



College  
STEPS  
Program

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*Supporting Transitions for Educational and Professional Success*

**Funding solutions for PSE:  
Thinking outside the box**

Aaron Rakow, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

November 2012

# Background

- The College STEPS Program (CSP) partners with colleges and universities to connect students with intellectual disabilities, ages 18-26, with college-experiences.
- CSP emphasizes integration in the academic, social, and vocational support it provides.
- Participants are enrolled in a partnering college as non-matriculated student via a 15-30 credit hour Certificate Program (non-degree) completed over the course of a 2 year period to include:
  - Academic Programming
  - Social Integration
  - Living and Independence
  - Work Experiences

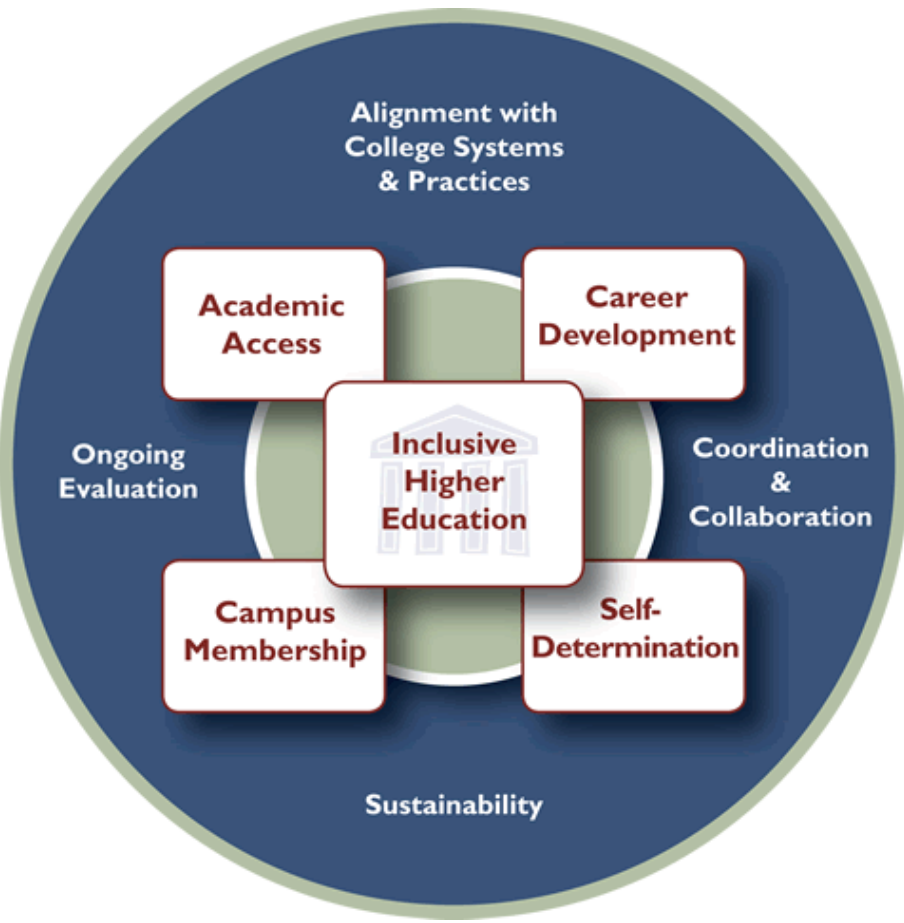
- >10,000 students with intellectual disabilities have enrolled in postsecondary institutions across the nation
- Of students with ID that expressed interest in pursuing PSE only 11% actually participated (Hart, et al., 2005).

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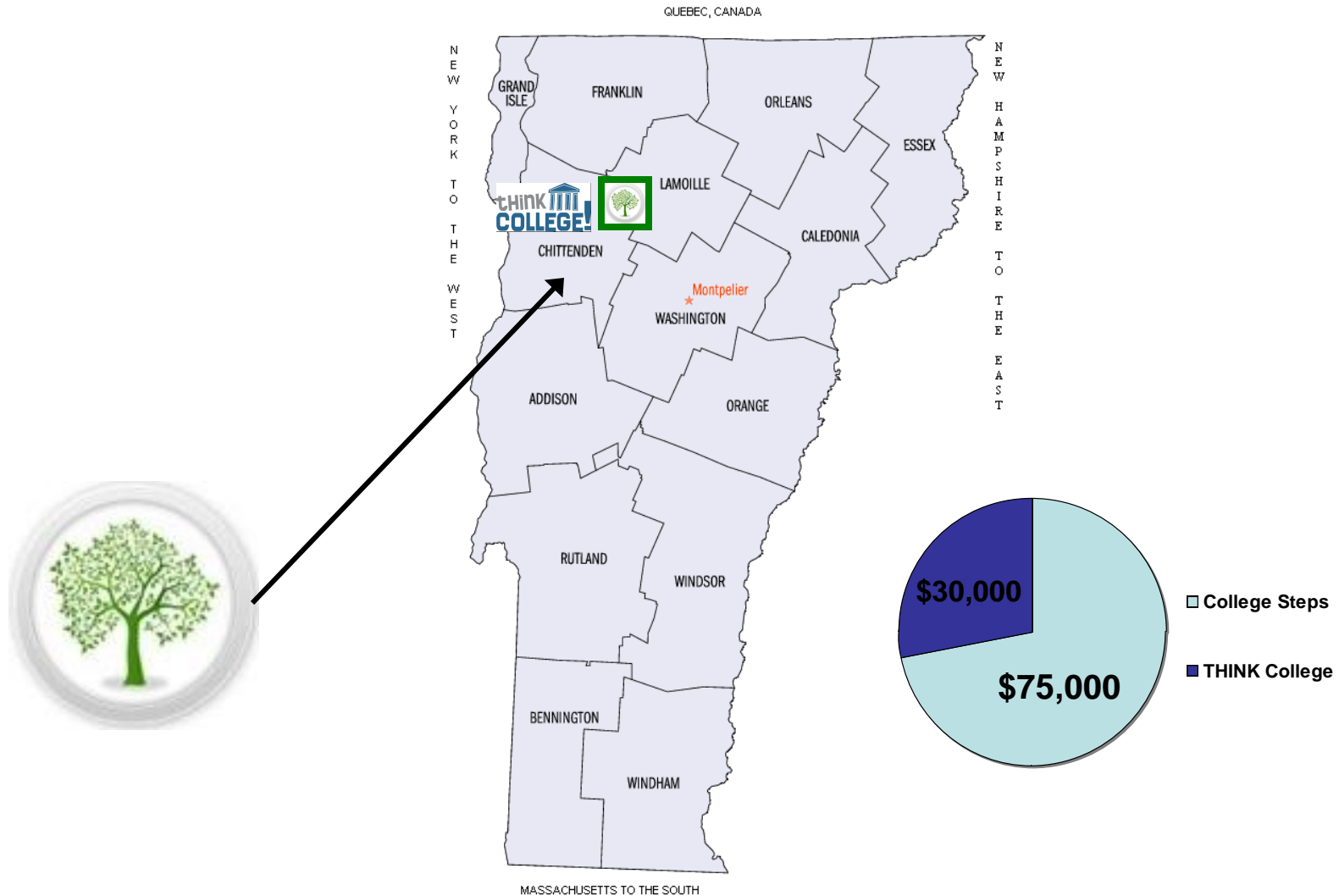




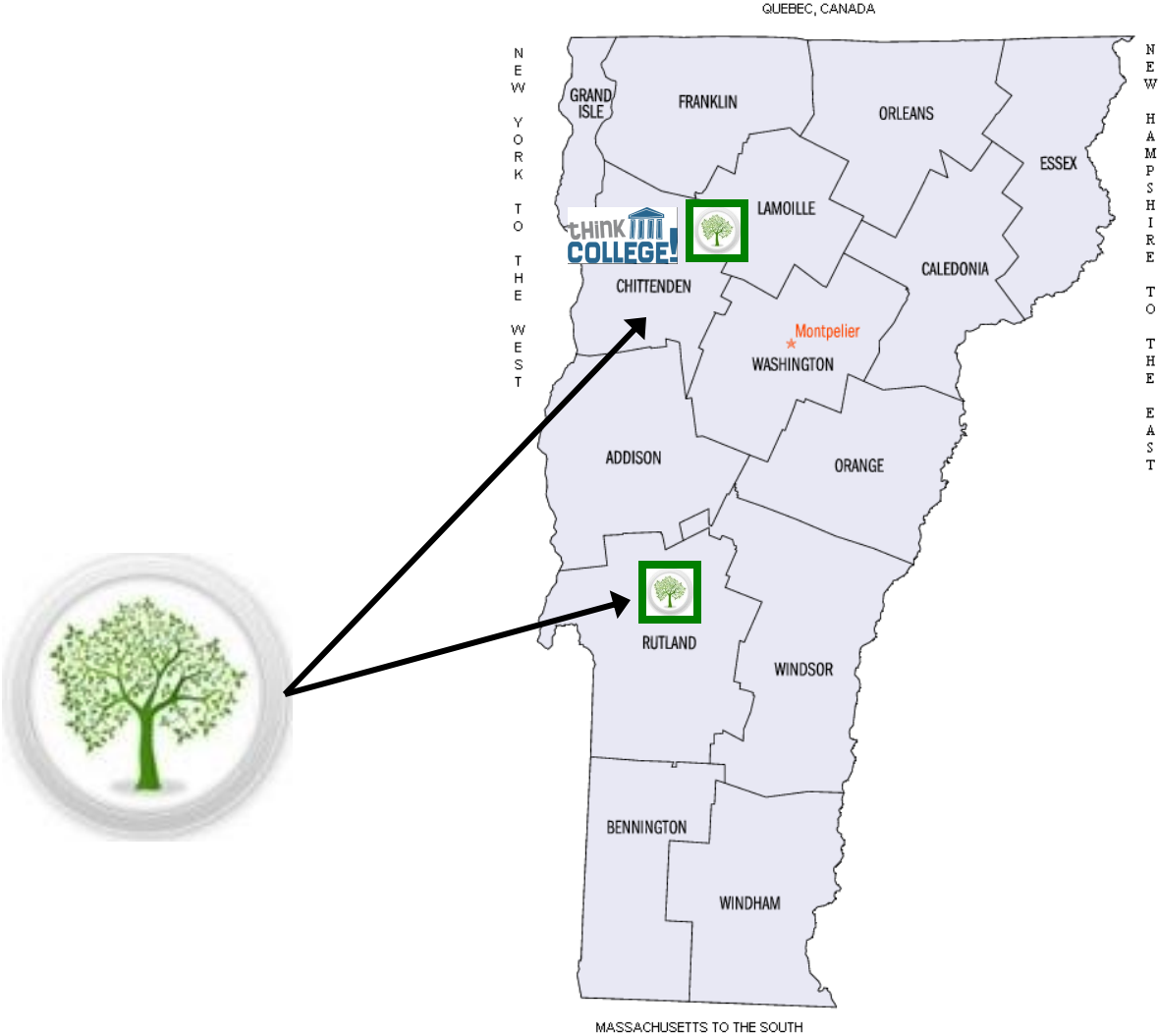
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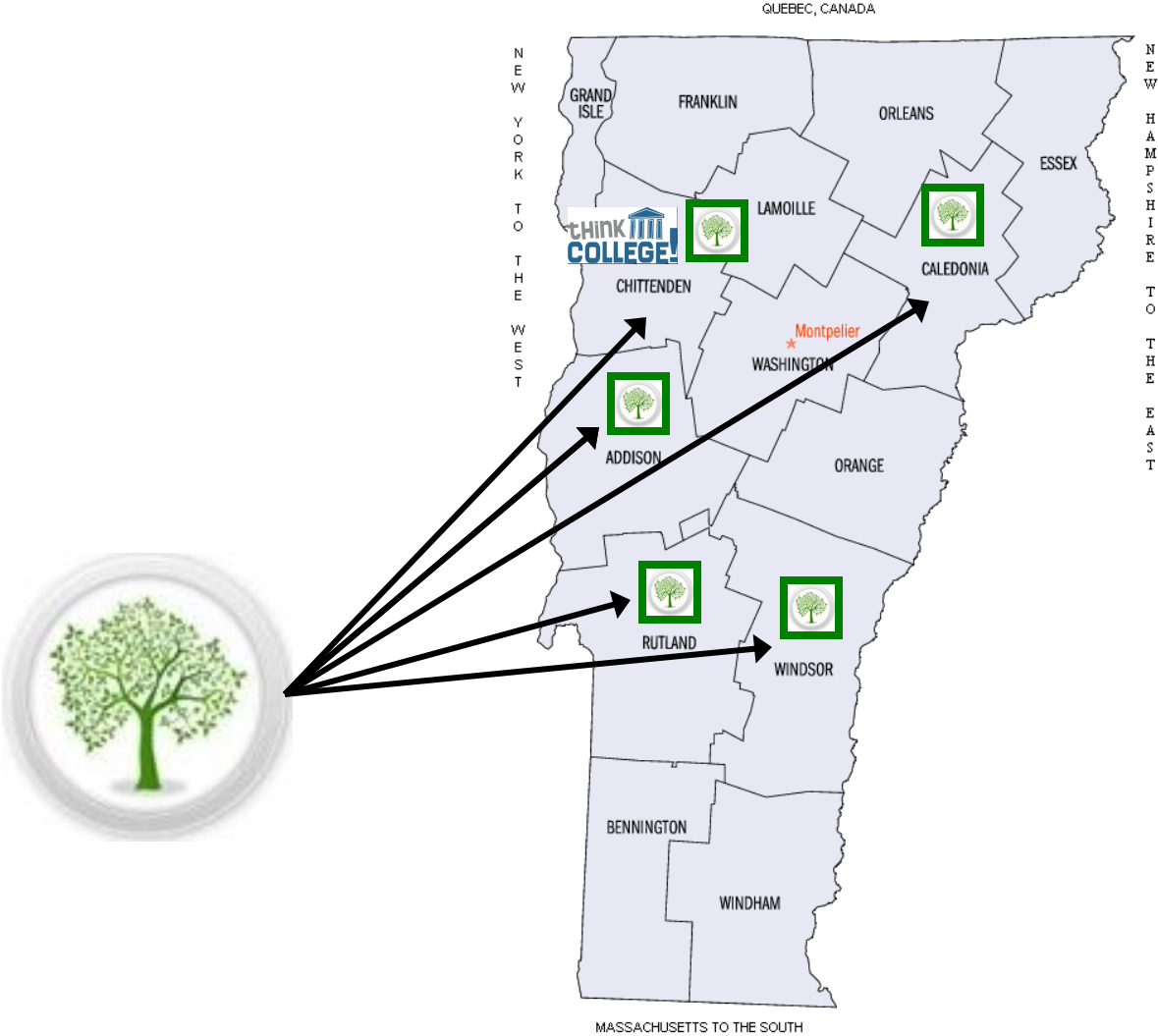
# CSP 2011-2012 Establishment Plan



# CSP 2012-2013 Expansion Plan

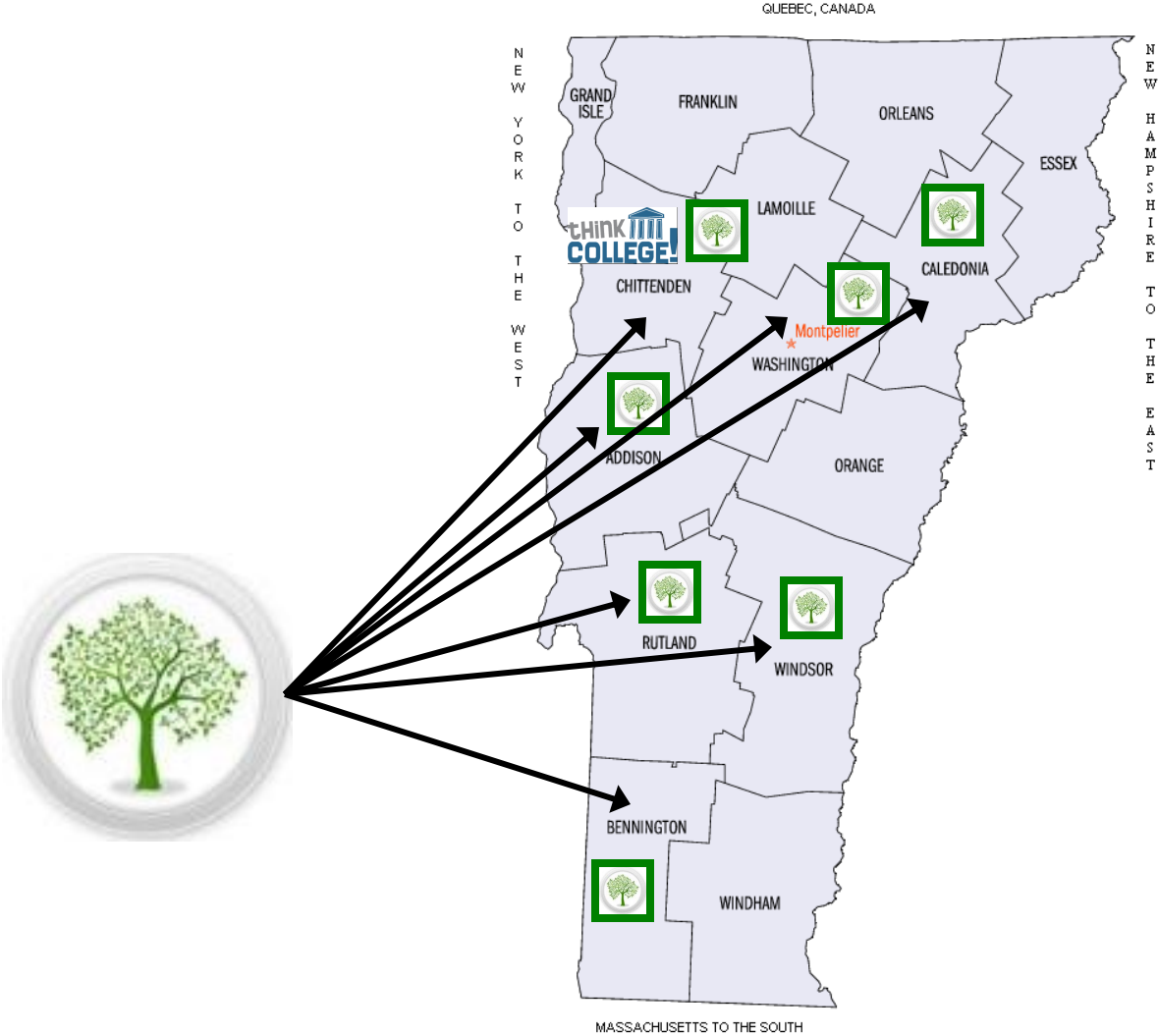


# CSP 2013-2014 Expansion Plan





# CSP 2014-2015 Expansion Plan





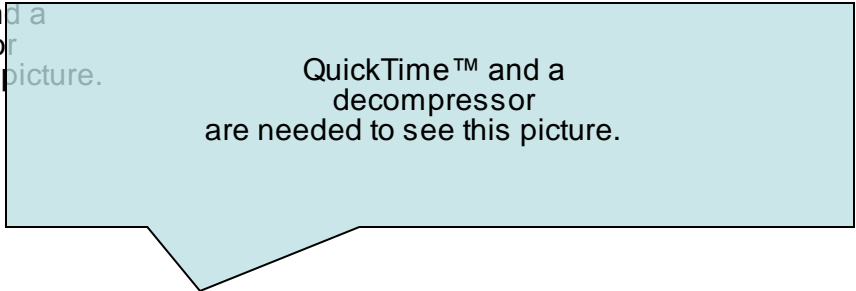
- Well-documented that PSE for students with ID:
  - Promotes true integration on large scale
  - Increases quality of life
  - Increases independent living skills
  - Provides opportunities for academic instruction after high school
  - **Increases employability**



- Well-documented that people with disabilities have a significantly lower rate of employment than people without disabilities (36% versus 74%)
- Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) consistently show that **PSE improves earnings for people with disabilities.**



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- Youths with ID who participated in postsecondary education were 26% more likely to exit the VR program with employment and they earned a 73% higher weekly income

	Total	Closures into employment		Earnings
	#	#	%	\$
<b>Youths with ID who did not receive PSE Services</b>	<b>34,931</b>	<b>11,261</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>\$195</b>
<b>Youth with ID who received PSE Services</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>\$316</b>
<b>Youth with ID who, after PSE Services, attained a higher level of education</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>\$338</b>



## Benefits of CSP

- Low cost fully integrated PSE for students with ID
- Growth potential with any interested post-secondary institution within the State
- Non-restricted by grant mandates (translates to increased inclusion)
- Increased employability for students within program



# The College Steps Program

STEPS: Supporting Transitions for Educational and Professional Success

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Students and CSP staff collaboratively design a Certificate Program based on a student's identified area of academic pursuit. [Read More](#)

Academic  
Programming

Social  
Integration

Living &  
Independence

Work  
Experiences





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CSP students are highly encouraged to become active members of their campus community. To meet these needs, CSP students have full access to all campus facilities including dining halls, sporting events, clubs, and workout facilities. [Read More](#)

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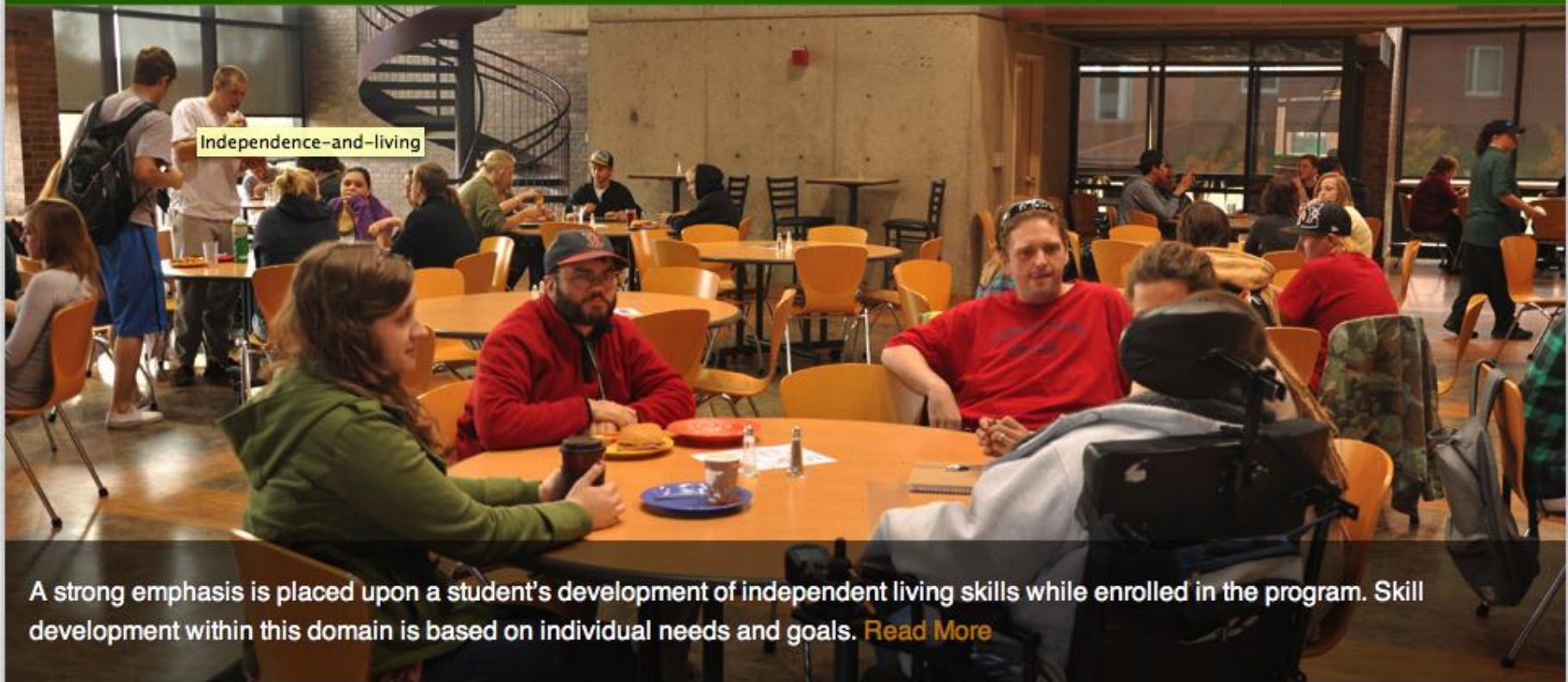
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A strong emphasis is placed upon a student's development of independent living skills while enrolled in the program. Skill development within this domain is based on individual needs and goals. [Read More](#)

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# The College Steps Program

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Throughout the program, students research and consider possible career directions and are assisted in developing a vocational internship experience in line with their career goals. [Read More](#)

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# Curriculum Planning

## Individualized College Plan (ICP):

- Students work with CSP staff to develop student-centered Individualized College Plan (ICP) delineating annual academic, social, and vocational goals.
- CSP staff work closely with course instructors at partnering colleges to support the needs of STEPS students.
- Upon graduation, CSP students will possess the emerging skill set necessary for successful independent living and achievement within the professional setting of their choosing

# Academic Programming

Students earn a Certificate of Higher Education for non-matriculated students designed to include:

- **Academic Programming**
- Social Integration
- Independence and Living
- Work Experiences

# Academic Programming

- Prior to each semester, CSP staff work with student to select menu of course options from which each student develop/refine their academic strategy.
- A minimum of 15 credit hours (four 3-credit courses; one 3-credit internship) is required to achieve the requirements of the Certificate Program within the span of the 2 year program.
- CSP students are provided with academic support via CSP peer mentors. Supported study time is incorporated into each student's weekly schedule to ensure timely assignment completion and concept understanding.

# Social Integration

Students earn a Certificate of Higher Education for non-matriculated students designed to include:

- Academic Programming
- **Social Integration**
- Independence and Living
- Work Experiences

# Social Integration

- CSP students are highly encouraged to become active members of their campus community. CSP emphasizes involvement in extracurricular activities, social events, and the development of new friendships.
- Each college with which CSP partners provides a wide array of extra-curricular activities through which students can become involved.
- To meet these needs, CSP students have full access to all campus facilities including dining halls, sporting events, clubs, and workout facilities.

# Independence and Living

Students earn a Certificate of Higher Education for non-matriculated students designed to include:

- Academic Programming
- Social Integration
- **Independence and Living**
- Work Experiences



# Independence and Living

- Strong emphasis is placed upon a student's development of independent living skills while enrolled in the program.
- CSP staff help foster student development of college survival skills emphasizing topics including:
  - Achievement and maintenance of success within professional settings
  - Personal health and well-being
  - The challenges of independent living

# Work Experiences

Students earn a Certificate of Higher Education for non-matriculated students designed to include:

- Academic Programming
- Social Integration
- Independence and Living
- **Work Experiences**

# Work Experiences

- 1st semester: Students research and consider possible career directions, receive classroom-based training on methods for maximizing professional success, and are assisted in shadowing professionals within their area or areas of interest.
- 2nd-4th semesters: Students are assisted in developing 1-2 vocational internship experiences through which they identify potential employers and work to obtain appropriate vocational training experiences to meet their professional goals.
- CSP staff work closely with each employer to attempt establishment of a paid position at the conclusion of the student's enrollment in the Certificate Program.

# Admissions Criteria

- Age 18-26 years
- Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Committed to post-graduate transition to community-based independent living
- Established living arrangements in close proximity to campus

# Program Costs

	Average Program Costs
CSP Program Costs	\$7,950 average/semester*
Tuition Costs	\$1,428 average/semester**

\* Average cost per semester

\*\* Average cost per semester based on 4 credits at \$357/credit hour at Vermont State Colleges

➤ *Books, school materials, meal plans, are not included in figures above*



# College STEPS Program

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	CSP Annual Costs
Program Director	\$34,000
Peer Mentors (70 hours per week @ \$9.00/hr)	\$23,000
Administrative Costs	\$25,000
Miscellaneous (website insurance, payroll, etc).	\$2,250
	\$84,250



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	<b>\$84,250</b>

**PSE programming for SIX students for 1 year**

# Program Costs

Program Costs

\$7,950 semester

– Medicaid Waiver (Community Support)

\$ 0.00 program costs



# Tuition Costs

Tuition Costs

**\$1,428 average/semester**

– VR contribution \$600 per semester

**\$828 average/semester**

– PASS Plan (requires family to receive SSDI)

– VSAC non-degree grant

**\$ 0.00      tuition costs**

# *Thank you!*

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**Vermont Department of  
Disabilities, Aging and  
Independent Living**

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