

# TENNESSEE BELIEVES



ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022-2023



Department of  
Intellectual &  
Developmental Disabilities

# INTRO

The Tennessee Believes grant is designed to help colleges and universities provide an inclusive postsecondary education program for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. These programs strive to provide students with a sound education, opportunities for internships and employment, mentorships, the chance to earn a college degree, and educational resources for starting and advancing their careers. This year, DIDD awarded grant funding to four colleges and universities to help them achieve these goals. The four programs were:

- University of Tennessee's FUTURE program
- Vanderbilt University's Next Steps program
- Tennessee State University's TigerEDGE program
- Dyersburg State Community College's Eagle Access program





# STUDENTS SERVED

The Tennessee Believes grant has helped these institutions serve 50 students across the state during the 2022-2023 school year. Here is a breakdown of the number of students enrolled at each school:

- University of Tennessee: 35 students
- Vanderbilt University: 7 students
- Tennessee State University: 2 students
- Dyersburg State Community College: 6 students



# STAFFING

The programs had a total of 30 staff members. Please see the breakdown below to see staffing numbers for each individual program.

- Tennessee: 13 staff members (10 full-time, 3 part-time)
- Vanderbilt: 7 staff members (5 full-time, 2 part-time graduate students)
- Tennessee State University: 5 staff members (plus 6 student support staff)
- Dyersburg State Community College: 1 staff member
  - Students also assisted through administrative support from Dean's Office – not funded by grant.

# TOTAL CLASSES TAKEN

Students enrolled in programs funded by the TN Believes grant were able to take 396 courses in total during the 2022-2023 academic year. That equates to an average of almost 8 courses per year per student. See below for breakdown by university/college.

<b>College</b>	<b>Total Courses Taken</b>	<b>Courses per Student per Year</b>
University of Tennessee	321	9.17
Vanderbilt University	56	8
Tennessee State University	8	4
Dyersburg State Community College	11	1.83

\*Course counts include both typical and specialized courses

# INTERNSHIP AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Over the course of this academic year, students enrolled at these institutions were able to complete over 60 internships at various businesses, government organizations, non-profits, academic institutions, and recreational facilities. The list below demonstrates just a few examples of organizations that students interned with.

Young Williams Animal Shelter, UT System President's Office, 90.3 The Rock, PetSmart, Nothing Bundt Cakes, The Acorn School, The Divinity School Library, Vanderbilt Medical Center's Occupational Health, TSU bookstore, East Tennessee History Center, and many more!



# TENNESSEE BELIEVES KITCHEN



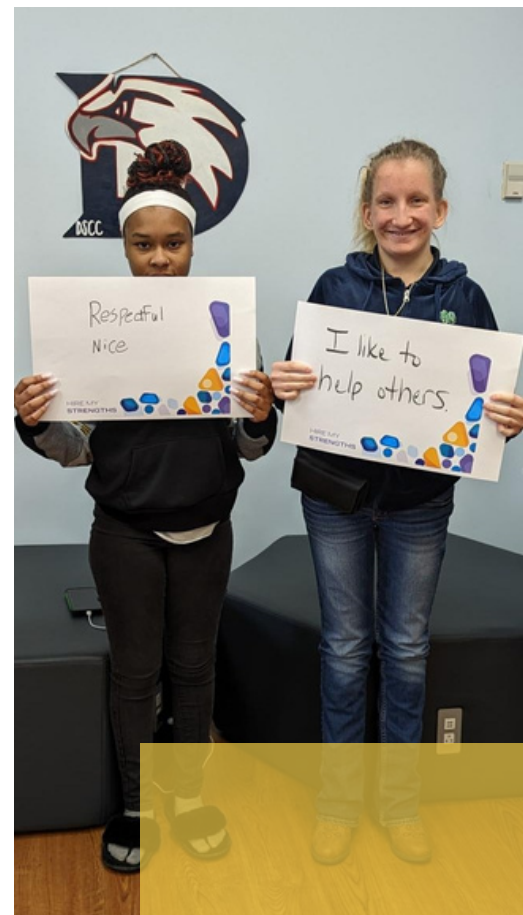
"The UTK Future Program, I love it. I'm sad that this is my last year, but I love cooking and [the Tennessee Believes Kitchen] to make food by ourself and be independent because I want to be on my own. I like the chef. He's a good cook and he knows what he's doing."

-Jacob Grant, UTK FUTURES and Tennessee Believes Kitchen student

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville utilized its grant funding to build the Tennessee Believes Kitchen to increase independent living and employment skills for students.

# DYERSBURG STATE'S EAGLE ACCESS

The first 4 students in the new Eagle Access program at Dyersburg State Community College completed their first year of college. The Eagle Access Program is a four-term, two-year program at DSCC for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and is the first and only community college in Tennessee to start a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with I/DD. Eagle Access is designed to help students gain independence, increase employment training and skills development, and increase their socialization skills.



# NUMBER OF GRADUATES

Seven (7) students graduated from the FUTURE program at UT. Eight (8) students graduated from Next Steps at Vanderbilt University. Each of those students were able to walk at commencement this spring.

Each other program supported by Tennessee Believes this year has students on track to graduate, but due to how new those programs are, they do not have any graduates yet.



# THE FUTURE OF TENNESSEE BELIEVES

Over the next year, DIDD will continue funding and partnership with the first 4 colleges and universities to ensure their programs flourish and support their students to succeed.

In May 2023, DIDD announced the recipients of the FY '23-24 Tennessee Believes grant funding. We look forward working with the following 5 higher education institutions across the state to expand and improve opportunities for students with disabilities. The awards are as follows:

- Chattanooga State Community College: \$411,917 over three years to create the Tiger Access Program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The two-year program will focus on life skills, career exploration and job readiness for up to 9 students in its first year.
- Lipscomb University: \$300,000 over three years to provide an Advanced Certificate Program for students in its IDEAL program. This would provide an additional third or fourth year of education while preparing students for independent living and employment.
- East Tennessee State University: \$400,000 for three years to support the transition of students in its ACCESS ETSU program into competitive integrated employment and independent living. ETSU will partner with a community provider, Core Services of Northeast Tennessee, to provide transitional support, including community navigators and job coaches, to ensure long-term success post-graduation.
- University of Memphis: \$375,000 for three years to create a three-year study, called PROOF, focused on expanding current inclusive higher education programs at the University. This includes offering credentials and training for individuals exiting the school system and the TigerLIFE program, piloting a study for expanding into Independent Living, and assessing the feasibility at adding new inclusive programs at other West Tennessee higher education institutions.
- The Union University EDGE Program: \$10,000 for two years to provide groceries and supplies to its Cooking Lab program. The program helps teach EDGE students about cooking and nutrition, so students can gain independence and self-sufficiency while learning important social skills, such as teamwork and communication.





Images shared by:

- Next Steps Program at Vanderbilt University
- The UTK FUTURES program
- Dyersburg State's Eagle Access Program
- Access ETSU

