,**

**Do you think these changes were necessary for students to have a more seamless transition to adult life? Why do you think Congress made these changes from IDEA 1997?**

I do not believe that all of the changes were driven to ‘create a more seamless transition for adult life’. For instance, the change in the age from 14 to now the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 was driven by a belief that the new 2004 legislation should reduce the paperwork in special education. Increasing the age to 16 was all about trying to reduce paperwork. I do believe that increasing the age from 14 to 16 was a huge mistake. We are losing too many young adults – dropping out - and if anything, the concept and practice of transition planning should have been lowered to be addressed at 12 years of age. If transition planning is done correctly it would show and give the young person a purpose and reason for staying school.

I believe the changing of the wording from ‘outcome’ to ‘results’ was based upon an attempt to better align the language of IDEA with the language in NCLB. Additionally the term ‘results’ implies a different level of accountability. This new level of accountability is also evident with the new indicators and requirements for the State Performance Plan. What schools and states must work toward are improved ‘results’ not just better outcomes. Results can be measured...not necessarily so for outcomes.

The new Summary of Performance (SOP) is a part of the ‘evaluation’ section in the statute and rules and regulations. The SOP is not a part of the IEP. Understanding that this is a separate document from the IEP helps one understand it has a different purpose. I do believe that this new requirement was driven by an attempt to assist the student and family make a smoother and more seamless transition from school to the adult world. The extent with which this new document will be of benefit is yet to be determined. I think it is a great

idea to summarize that information and have it all in one place for students and families – including recommendations on how to help the student achieve their measurable post secondary goals. The reason I question the benefit is because much of that information from schools in the SOP is of little value or use in determining eligibility for many post school adult services or agencies. Helping students and making sure they have ‘current information needed to make eligibility determinations so students can get post school services should be the primary concern...the other information is ‘nice to know’. Current information and evaluations necessary for eligibility determination is critical. The legislation for the SOP did not go far enough – it should have required schools to provide the student with the necessary reports and evaluations required by whatever adult agency, service or provider so eligibility determinations could be made and the students receive the necessary post school services, accommodations, and supports.

I believe the emphasis on the importance of student demonstrating progress in the general education curriculum has to do with the research showing students who are included in the general education curriculum show better post school results. Of course showing better post school results is about improving the transition from school to the adult world.

**3. In your opinion, what is the most important component of transition planning that a special education teacher must know under IDEA 2004? Is it the post secondary goal statements, the coordinated set of activities, and/or the interagency coordination? Or are all the components equally as important?**

All of the requirements for transition are important. I will speak to several. I am intrigued with the ‘measurable post secondary goals’. What fascinates me most about this requirement is that for the first time the language and emphasis is on these goals being the student’s and not the schools or parents. I do not recall that special education or special educators ever expected any student to set a goal for themselves and take some responsibility for working toward and achieving that goal. The ‘annual goals’ have traditionally been the schools goals or the parents or a combination of both. I am not sure at this time that many special educators see the measurable post secondary goals being the student’s – but that is the intent and it may take some time for educators to understand and support that change. I think it is a subtle but dramatic shift and change in empowering students to become more active in their future and their education. In many of my recent presentations to groups of special educators I have asked how many have ever sat with their students, help them set a goal and then helped them develop a plan to achieve that goal. Not surprisingly, it appears few have done that. This new requirement presents us with the opportunity to do that but it will require some major shifts in thinking and practices.

The ‘coordinated set of activities’ continues to be a stumbling block for many teachers. They do not know what this is or how to develop and write it. Much of what goes into this section is still primarily ‘school only’ activities. It is a challenge – but not impossible - to get teacher’s heads outside of their classrooms and buildings and get them to think ‘big picture’, long range planning and possible needed adult services, supports and programs. Thinking about, planning for and doing that type of

coordinated planning is not something educators have been taught to do.

‘Course of study’ is getting better in many places. Educators seem to be more open about long range education planning and trying to align the student’s course work and experiences with their post school goals. Some still want to do just one year only planning and specify only the required courses for graduation. I think they understand the importance of this being long range and including those courses that interest students and align with the post school goals. Doing multiple year long range planning in schools is a major shift from traditional practices.

#### **4. What important thought would you like to leave to new special education teachers about transition and IDEA 2004?**

Clearly the emphasis in special education today is on ‘results’ and ‘accountability’. The results I am referring to is post school results – what happens to students after they have left the education system and what have we done in the education system to prepare them to live, contribute, work and take part in our communities. One of the most important efforts we can undertake in our schools to do that has to do with quality transition

planning. Preparing students for post school adult life, providing them the necessary skills, knowledge and experiences and then assisting them in making that step to adult life is critical to showing improved post school results.

Additionally, with IDEA 2004 we are being held to new levels of accountability in what and how we provide special education. There are now twenty special education indicators that states and local districts must annually report on to the US Department of Education and the general public. They must measure and report on how well they are doing with each of these indicators. It is expected that they set specific goals and show improvements yearly. If they do not show improvement and meet their goals there are steps they must take to get assistance that will demonstrate improvement. The ultimate hammer is the threat of loss of federal funding.

I like the emphasis on results and accountability. I know we can do a better job of preparing and helping young people for the adult world and can show better post school results. I believe we need to be able to show that what we do in schools does make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

# New Transition Resources



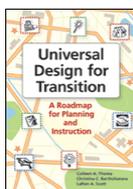
## [Transition IEPs: A Curriculum Guide for Teachers](#)

By Paul Wehman and Katherine Wittig

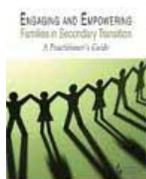
The third edition of Transition IEPs: A Curriculum Guide for Teachers is a practical plan curriculum guide for parents, educators, and practitioners who are involved in the transition planning process and IEP development of students of all disability levels. \$52.00

## [Universal Design for Transition](#)

By Colleen A. Thoma, Christina C. Bartholomew, & LaRon A. Scott



Schools across the country already use universal design for learning to improve students' access to the general curriculum-and now they'll have a practical book that takes this powerful teaching approach one step further for students approaching the transition to adult life. \$34.95



## [Engaging and Empowering Families in Secondary Transition](#)

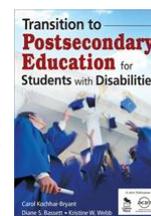
By Donna L. Wandry and Amy M. Pleet

An expanded follow-up to a CEC best seller, this guide includes tools for assessing families' and practitioners' engagement in practices that promote

positive postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities. \$25.95

## [Transition to Postsecondary Education for Students With Disabilities](#)

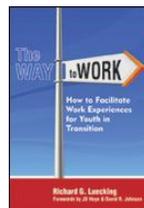
By Carol Kochhar-Bryant, Diane S. Bassett, Kristine W. Webb



Help students with disabilities put their goals into action and navigate postsecondary life! As mandated by federal law, schools must assist students with disabilities in developing appropriate goals and transition plans for life after high school. Written for teachers and student assistance professionals, this comprehensive and practical book focuses on how the planning process can prepare students for the greater independence of postsecondary settings. \$33.95

## [The Way to Work: How to Facilitate Work Experiences for Youth in Transition](#)

By Richard G. Luecking, with invited contributors



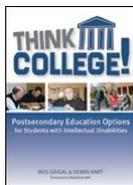
Teachers and transition specialists will rely on this strategy-filled guidebook to connect students with the early work experiences they really want-and make lifelong career satisfaction the rule, not the exception, for people with disabilities. \$34.95

Portions of this newsletter were excerpted from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition E-News, which can be found at <http://www.ncset.org/enews/> and from the Division of Career Development and Transition Email Blast, which can be found at <http://www.dcdt.org/>.

[Think College! Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

By Meg Grigal & Debra Hart

As legislation and policy changes expand postsecondary education options for students with intellectual disabilities, this resource provides education professionals, family members, and policy makers with the critical information they need to help students take full advantage of their educational opportunities. \$39.95



[AUTISM & the Transition to Adulthood: Success Beyond the Classroom](#)

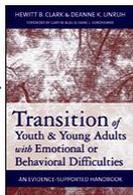
By Paul Wehman, Marcia Datlow Smith, and Carol Schall

In this guide, get hard-to-find information on how specific social, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics of people with autism affect the transition to adulthood. \$34.95

[Transition of Youth and Young Adults with Emotional or Behavioral Difficulties-An Evidence-Supported Handbook](#)

Edited by Hewitt B. "Rusty" Clark, Ph.D., & Deanne K. Unruh, Ph.D.

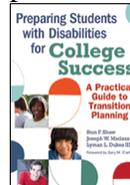
Drawing on the expertise of a wide range of contributors-practitioners, educators, researchers, administrators, parents, and young people themselves-this book collects our best, most current knowledge on



supporting transitions for young people with mental health issues. \$34.95

[Preparing Students with Disabilities for College Success A Practical Guide to Transition Planning](#) (available for preorders)

Edited by Stan F. Shaw, Ed.D., Joseph W. Madaus, Ph.D., & Lyman L. Dukes, III, Ph.D.



For students with mild to moderate, non-visible disabilities, navigating a college education without the support team they had in high school can be challenging. Help students become effective self-advocates and maximize their postsecondary possibilities with this cutting-edge book, which balances current research with the most practical guidance to date on this topic. \$34.95

**NAEP State Profiles**

The NAEP State Profiles tool, which provides key data about each state's performance in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), has added new features. The upgraded tool includes interactive maps, clear graphics, a comprehensive table of results, and comparisons of each state's performance against the nation and all other states.

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>

**Growth Models and Students with Disabilities: Report of State Interviews (December 2009) (Policy Analysis)**

This policy analysis includes a description of accountability requirements from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the assessments states use to meet this requirement; a comparison between status models for determining performance levels and growth models; and discussion of the complexity of adding a growth model to a state's accountability and assessment system, obstacles to including students who participate in alternate assessments based on alternate academic standards in a growth model, and progress in instruction and assessment for this population of students that could ease these obstacles. Available in pdf (17 pages, 211 KB).

<http://tinyurl.com/yzvthnv>

**National High School Center Research Report (December 2009) (Report)**

The National High School Center report, "What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on Students with Disabilities," was co-released with the Consortium on Chicago School Research. The report determines that freshman year course performance (which entails more than background characteristics such as race, gender, socioeconomic status or prior achievement) predicts which students with disabilities are most at risk for dropping out of high school. The report, by Julia Gwynne, Joy

Lesnick, Holly M. Hart and Elaine Allensworth, found that absences, course failures, course credits and GPA can all be used to accurately predict whether ninth-graders with disabilities will graduate from high school. Identifying early warning indicators is crucial for students with disabilities, who drop out of high school at alarming rates. Available in pdf (56 pages, 1.50 MB).

<http://tinyurl.com/yjbdx5l>

**Special Education Scorecards from the National Center for Learning Disabilities (September 2009) (Scorecards)**

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has issued special education scorecards for every state, with information on each state's special education enrollment, including students with learning disabilities, student performance on key indicators, federal funding provided to states in support of special education, and the state's latest rating by the US Department of Education on its State Performance.

<http://www.nclld.org/on-capitol-hill/policy-related-publications/special-education-scorecards>

**What Works for Parent Involvement Programs for Adolescents: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Social Interventions (December 2009) (Fact Sheet)**

This fact sheet from Child Trends presents lessons learned from 47 parent involvement programs that

have had successful, unsuccessful, or mixed results for adolescents ages 12-17. The fact sheet includes a chart of the programs that worked or didn't work for different outcomes, and a glossary summarizing the programs. <http://www.childtrends.org/listFS.cfm?LID=348F6ECA-DC2E-46B2-AA77428D4931464C>

### **The Best Journey to Adult Life (2009) (Guide)**

“The Best Journey to Adult Life for Youth with Disabilities” is a model that represents the developmental process of a young person's life course, with the transition to adulthood depicted as an important “journey.” Best Practice Guidelines for the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities have been written using the words of youth, parents, community members, service providers, educators, and researchers in Ontario, Canada. The Guidelines are organized into six themes: Collaboration, Capacity-building, Navigation, Education, Information, and Research. Available in pdf (90 pages, 990 KB).

<http://transitions.canchild.ca/en/OurResearch/resources/BestPractices.pdf>

### **Identifying Students Eligible for SSI Pass Plans at IEP Meetings (2009) (Podcast)**

Many transition-aged students with disabilities are receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a financial benefit available to families who meet income and resource requirements and who have a child with a disability. SSI has several Work

Incentive programs that could provide resources to eligible students to assist them in obtaining, advancing, or maintaining employment. Plans for Achieving Self Support (PASS plans) are one such work incentive program. [http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training/publications/fact\\_sheets/student\\_eligibility.asp](http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training/publications/fact_sheets/student_eligibility.asp)

### **Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation Takes an In-Depth Look at Challenges Youth with Severe Disabilities and Their Families Face (September 2009) (Journal Article)**

Youth who receive benefits from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, the largest federal program providing cash payments to low-income youth with severe disabilities and their families, face challenges transitioning to adulthood. Highlights from six articles in the September 2009 issue of Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, by researchers from Mathematica Policy Research, TransCen Inc., and the Social Security Administration, include the public cost of child dependence on SSI, the high number of SSI students at age 18 who are not working or in school, and how parents of these youth often face difficult tradeoffs between providing child care and entering the work place.

[http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/newsroom/releases/2009/journalvocrehab8\\_09.asp](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/newsroom/releases/2009/journalvocrehab8_09.asp)

### **Transition from College to High School Podcast (2010) (Podcast)**

The Disability Law Lowdown Web site has posted a podcast called

Transitioning from High School to College for Students with Disabilities. Interviews are conducted about facts, myths, and tips for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college.

<http://dll.ada-podcasts.com/shownotes/DLLPod35.php>

## Future Transition Conferences and Webinars

**Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability  
Columbus, OH  
Ohio State University Campus  
April 27-28, 2010**

Sponsored by Ohio State University and held at the Columbus Campus, the Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability conference is intended to serve as a catalyst for positive change and a beginning point for collaborations with partners in education, business, public and social service. Each year a series of workshops provides a forum for individuals and organizations to expand their knowledge and perspectives, and an opportunity to increase community resources through collaboration. The workshops bring a diverse audience together to discuss the full spectrum of disability issues and experiences.

<http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm>

**Council for Exceptional Children  
2010 Convention and Expo  
Nashville, TN  
April 21-24, 2010**

The Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo is the largest professional development event dedicated to special and gifted education. It will be held in Nashville, TN, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center. Advance registration rates will be available until April 2, 2010.

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ConventionExpo/>

**Disabilities Awareness Conference  
Piscataway, NJ  
April 15, 2010, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM,  
Eastern**

The Disabilities Awareness Conference, held by Rutgers University, invites those involved in the field of secondary and postsecondary education, disability professionals, returning veterans, parents, students, and interested others to a one-day conference addressing disabilities on campus and in the workplace. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Wise Young, who is a leader in the field of spinal cord injury research, Founding Director of the W.M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience, and the first person to hold the Richard H. Shindell Chair in Neuroscience at Rutgers University.

[http://lrc.rutgers.edu/dwc\\_home.shtml](http://lrc.rutgers.edu/dwc_home.shtml)

**MTSA 2010 Annual Conference -  
March 17-19, 2010**

The Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) is looking for presenters for our Annual Conference on March 18-19, 2010 in

Frankenmuth Michigan. At our 2009 Conference, 746 participants had the opportunity to choose from 60 hours of professional development provided by 50+ speakers including our Michigan Transition Outcomes Project Core Team. **Early registration deadline is January 31st.** MTSA members also receive discounted Conference Fees. For further information or questions, e-mail Julia Flowerday, MTSA Past-President and Conference Chair - [jflowerday@tucker-usa.com](mailto:jflowerday@tucker-usa.com). Presentation guidelines, focus issues and other registration information can be found by following the links on our website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com)

**The 20th Annual Alabama Transition Conference  
March 8-9, 2010**

The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute invites all interested persons to submit proposals on current transition-related topics for the 2010 Alabama Transition Conference which will be held at The Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center at Grand National [www.marriottgrandnational.com](http://www.marriottgrandnational.com). More information can be found on the [conference website](#).

**The 7th Annual Wisconsin Transition Conference  
February 18-19, 2010**

Join us for the 7th Annual Wisconsin Transition Conference which will be held on February 18-19, 2010, at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells! Morning and afternoon pre-conference sessions will be offered on February 17th. Keynote speakers and

concurrent sessions on timely transition topics of interest will be offered to participants who are working with and supporting youth with disabilities as they transition from high school to adult life. Early bird preconference registration is \$75 and conference registration is \$250. After December 23 preconference registration is \$100 and conference registration is \$300.

**Conference registration and information available at**  
<http://www.wsti.org/>.

**Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)  
47th Annual International Conference  
Baltimore, MD  
February 17-20, 2010 (Conference)**

Sponsored by the LDA of America, the LDA Conference is the largest meeting on learning disabilities in the world, featuring over 300 workshops and exhibits presenting the latest in LD research, effective teaching techniques and strategies, and critical policy issues, with opportunities to network with experts in LD and colleagues, and to make new friends and earn graduate or continuing education credits (CEUs). The 2010 Conference is in Baltimore, at the Baltimore Marriot Waterfront.

<http://www.ldaamerica.org/conference/index.asp>

## New Financial Aid & Scholarship Information

### **HEATH Resource Center Financial Aid Information 2009-2010**

While education beyond high school in the United States is optional, it has become a necessary investment in future employment and life satisfaction for many people. Most, however, cannot afford to make this investment without some outside monetary assistance. Over the years, public and private sources of money have been developed specifically to meet this need. As increasing, but limited, amounts of money have become available, a standardized method of determining eligibility has evolved to promote equitable distribution of student financial aid.

[www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)

### **The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation: Public Policy Fellowship Program 2010-2011**

The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation seeks exemplary professionals and/or family members of persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are currently working or volunteering in the field of inclusive services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for an intensive one-year Public Policy Fellowship in Washington, DC. The purpose of the Fellowship is to prepare both early career and veteran leaders be leaders in public policy in their home state and/or nationally. The program provides a one-

year full-time exposure to the federal public policy making process, and includes a stipend and modest relocation expenses.

<http://www.jpkf.org/>

### **National Federation of the Blind Scholarship Program**

Applications are now being accepted for the 2010 National Federation of the Blind Scholarship Program. Each year at its national convention in July, NFB gives 30 scholarships to recognize achievement by blind scholars. The scholarships are available to blind students who will be enrolled in college or a graduate program beginning in the fall of 2010, including incoming freshmen. Scholarships range in value from \$3,000 to \$12,000. In addition to a scholarship, each winner will receive assistance to attend the 2010 National Federation of the Blind Annual Convention in July, providing opportunities for networking with active blind persons in many different professions and occupations. Deadline March 31, 2010.

<http://www.nfb.org/scholarships>

### **Disaboom Scholarship Directory**

Disaboom recently launched a scholarship directory for students with disabilities, listing over 125 scholarships.

<http://www.disaboom.com/scholarships>

### **Federal Student Aid Grant Program Fact Sheet**

Disability.Gov has created a fact sheet that provides an overview of the major federal student aid grant programs. The

federal government provides grant funds for students attending colleges, including career colleges and universities. Grants, unlike loans, do not have to be repaid. (A Spanish version is at: <http://tinyurl.com/yz2zheg>.) Available in pdf (1 page, 164 KB). <http://tinyurl.com/yfbe5tb>

### **Funding Education Beyond High School**

The US Department of Education's Guide to Federal Student Aid (2009-2010) provides information for students and families on applying for federal student aid to pay for post-secondary education. This guide explains the application process, the various federal loans, grants, and work-study programs available, and how to apply for them. Education creates opportunities and is an important step toward success. Available in pdf (64 pages, 2.95 MB). <http://tinyurl.com/yk7uot7>

### **NASFAA and Casey Family programs: Guide to Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

This guide provides information for those who help youth from foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth to secure financial aid for postsecondary education or training programs. It describes how to respond to new FAFSA questions 55-60 that will determine federal financial aid status for these students. A section on sensitive communications is also included. This guide will be useful for financial aid professionals, independent

living coordinators, guidance counselors, financial aid counselors, social workers and advocates who are helping youth to secure the maximum allowable financial aid. [www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm)

### **Scholarships and Internships for Latino Students with Disabilities**

The World Institute on Disability (WID) has a five-year grant to establish the National Technical Assistance Center for Latinos with Disabilities living in the United States, through Proyecto Vision. Proyecto Vision's website has a list of scholarship opportunities for college students who are Latino and who are living with disability. <http://www.proyectovision.net/english/opportunities/scholarships.html>