



Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act of 2021

For every young person, college is an experience that allows us to explore our skills and interests and prepare for a future career. However, students with disabilities often face challenges as they navigate the higher education system and must meet new – sometimes costly – requirements to access the accommodations they deserve. Finding clear information about disability services programs in college can be difficult. Too often, college faculty do not receive training and support they need to address the needs of students with disabilities.

What is the RISE act?

The Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act of 2021 amends the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), to ensure that students with disabilities will thrive in college. If passed, it will streamline the process to qualify for disability services and require colleges to accept a variety of forms of documentation of a disability, including an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, notice from a doctor, or evaluation by a psychologist.

It focuses on three critical issues:



Accommodations

Requires colleges to accept an IEP or 504 plan as evidence of a disability when a student is seeking accommodations in college.



Information

Provides parents and students with information on disability services in one clearinghouse, making it easier to know what services are available in higher education and how to access them.



Training

Supporting a Technical Assistance Center for college faculty to learn more about the needs of students with learning disabilities.

Did you know?

The cost of a new evaluation for a student with a learning disability ranges from \$500–\$2500. ⁴

How Will the RISE Act Change Lives for Students and Families?

#1: Fairer Access to Accommodations

Many students with disabilities receive accommodations throughout their elementary and secondary education, but when they transition to college they must navigate new requirements to document their disability and often receive different types of support. In fact:

- **94% of students with LD received accommodations in high school but only 17% received accommodations in postsecondary education.** ¹
- **43% who didn't receive accommodations in post-secondary reported that they wished they had.** ²
- **50% of parents of high school students and 60% of parents of recent graduates think the process to get accommodations and support services, including necessary documentation, is difficult and unclear.** ³

#2: Clearer Information About Disability Services

For many prospective college students with disabilities, the availability and quality of disability services and supports offered by a college can be a significant factor in deciding where to enroll. But quality information is hard to find and often requires students and families to reach out to schools individually to find the information they need. According to an analysis by NCLD, only 6 out of 400 colleges provided any information about disability services on the U.S. Department of Education's public website, College Navigator.

The RISE Act will authorize \$10 million for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities, a resource center that will provide clear information about disability services offered by colleges and the supports available.

75% of parents of high school students think it is difficult to find information about disability services in college. ⁵

In our college search, I feel like we dig and dig and come up with not a lot for our effort.

– Parent, Wisconsin

1. Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends, and Emerging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.

2. Newman, Wagner, Knokey, Marder, Nagle, et al. (2011), NLTS 2 Wave 5.



#3: Better Training For College Faculty to Support Students with Disabilities

More students with disabilities are enrolling in college than ever before, but just 45 percent of students with learning disabilities completed a 4-year degree compared to 53 percent of students without disabilities. ⁶

“While my son has accommodations from his university, some of his professors have been reluctant to allow them. It would be wonderful if colleges provided training for their professors about disabilities and accommodations.”

- Parent, Florida

To help students succeed in college, it's important for their professors to have the training and support to understand the different types of disabilities, accommodations and effective teaching strategies.

Through the \$10 million the RISE Act authorizes for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities, the Center will support professional development about disability for college faculty and serve as a clearinghouse for disability services information for students and families.

The cost to have my son reevaluated for a more current diagnosis was too expensive, so he was not able to get services. It is very likely he will have to move home and go to a community college for the Fall 2016 semester. He feels like a failure because of this.

- Parent, North Carolina



3. Source: NCLD May 2016 survey of over 800 parents on Understood.org merging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.

4. Learning Disabilities Association of America (2013). Adult learning disability assessment process.

5. Ibid.

6. Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends, and Emerging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.