

California Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

A guide for helping families explore college,
career, and transition programs across
California.





How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help students and families explore postsecondary education options for adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD), such as autism and intellectual disability (ID), across California.

Programs are organized by region to make it easier to identify opportunities near you: **Southern, Central, and Northern California.** Within each region, programs are presented in a series of comparison tables that highlight key program features and supports.

This guide specifically focuses on programs that are 1) directly affiliated with a postsecondary institution and 2) are specifically designed for students with neurodevelopmental disabilities. Programs that serve a broader student population or that are not affiliated with a particular college are not included - though they may be supportive to neurodivergent students.

Important Notes:

This list is not intended as a recommendation, referral, or endorsement by the UCLA Tarjan Center. We recommend that individuals and families evaluate programs and fit dependent on their unique needs.

Program information may change over time. Families are encouraged to visit program websites and contact programs directly for the most current information.

Understanding the Tables



Table 1 Program Overview

This table provides a broad overview of each program, including:

- **Target Population** – The students the program is designed to serve.
- **Outcome Type** – The educational outcome(s) students may work toward.
- **Length** – The typical duration of participation in the program.

Table 2 Supports

This table highlights the types of support available through each program.

- **Academic Support** – Assistance with studying, organization, time management, and coursework.
- **Career & Employment Support** – Services that help students prepare for employment and gain work experience.
- **Independent Living Support** – Support related to daily living skills, self-management, and independence.
- **Social & Community Building Support** – Opportunities to build friendships, develop social skills, and engage in campus and community activities.
- **Coaching & Mentoring** – Support from an assigned peer or personnel who may support the student navigate campus, connect socially, academically, or adjust to college life.

Southern California Programs

1. California State University, Long Beach – *Learning Independence for Empowerment (LIFE) Project*
2. California State University, Long Beach - *Think Beach*
3. California State University, Northridge – *CSUN Explorers*
4. California State University, San Marcos – *Aspiring Scholars Program*
5. Coastline College – *Career Options through Academic Support and Training (COAST) Program*
6. Coastline College – *Intellectual Disabilities (ID) Program*
7. Golden West College – *College Autism Program (The LOOP)*
8. Long Beach City College – *College to Career (C2C)*
9. North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD) – *College to Career (C2C)*
10. San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) – *College to Career (C2C)*
11. UCLA Extension – *Pathway*
12. West Los Angeles College - *College to Career (C2C)*

Southern CA Programs:

Table 1 - Program Overview

College	Program	Target Population			Outcome Type			Length
		Autism	ID	Other NDD	PSC	VC/AA	BA/BS	
CSU Long Beach	LIFE Project	✓					✓	Ongoing
CSU Long Beach	Think Beach		✓	✓	✓			2 years
CSU Northridge	CSUN Explorers	✓	✓		✓			2 years
CSU San Marcos	Aspiring Scholars Program		✓		✓			4 years
Coastline College	COAST Program		✓	✓		✓		3–4 semesters
Coastline College	Intellectual Disabilities Program		✓		✓	O		Not specified
Golden West College	College Autism Program	✓				✓		Ongoing
Long Beach City College	College to Career	✓	✓	✓		✓		up to 4 years
NOCCCD	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		3 years
SDCCD	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		3 years
UCLA Extension	Pathway	✓	✓	✓	✓	O		2–3 years
West Los Angeles College	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		3 years

Note. **PSC** = program-specific certificate
VC/AA = vocational certificate / Associate's Degree
BA/BS = Bachelor's Degree

✓ = standard outcome
O = optional outcome

Southern CA Programs:

Table 2 Supports



College	Academic Support	Employment Support	Independent Living	Social / Community Building	Coaching & Mentoring
CSU Long Beach – LIFE Project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU Long Beach - Think Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU Northridge – CSUN Explorers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU San Marcos – Aspiring Scholars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coastline – COAST	✓	✓			
Coastline – ID Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Golden West – The LOOP	✓	✓		✓	
Long Beach City C2C	✓	✓	✓ *		✓
NOCCCD – C2C	✓	✓			✓
SDCCD – C2C	✓	✓		✓	✓
UCLA Extension – Pathway	✓	✓	✓ *	✓	✓
West LA - C2C	✓	✓			✓

Note.

* = the program has affiliated housing for participants.

Central California Programs

1. Fresno City College - College to Career (C2C)
2. Fresno State University - Wayfinders
3. Taft College - Transition to Independent Living (TIL)

Central CA Programs:

Table 1 Program Overview

College	Program	Target Population			Outcome Type			Length
		Autism	ID	Other NDD	PSC	VC/AA	BA/BS	
Fresno City College	College to Career (C2C)	✓	✓			✓		3 years
Fresno State University	Wayfinders		✓		✓			2 years
Taft College	Transition to Independent Living (TIL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	O		Average 22 months

Note. **PSC** = program-specific certificate
VC/AA = vocational certificate / Associate's Degree
BA/BS = Bachelor's Degree

✓ = standard outcome
O = optional outcome

Central CA Programs:

Table 2 Supports



College	Academic Support	Employment Support	Independent Living	Social / Community Building	Coaching & Mentoring
Fresno City College – C2C	✓	✓			✓
Fresno State – Wayfinders		✓	✓ *	✓	
Taft College – TIL		✓	✓ *	✓	

Note.

* = the program has affiliated housing for participants.

Northern California Programs

1. California State University, East Bay – College Link Program (CLP).
2. California State University, East Bay – Think by the Bay.
3. College of Alameda – College to Career (C2C).
4. Foothill College – Tools for Transition and Work (TTW).
5. Sacramento City College – College to Career (C2C).
6. Saint Mary's College – Connect Program.
7. San Francisco State University – SF State Inclusion Program for Certificate in Integrated Career and Community Studies (CICCS).
8. San José State University – Connect: Autism Support Group (ASG).
9. San José State University – SPARTANS OCLS (Occupational Career Life Studies).
10. Santa Rosa Junior College - College to Career (C2C).
11. Shasta College – College to Career (C2C).
12. University of California, Berkeley – Spectrum Connect.
13. University of California, Davis – Redwood SEED Scholars Program.

Northern CA Programs:

Table 1 Program Overview

College	Program	Target Population			Outcome Type			Length
		Autism	ID	Other NDD	PSC	VC/AA	BA/BS	
CSU East Bay	College Link Program	✓					✓	Ongoing
CSU East Bay	Think by the Bay		✓		✓			4 years
College of Alameda	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		3 years
Foothill College	Tools for Transition and Work	✓	✓		✓	O		1 year
Sacramento City College	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		Varies
Saint Mary's College	Connect Program	✓					✓	Ongoing
SFSU	Inclusion Program		✓		✓			2–4 years
San José State	Connect	✓					✓	Ongoing
San José State	SPARTANS OCLS		✓			✓		2 years
Santa Rosa JC	College to Career	✓	✓		✓	O		3 years
Shasta College	College to Career	✓	✓			✓		3 years
UC Berkeley	Spectrum Connect	✓					✓	Ongoing
UC Davis	Redwood SEED Scholars		✓		✓			4 years

Note. PSC = program-specific certificate
VC/AA = vocational certificate / Associate's Degree
BA/BS = Bachelor's Degree

✓ = standard outcome
O = optional outcome

Northern CA Programs:

Table 2 Supports



College	Academic Support	Employment Support	Independent Living	Social / Community Building	Coaching & Mentoring
CSU East Bay – CLP	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CSU East Bay – Think by the Bay	✓	✓	✓ *	✓	✓
College of Alameda – C2C	✓	✓			✓
Foothill – TTW	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sacramento City College – C2C	✓	✓			✓
Saint Mary's – Connect	✓			✓	
SFSU - Inclusion	✓	✓		✓	✓
San Jose State – Connect ASG	✓			✓	
San José State – SPARTANS OCLS	✓	✓			✓
Santa Rosa JC - C2C	✓	✓			✓
Shasta College – C2C	✓	✓			✓
UC Berkeley – Spectrum Connect	✓	✓	✓	✓	
UC Davis – Redwood SEED	✓	✓	✓ *	✓	✓

Note.

* = the program has affiliated housing for participants.

What's Next?



Now that you've explored programs across California, consider the following questions yourself or with your student:

- What are your goals after high school?
- What do you hope to gain from a postsecondary program? For example, are you hoping to pursue academic studies, gain employment skills, become more independent, experience college life, or a combination of these?
- What program seems like the best fit for you?
- What supports would be most helpful for you?

Consider:

- Visiting program websites for the most current information.
- Attending information sessions or open houses.
- Contacting program staff with questions.
- Speaking with your student's IEP team, Regional Center service coordinator, Department of Rehabilitation counselor, or transition specialist about postsecondary options.
- Explore other [UCLA Tarjan Center](#) resources related to college:
 - [ACCESS Webinars](#)
 - [ACCESS Newsletters](#)
 - Additional postsecondary [resources](#)

We hope this guide serves as a starting point for exploring the many postsecondary opportunities available throughout California and finding a program that aligns with your students' goals, interests, and support needs.