Achieve Program

A comprehensive post-secondary transition program
for students with intellectual disabilities

The Achieve program's goal is to create an inclusive, postsecondary education experience for its students and to provide career preparation and internships based on a student's interests and skills. Created in 2001, Achieve addresses the unique needs of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) ages 18–21 as they transition out of the K–12 system and into the workforce. Achieve provides opportunities for individuals with ID to continue their education post high school by earning a meaningful credential; develop and enhance academic and employment readiness skills in an inclusive community college setting; plan and prepare for a career based on interests and skills; gain job skills in real community-based businesses; and make lasting friendships through participation and membership in campus clubs and activities.

Factoids **at a glance**

- Funded through a Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education (TPSID) grant from the U.S. Department of Education (CFDA #84.407A)

- Current 5-year, $1.79 million grant ends 2020

- Highline was one of only 25 higher education institutions nationwide, and one of just three community colleges, to receive the TPSID grant in 2015

- Initial grant funded in 2010, with Highline selected as one of only 27 model demonstration programs
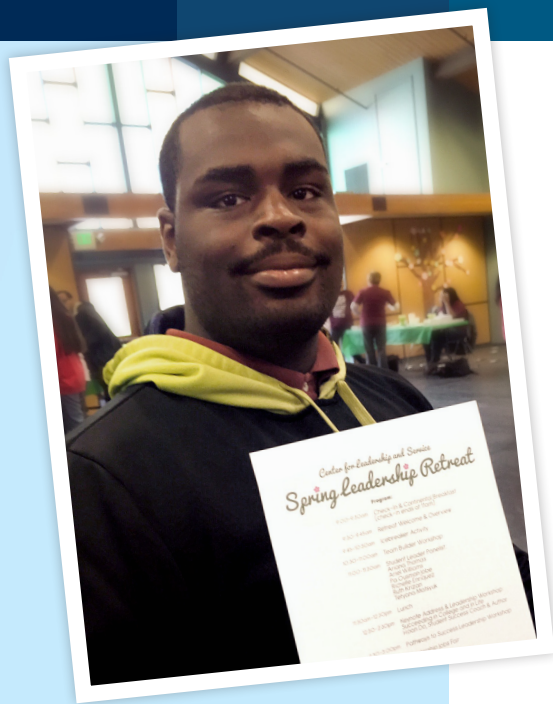
Achieve Program Accomplishments

2019–2020 ACADEMIC YEAR

- Increased access by adding 37 dually enrolled students to the ACHIEVE program, surpassing the original goal of 25.

- Developed quarter-long inclusive, paid internship experiences for 100% of first-year students including opportunities for job shadowing, skill development and skill practice. Twenty-two (22) students participated, surpassing the original goal of 15.

FALL 2015–SPRING 2019

- Created at least one paid internship in each of eight pathways on campus and in the community (27 sites). Surpassed goal by developing 49 internship sites over the course of the project (2015–2019).

- Held regional college and career readiness programming for high school students. Original goal was 250 students, but many more students participated, thanks to Achieve students' inclusion in campus and community summits and workshops. These opportunities focus on college and career preparation for low-income, first-generation students, including those from underrepresented immigrant/ethnic communities.

MEET
Evan

Evan came to Achieve at Highline College through his school district's transition program. Having spent two years in the transition program, he was ready to embrace the rigor and opportunity of college life.

At Highline, he first enrolled in a career planning and evaluation class, a general college course full of students interested in exploring their skills and potential career pathways. Through the coursework, classroom discussion, and a variety of career assessments, Evan learned that the best fit for his first job would be one that combined his desire for a structured, steady work environment with his precise technical skills.

Next, Evan took a business information technology course where he could work on expanding his computer skills.

He also completed internships in two different areas: photo assistant and medical records administrative assistant.

He expanded his communication skills by participating in a campus-based leadership seminar and by joining the writing club, giving him the chance to share his passion for writing with other students.

At the end of the year, he joined other student leaders in a spring retreat to celebrate accomplishments and plan for the future.

Evan's future seemed like it couldn't get any brighter when, just after graduation, he was offered a job at the City of Seattle as an office assistant, working more than 20 hours per week with benefits. This is only the beginning for Evan and Highline is proud to have been just a part of his journey.

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