

Asking for What You Need and How to Get It:

A Guide to College Accommodations

When planning for college, it's important to make sure you have the tools and support to help you succeed. If you have special healthcare needs, you already know how beneficial it is to plan ahead and be prepared.

Consider the following tips before talking with potential colleges and universities.



Tip 1: Check out potential college and university websites.

To help you succeed, connect with the school's Office of Disability Services for support and accommodations.

- Does the website have information about their Campus Office of Disabilities?
- If so, is there information on how to apply for accommodations and what they may offer?
- What documentation is required to get reasonable accommodations?

Advice from our YAC members:

“It is important to visit and speak to the disability departments to ask them what they specifically provide or recommend. Constant communication is important.”

“Check for flexibility and contact information: Can accommodations be updated mid-semester if needs change? It's important to look for information on how your disability information is kept private and secure, or if it's stated on the forms.”



The Division of Specialized Care for Children's Youth Advisory Council created this fact sheet to share helpful resources and tips from their personal experiences.

 UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO

Division of Specialized Care for Children



Tip 2: Know the differences between accommodations in high school and college.

In high school, you have a team that helps you put your accommodations together and supports you. Whereas in college, you have to initiate and take responsibility to find those accommodations and resources.

01. FOCUS

Schools focus on helping all students succeed. Students have an IEP or 504 plan for support and accommodations.

01. FOCUS

Colleges work to give all students an equal chance to learn and take part in activities. There is no IEP or 504 plan.

02. LAWS

Federal and state rules guide how accommodations are provided. Students with disabilities are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

02. LAWS

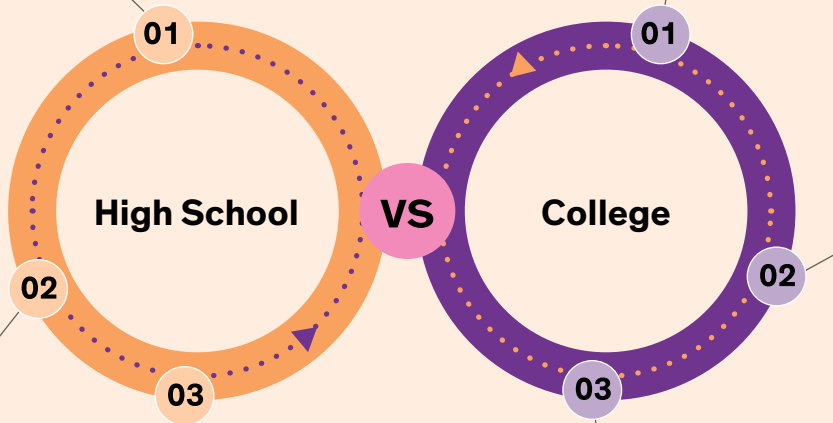
Students with disabilities are protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each college may have its own rules for how these laws are followed.

03. RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers and staff help set up accommodations for students. **The school is responsible** for finding out what a student needs and making sure they get help.

03. RESPONSIBILITY

Students have to ask for accommodations themselves. They need to tell the college about their needs and work with the school's disability services to get support. Colleges will help, but students have to take the first step.





Tip 3: Know the types of accommodations available.

Note that various colleges and universities offer different accommodations. It is best to check with your school's Office of Disabilities.

Instruction and Testing



Physical

- Adaptive furniture (desk) and adaptive aids
- Assistive technology
- Enlarged text
- Sign language interpreter
- Someone to take notes
- Record information, lectures and tests
- Extended/flexible deadlines on assignments
- Flexible attendance
- Priority enrollment

Learning

- Extra time on assignments and tests
- Selective seating
- Computer-read test
- Essay test versus multiple-choice test
- Someone to take notes
- Someone to read the test or write down answers
- Quiet environment, no distractions
- Extended/flexible deadlines on assignments
- Tutor
- Printed copy of verbal instructions

Housing and Campus Life

- Wheelchair-accessible entrances, bathrooms and kitchens
- Visual alarms (fire, doorbell, phone) for people with hearing loss
- Permission to have service animals
- Near an accessible bathroom or on the ground floor
- Accessible public transit services and shuttles
- Access to a specific meal plan, kitchen or separate food pantry (for example, gluten-free food)
- Adapted furniture or space modifications






Tip 4: Learn what you need help with and set up ways to get that help.

Here Are Some Things to Know


Complete DSCC's Adult Living/Self-Reliant Skills Checklist to see where you might need more help.

 https://dsccl.org/dsccl_resource/independence-milestones-skills-list-2/


Connect with your school's local Center for Independent Living (CIL).

 The Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL) supports 22 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in the state. These nonprofits help people with disabilities live independently at home, work and school. To find a CIL near you, go to: <https://incil.org/locate/>.


Learn about adaptive equipment that can make your everyday life easier.

 The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) supports people with disabilities with assistive technology for daily living, device loans, a demonstration center, a loan program for funding and much more at www.iltech.org/. You can also call toll-free at (800) 852-5110 (voice) or dial 711 for Illinois Relay Services.

You may need an attendant to help with your personal care in the mornings and evenings.

 More details on available home services are at www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29738.

Using public transportation.

 Some campuses provide shuttles to get you to and from class. However, it is not common and getting to know the public transportation options in the area is key.

Public transportation includes buses, trains and other transit options open to everyone. If you have a disability, there are services and supports to help you use public transportation more easily, such as:

- **Accessible vehicles** (with ramps or lifts)
- **Priority seating**
- **Travel training** to help you learn how to ride
- **Paratransit services**, if you can't use regular buses or trains

You may need to apply or schedule some of these services in advance. The Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois (SILC) provides three pre-recorded trainings for individuals with disabilities on the basics of riding the bus.

- The Basics of Riding the Bus: On-Demand Services
- The Basics of Riding the Bus: Fixed Route
- The Basics of Riding the Bus: Complementary Paratransit Service

Find the trainings in SILC's resource section here: <https://silcofillinois.org/silc-news/>.

**Advice from
YAC members:**

**"For your transportation needs,
be sure to ask for paratransit
and shuttle services."**

**"Ask the school if they
offer PA (personal
assistant) services."**



Tip 5: Learn about your healthcare options.

1. Planning for nearby medical care is important. If you have special healthcare needs, you should plan where you will go for health services, medications and supplies.
 - You can ask your current physician to help identify health resources closer to campus.
 - Your insurance provider can help find in-network health services, including equipment providers for maintenance or repairs, pharmacies and medical facilities for lab work and other services.
 - Your Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) care coordination team can help you plan for medical emergencies and connect you to health resources.
2. If you use assistive devices, such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid, you will need to check on repair services available near the campus. This way, you will be prepared if something goes wrong while you are away at college.





Tip 6:

Look for clubs and organizations on and off your campus that support self-determination and promote disability education, activism, mentoring and awareness.

Examples of Campus Organizations:

The Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition (DPOCC) through the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC)

 <https://chicagolanddpocc.wordpress.com/>


The Student Disability Network (SDN) at Illinois State University

 <https://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/students/student-disability-network/>

The Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM) Chapter at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)

 www.facebook.com/DREAMatUIUC/

Disability and Chronic Illness at Carle Illinois College of Medicine

 <https://medicine.illinois.edu/student-life/student-interest-groups/disability-and-chronic-illness>

Examples of Community Organizations

The Arc of Illinois is a statewide organization that advocates for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, provides resources and information, and supports families across the state.

 www.thearcofil.org/

Equip for Equality works to empower people with disabilities to advocate for themselves and their families. They also offer legal services and training.

 www.equipforequality.org/