



STUDENTS WITH unique or special circumstances

Students with Unique or Special Circumstances (Perkins Defined Special Populations) Guide for Texas Community College Perkins Basic Grant Directors.

Special Populations include:

- ✓ Individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults
- ✓ Individuals preparing for nontraditional fields
- ✓ Single parents, including single pregnant women
- ✓ Out-of-workforce individuals
- ✓ English learners
- ✓ Homeless individuals
- ✓ Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system
- ✓ Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty

Special Populations list above comes from NAPE.

<https://napequity.org/public-policy/frontline-legislation/strengthening-career-and-technical-education-for-the-21st-century-act/#specialpops>

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Please note, this guide is intended to provide ideas and strategies, not all suggestions can be covered by Perkins funds. Please check with your Perkins Project Director for anything not specified in the Perkins RFA.





Defined:

*The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity (i.e., caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning and working). This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person's association with a person with a disability. ** This category is for all disabilities and is not limited to only those students with accommodations on file*

Top Five Disabilities: Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Psychiatric Disabilities, Health/Chronic, and Mobility

Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Ensure equity and access to eligible individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to:

Classroom Accommodations

- Extended time on tests and/or reduced distraction setting for testing.
- Interpreters, scribe, and/or readers.
- A tape-recorder for lectures, enlarged print textbook, textbook outline, advanced reading list, and assistive technology.
- Equipment and/or supplies—Braille, pocket spellers, and assistive technology.
- Instructor's notes, hand-outs, and PowerPoint presentations when applicable.
- Offer front-row seating.

Other Disabilities Assistance

- Individual needs based on needs for student success (collaboration of community resources and/or services may be needed).

Reminders:

Evaluate student success: Is there classroom interaction? Does the student contribute in class to constitute a significant component of the learning process? Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning? To what degree does a student's failure to attend class indicate a significant loss to the educational experience of others students in the class?

Look at issues from the lens of students with disabilities: Investigate how instruction can be designed to support students with disabilities. Understand the unique challenges of online learning for students with disabilities. Implement learn strategies to ease and improve accommodations for face-to-face and online learning. Explore options that could be influenced to support faculty providing required accommodations.





SPECIAL POPULATIONS: Individuals Preparing For Non-Traditional Fields

Defined:

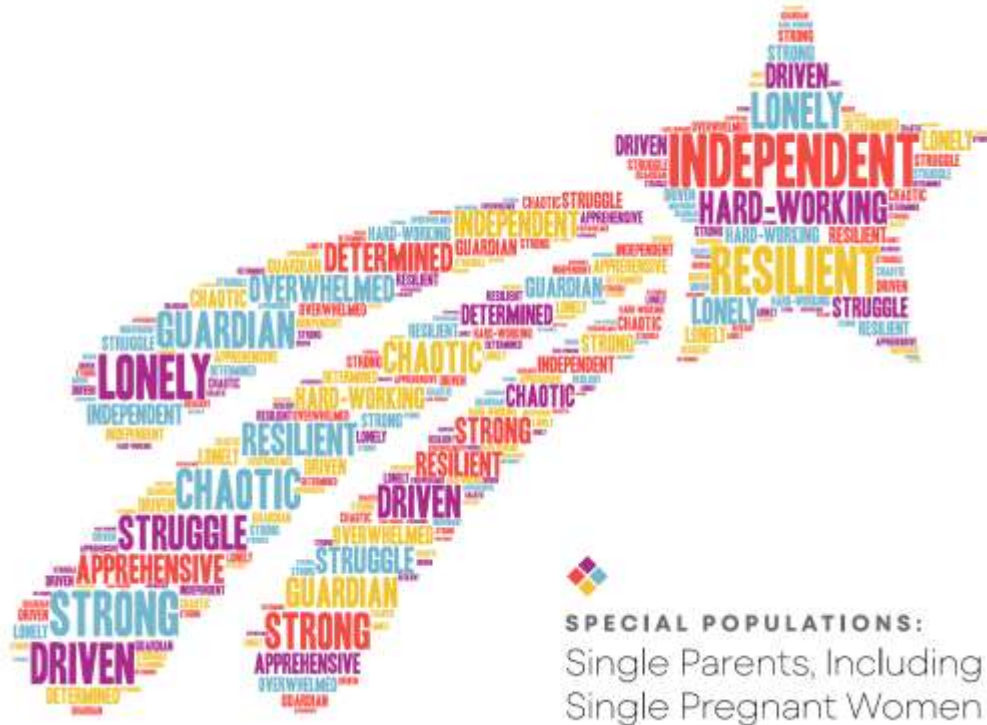
The United States Department of Labor classifies a nontraditional occupation as one in which individuals preparing for that field are on a career path to an occupation that generally employs less than 20 percent of a specific gender. For female nontraditional careers, less than 20 percent of individuals employed are female; likewise, male nontraditional careers employ less than 20 percent males.

Supporting Students who are Non-Traditional in their CTE Field:

- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and advisors that focus on non-traditional careers, barriers, and gender equity gaps.
- Create mentorship programs with instructors or industry partners for those students enrolled in non-traditional programs to help guide them through education to industry.
- Provide networking opportunities for students to engage with non-traditional industry representatives.
- Develop and promote student support services that specifically target those students enrolled in nontraditional career pathways. (Work with your Veteran's Affairs Office.)

Recruiting to increase Non-Traditional Participation (Perkins 3P1):

- Create marketing materials without inadvertent gender bias and discriminatory messages. Include testimonials from current students in nontraditional career programs or former students working in nontraditional occupations.
- Use social media campaigns to highlight and promote nontraditional gender occupations recommended practices.
- Provide career fairs and seek out opportunities to engage students with nontraditional occupations (i.e., Women in Industry conferences)
- Host events and invite students and parents to a program site to eliminate misconceptions about CTE programs and nontraditional careers.



Defined:

Individuals who are unmarried or legally separated and have custody or joint custody of one or more minor children; including single, pregnant women.

Supporting Students who are Single Parents, Including Single Pregnant Women:

- Affordable and reliable childcare.
 - Collaboration with local, state, and federal resources to help with childcare that meets the student’s needs.
 - Work with Workforce Solutions on childcare eligibility.
- Collaboration between campus resources and community service providers for resources and services.
- Flexible coaching models that meet student parents where they are.
- Foster a more family-friendly culture on campus.
- Make sure students do not feel isolated because they are a single parent or single and pregnant by possibly implementing single-parent support groups.
- Provide information and outreach to single fathers.
- Evaluate the institutional policies that could possibly hinder single parents from having their children with them on campus.
- Work in conjunction with the Title IX coordinator.

Reminders:

Title IX provides that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Department of ED’s regulation implementing Title IX specifically prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. The Title IX regulation also prohibits a school from applying any rule related to a student’s parental, family, or marital status that treats students differently based on their sex.



SPECIAL POPULATIONS: Out-Of-Workforce Individuals

Defined:

An individual who is a displaced homemaker, as defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) (A displaced homemaker describes someone who has been [out of the paid workforce](#) for years, usually raising a family and managing a household and its chores, without pay, during those years. The homemaker becomes displaced when for some reason – most often divorce, a spouse’s death or a reduction in household income – she must find other means of support, likely including re-entering the workforce.)

and

An individual who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for a home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills; or is a parent whose youngest dependent child will become ineligible to receive assistance under Social Security Needy Families Act not later than 2 years after the date on which the parent applies for assistance under such title; and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Supporting Students who are Out-of-Workforce Individuals

- **Informational needs:** reaching often-isolated displaced homemakers through publicity and outreach, helping them understand that services are available as well as more specifics on what services might be available to them.
- **Financial needs:** temporary financial support for living expenses, childcare, and transportation.
- **Vocational needs:** assessment of skills, career/vocational counseling, help with job search and job placement, creating jobs, opening apprenticeship programs to older women, advocating for the hiring of displaced homemakers, affirmative action, working with employers to advocate for displaced homemakers and help employers deal with their needs. Once a displaced homemaker with children found a training program or job, child care and transportation were also needed.
- **Personal counseling needs:** these might include crisis counseling, financial and legal counseling, assertiveness training, psychological support including support groups. Counseling might specifically address single parenthood, divorce, and widowhood.



Students who do not speak English or whose native language is not English. This group also includes individuals who need to enhance their abilities in the areas of speaking reading, writing and understanding the English language.

- Individuals that meet the criteria are usually identified through a formal assessment of their English literacy, testing their reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension.
- If assessment results indicate the potential to struggle in regular academic courses, dual-language, or English as a second language (ESL), and provide which courses or programs may be made available to them.
- Assessment results may indicate language proficiency for those students that may have since acquired English-language abilities and allow them to transition into regular academic courses taught in English. The students, however, may still struggle with academic language. For this reason, support should continue to be provided to these students, and their academic progress monitored throughout the course of their educational careers.

- Facilitate collaboration between CTE and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers so students have smooth transition into CTE programs.
- Identify individuals on your campus that can serve as interpreters for students or have interpretive services available for students.
- Guide students to free resources that facilitate language translation such as visual dictionaries and translation apps.
- Provide information or professional development that helps faculty connect content learning to language acquisition.
- Based on your campus, evaluate the possibilities of providing instructional materials in multiple languages.

20% of students in Texas public schools are English learners.



Based on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the federal law created to support the enrollment and education of homeless students. McKinney-Vento is intended to provide homeless students the same educational opportunities as housed students by removing as many barriers to learning for homeless students as possible

Defined:

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This definition includes (but is not limited to) children who are:

- Sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing (e.g. doubled-up).
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campgrounds (due to a lack of adequate alternative accommodations)
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Sleeping in places unfit for human habitation (e.g. park benches).
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, etc.

Supporting Students who are Homeless:

- Implement ways to identify homelessness.
- Provide access to free meals, shower and laundry facilities, a secure place to store personal belongings, a quiet place to study, free school supplies, and access to technology and the internet.
- Coordinate or partner with local agencies to provide services such as transportation, referrals to health care, shelters, housing, and employment.
- Implement or partner with local agencies for a resource center that includes a food pantry, clothing closet, personal hygiene supplies, and a social worker or counselor.
- Have some type of emergency shelter or emergency funds set aside to help students that need emergency shelter.

Reminders:

Currently it is estimated that 14% of community college students are homeless.



Youth Who Are In, Or Have Aged Out Of, The Foster Care System

The term 'age out' refers to: the time frame after which a foster care child is eligible for state services. Eligibility for state services varies depending on the state in which the child resides. Transitioning out of the child welfare system may occur as early as 18 or as late as age 23.

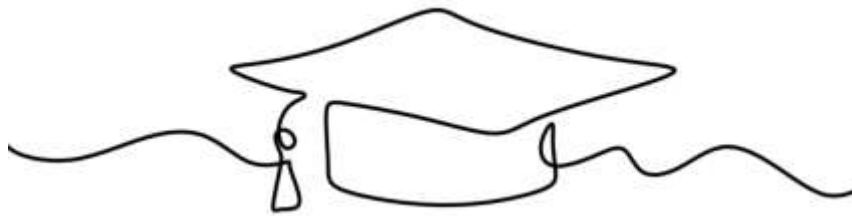
FYI:

- In the state of Texas, children are aging out of foster care at the age of 18. At this age, CPS is no longer responsible for you, and you do not legally have to answer to all the restrictions that were once placed on you, including the 24/7 oversight that you received in the foster care system.
- Texas lawmakers have established programs to help address low college enrollment and retention rates among foster-care alumni. In 2015, the Legislature amended the Education Code to require each Texas public institution of higher education (IHE) to appoint at least one employee to serve as a foster-care liaison.

- Coordinate services in conjunction with the campus foster-care liaison.
- Help students who are gaining out of foster care develop a transition plan that includes a career assessment and pathways to follow.
- Evaluate and understand the different major obstacles specific to in the transition plan that will affect your students. (Example, where is the transitional housing in comparison to your campus.)
- Build a relationship of trust and support with them.
- Give them one point of contact to help them through all aspects of your institution and do not pass them along through your system.

There are over 31,500 children in foster care in the state of Texas. Make sure to download the Texas Foster Care Liaison Information and Reference Guide





Additional Resources

A Guide to Disability Rights Laws-- <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor62335>

Access to Higher Education for Students Experiencing Homelessness. <https://nche.ed.gov/higher-education/>

English Learners in Texas: Fact Sheet #1. www.txel.org%2Fmedia%2Fjvehnvgp%2Ffact-sheet-1-7-15-20-final.pdf&clen=493932&chunk=true

Fact Sheets on the Military Child. <https://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=8998>

Four Ways Community Colleges Can Address the Needs of their Single Mother Students. <https://www.ecmcfoundation.org/news/2022/4-ways-community-colleges-can-address-the-needs-of-their-single-mother-students>

How Community Colleges Can Act to Support Students Facing Hunger and Homelessness. <https://perspectives.acct.org/stories/how-community-colleges-can-act-to-support-students-facing-hunger-and-homelessness>

Innovative Educators—Supporting Online Students with Disabilities—Strategies & Solutions for Providing Accommodations Panel Presentation

Kilgore College Student Procedural Manual for Disability Services-- <https://www.kilgore.edu/current-students/student-services/disability-services>

Promising Community College Practices for Student Parent Success. <https://perspectives.acct.org/stories/promising-community-college-practices-for-student-parent-success>

Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth. www.theotx.org

Texas Health and Human Services. [Affordable Housing and Transitional Housing Resources | 2-1-1 Texas \(211texas.org\)](https://www.211texas.org/)

Texas Higher Education Foster Care Liaisons: Information and Reference <https://www.socialwork.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/FHE-Liaisons-Guide-FINAL.pdf>

Texas Homeless Network. www.thn.org

Title IX Requirements Regarding Pregnant and Parenting Students. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.html#_Toc3

Credit and Thanks

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