







College Planning Guide

for Students with Disabilities, Students with IEPs & 504 Plans

A handbook to help you:

- Understand your legal rights related to postsecondary education
- Take important steps in high school to prepare for college
- Learn key facts about applying for college admission and financial aid
- Become familiar with accommodations and services in college to support your success
- Know how to obtain needed supports in college
- Find resources to assist you along the way

NYC Public Schools Student Pathways

NYC Public Schools | Division of Inclusive & Accessible Learning

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

When I was applying to college, it would have been great to have a guide like this that explained what I needed to know as a student with a disability. There is a lot to know! As a college student, I have learned how important it is to speak up for yourself and ask for help to get accommodations. Plus, there are other resources you can access on campus to help you build the skills needed to succeed in college. Attending my freshman orientation was important for me because they taught me about accessibility features on my device and how to get tutoring support.

It's great you're learning about these things now. Good luck!

J.
College of Mount St. Vincent

Thinking about college? I am excited for you! When I first started college, I was excited and anxious. Navigating financial aid was stressful, but knowing what financial aid options were available to me really helped. As a student with a disability, it has been important for me to know my rights and have access to support that helped me succeed. From applying to college and being in college, there is always so much to do and keep track of. Take advantage of supports, understand your rights, and know when to disclose your disability. You got this!

P.
City College, CUNY

Introduction

Planning for the transition to life after high school can be exciting, and sometimes intimidating. But it's about taking one step at a time—and learning about the resources available to support you.





Whether or not a student has a disability, they need information on how to find colleges that will be a good fit for them. They also need information about applying for admissions and financial aid, enrolling, and succeeding in college. There are also some specific steps to consider if you have a disability. **This Resource Guide is for you, high school students with IEPs or 504 plans**. Use it with family, counselors, case managers, and any other supporters as you prepare for college.

Important notes for using this guide!

- A **disability** can be a physical, developmental, intellectual, mental, emotional or learning disability. Not all disabilities are visible. Some students with disabilities require more support related to the disability, some less. Many disabilities are permanent, some temporary. All students with disabilities should learn about legal rights and responsibilities and assistance available to them.
- In this Resource Guide, the word **college** is used to refer to any **institution of higher education (IHE)**. It can include a college or university, and can include programs leading to certificates, associate degrees, or bachelor's degrees.

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1 Know Your Rights

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Differences in legal rights in high school and college

There are legal rights related to your education that you should understand so you can fully benefit from them as a student. But there are important differences between laws covering you through high school and laws that apply in college.

Rights in High School

The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, is a federal law that says children and youth with disabilities are entitled to a "free and appropriate public education" until a student graduates from high school through age 21.* IDEA requires public schools to provide special education and related services to support students' success. These services, outlined in an individualized education program (IEP) depend on your needs to help you reach your educational goals.

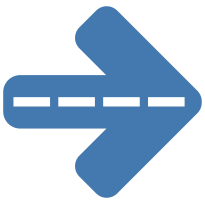
The IEP is a legal document that:

- Is unique to you.
- Is updated at least once each year.
- Includes goals and support needs, as well as your strengths and progress.
- Recommends programs, services, and accommodations that will support your success, such as assistive technology or longer time to take tests.

As a high school student, you should be attending your IEP meetings to talk about:

- Your goals for high school
- Your goals for post-high school
- Supports that are working for you
- Your progress and any challenges

In your senior year, you will participate in creating an exit summary which summarizes your strengths, achievements, support needs, and recommendations for next steps.



Rights in College

Once you leave high school, IDEA no longer applies to you. But there are civil rights laws, **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which provide protections against discrimination based on disability. In college, this means students have the right to *reasonable accommodations* to ensure they can participate fully in all aspects of college life.

Accommodations are adjustments made to ensure that a student with a disability has equal access to college activities. This means participation in college courses, campus housing (dorms), as well as clubs and student organizations. ADA requires that colleges provide *reasonable accommodations* to ensure full access to courses and other college activities.

You have to request accommodations—they don't happen automatically. **As a college student, you need to start the process yourself by disclosing that you have a disability and requesting accommodations.** Chapter 5 has more information about requesting accommodations.



You have to request accommodations—they don't happen automatically.

YOUR RIGHTS: KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE		
Categories	**IDEA (PreK–12)**	**ADA (College)**
Legal rights	Free and appropriate public education	Ensures access. Prohibits discrimination based on disability, eliminates barriers to participating in college
Who is covered	Any person with a disability, ages 3-21* (or until completion of high school)	Any person who is qualified to attend a college and has a disability that impacts their participation in that college
Identifying a disability and providing an evaluation	Schools and districts are required to identify a student who may have a disability and provide an evaluation to determine if the student has a qualifying disability under IDEA.	Colleges do not have an obligation to identify or evaluate students. Students have to self-disclose that they have a disability and request accommodations.
Role of family/ parents	Parents are fully included in the IEP process.	College students are considered independent adults; parents are not consulted nor provided information by a college (unless student provides written consent).
Decision process about services & accommodations	An IEP team meets at least annually to review progress, needs, goals, and services; the IEP team includes school professionals as well as the parents and the student.	College students have to request accommodations; the college does not have to agree to accommodations not considered “reasonable”; the student, staff, and faculty work together to develop a plan.

YOUR RIGHTS: KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE		
Categories	**IDEA (PreK–12)**	**ADA (College)**
Provision of services & devices	Schools have to provide what is deemed necessary and is written on the IEP.	Colleges do not have to supply services (such as therapy, tutoring, coaching) nor devices (such as wheelchairs, speech to text devices, and electronic readers). *NOTE: you may be able to get funds for these devices from health insurance and disability services systems such as ACCES-VR.*

* In NYC, a student with disability who has not yet earned a New York State recognized diploma may continue to be enrolled in New York City Public Schools and receive special education services until the end of the school year (June 30th) in which they turn 22.

2 Preparation for College While You Are in High School

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Transition planning
- Self determination
- Self advocacy
- Career exploration
- Life skills

There are important steps to take in high school to get ready for college and adulthood. An important goal of education is to support you in self-determination. This means you are the one who sets your life goals and makes decisions. Self-determination means different things to different people, but the main idea is to be able to make choices for yourself.

The process of developing goals and mapping out steps for life after high school is called transition planning. **Everyone needs help with transition planning—it's part of the process to work with your family, teachers, counselors, and peers to develop your plan.** Transition planning involves yearly assessments of your strengths, needs, skills and interests in future jobs, education, and independent living. Annual IEP meetings are an important opportunity to review this information and how your IEP team is helping support you now for the future.This timeline can help you map out your steps.



KEY ACTIONS TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE		TIMING
Track your progress on meeting graduation requirements	■ Review your diploma path using the Diploma Requirements Worksheet. ■ Learn about additional options for students with disabilities. ■ Talk with your guidance counselor about exam requirements and other questions you may have. ■ Discuss diploma and graduation progress at annual IEP meetings.	**9th through 12th grade**
Explore your career interests	■ Use career exploration tools, including transition planning assessments, to learn about what types of careers line up with your interests and strengths. ■ Use your IEP meeting to discuss your goals, dreams, and questions about career options. ■ Apply for internships and summer jobs to learn more about workplaces. ■ Research how college relates to your career interests.	**9th through 12th grade**



KEY ACTIONS TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE		TIMING
Apply to ACCES-VR and other service agencies	■ Learn about services provided by ACCES-VR to support your career development and future employment. ■ Apply to ACCES-VR, if appropriate (preferably 11th grade) ■ Learn about the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), apply for services, if appropriate, as early as possible. ■ Learn about the Independent Living Centers (ILC), contact your local ILC for support if appropriate. ■ Learn about other agencies including New York State Commission for the Blind, if relevant to your needs.	**9th through 12th grade**
Research colleges	■ Learn about types of colleges and universities and programs they offer. ■ Use college research tools to find colleges that might be a good fit for you. Check with your school counselor about resources (including non-degree college experience programs for students with disabilities). ■ Find out about admissions tests, such as the SAT, that you may need to take. Request accommodations (example: extra time) if needed. ■ By 11th grade, start developing a list of schools that interest you. ■ Talk with your family about your interests, needs, and plans. ■ Create your college application plan with all the necessary steps to keep you on track with deadlines.	**9th through 12th grade, especially 11th grade**



KEY ACTIONS TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE		TIMING
Ensure you have an updated evaluation	■ Ensure that your final mandated Three-Year Re-evaluation is conducted (preferably within the last year of high school) since an up-to-date evaluation will be needed when requesting accommodations in college.	**11th and 12th grade**
Participate in completing your Exit Summary	■ Work with your IEP team to complete your exit summary. Use the experience to reflect on your challenges and success, and plan next steps.	**12th grade**
Assemble documents you will need for accommodations	■ You will need a copy of your most recent evaluations, IEP, and Exit Summary (or other related documents) to request accommodations. Create a folder of these materials so you will be prepared to submit them to your college accessibility office. ■ Check with your school about electronic sharing of these documents with your college of choice. Discuss this option at your IEP meeting.	**12th grade**
Assemble health care documents	■ Colleges may require your vaccination records, so arrange with your doctor to send them at the appropriate time. ■ Discuss the need for a medical release or health proxy with your family. These documents allow someone you trust to speak with medical professionals on your behalf if you have an emergency or need support with your health care.	**12th grade**



Build Your Skills

Part of planning for life after high school is building the **skills** you will need to navigate along the way. You have been building them over your life, and high school is a time for major development.

IMPORTANT SKILLS TO DEVELOP IN HIGH SCHOOL	
Self advocacy skills	No one knows you like you know yourself. In college, you will need to speak up for your needs. You have to request accommodations and discuss your accommodation plan with college faculty and staff. If you have challenges with your accommodation plan, you will need to communicate with your instructors and college staff. Developing your skills and confidence to advocate for yourself is important for your success in college and beyond.
Self awareness	Learn about yourself, what you like, what you don't. Pay close attention to what you do well, and in what situations you are most successful. Notice which supports are helpful to you in learning situations. In college, your self awareness will help you know what accommodations to request, and help you to solve problems.
Independent living skills	Build up life skills such as traveling on your own, managing money, making financial decisions, handling your medications, doing your laundry, and planning your meals. In college, you have a lot of independence, and you will use these skills to support your success in your studies, your career, and beyond.
Organization skills	Strengthen your time management, planning, and decision-making skills to help you manage college courses and other campus activities.



Help with transition planning, college preparation, and college applications

There are many people and programs in New York City Public Schools—and beyond—to help you manage these steps, and plan your transition from high school to life after high school. Your supports include:

- Guidance Counselors
- College & Career Counselors
- Social Workers
- Case Managers
- Transition Coordinators and Transition Team Leaders
- IEP Teams
- Teachers and School Administrators
- Postsecondary Engagement Managers and other staff at **Transition and College Access Centers (TCAC)**

Where can you find more information and support?

There are many tools and materials to assist in your planning for next steps after high school. Below are some key NYCPS planning resources.

- After High School
- Family Guide to Transition Planning
- Guide for Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities
- College and Career Planning

3 Applying to College

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Types of college options
- Assessing your wants and needs for college
- Finding colleges that fit your wants and needs: create your list
- Special programs
- College applications
- Considerations related to your disability

There are many types of college-based options for education and training after high school.

Academic Program Categories	What You Earn After Completing the Program	Examples
Educational Certificates	■ A credential for completing certain courses as outlined by the college. ■ Intended to qualify students for specific jobs. ■ Length of time varies, usually shorter than degree programs.	Automotive technology, Computer programming, Early Childhood Assistant, Medical Coding, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, Web Developer

Academic Program Categories	What You Earn After Completing the Program	Examples
Associate degree	■ A degree awarded for successful completion of a specific program of study. ■ Typically completed in two years. ■ Associates of Applied Arts (AAA) or Applied Science (AAS) are generally meant to support direct entry into the workforce, and not used to transfer to a bachelor's program. ■ Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees can be a pathway to earn a bachelor's degree.	Associate of Arts or Science in Accounting, Childhood Education, Computer Technology, Criminal Justice, Liberal Arts, Nursing, Psychology Associate Degree of Applied Arts of Science in Dental Hygiene, Medical Records Technology, Respiratory Therapy
Bachelor's degree	■ A degree awarded for successful completion of a specific course of study. ■ Typically completed in four years.	Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology, Education, Fine Arts, English, History, Journalism Bachelors of Science in Accounting, Biology, Biomedical engineering, Business, Math, Marketing, Physics
Non-credit credential	■ A credential focused on career development and providing the academic foundation necessary for a successful transition to employment. ■ Expands access to the college experience for students with intellectual disabilities.	CUNY Unlimited Credential in Academic and Career Studies

Create Your College List

You need to consider your interests, wants, and needs for college and career development. You will then be able to do research to find colleges that meet your interests and needs.

After your research, create a list of colleges you will apply to. Remember that the list should include schools that may be more difficult to get into (based on your profile and their admissions criteria) and some less difficult. Make sure you have a range of good options.

Complete College Applications

Review each college's application instructions to identify necessary steps, which may include taking admissions exams like the SAT, requesting recommendation letters from teachers, and writing a personal statement or essay.

Check with your college advisor or guidance counselor to see if you are eligible for **fee waivers** for college applications.

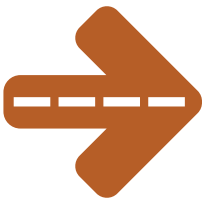
Special Programs

Within a college, there are often special programs to support students' success. Learn about whether there are programs that might be a good fit for you and how to apply. For many, you need to complete a special section on the college application. Some program examples include:

- Higher Education Opportunity Program
- Educational Opportunity Program
- CUNY SEEK & CUNY College Discovery
- CUNY ASAP
- CUNY LEADS

Remember Your Disability-Related Needs

Identify your individual needs related to your disability as you plan for college. To understand which colleges could best meet your needs, here are some steps to take and questions to ask.



RESEARCH

- Find the name of the office that supports students with disabilities at each college you are considering. You can search online to identify it. Some colleges will use a name such as Office of Disability Services, others may call it Center for Accessibility or something similar.
- Look into how accessible a college is for your particular needs. Call the office of accessibility services to ask questions.
- Check out the colleges' website. Learn about policies and procedures about how students request accommodations.
- Visit colleges, and plan in advance to meet with someone at the accessibility services offices. Ask how students request accommodations, and what types of accommodations and support services are available.

QUESTIONS TO ASK OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

- [ ] What is the process for requesting an accommodation at this college?
- [ ] Are there other support services (such as tutoring) for all students?
- [ ] Is there a fee for additional support services (not under ADA)? If so, what is the cost?
- [ ] Tell them the kind of accommodations you think you will need. Are these accommodations the school will provide?
- [ ] What documentation do I need to show proof of my disability, and how recent does it need to be?

Remember: Accommodations under ADA must be free. But there may be other services on campus that have fees.

Conversations with your family, school counselors, and other supporters

It takes teamwork to apply to college! You have choices to make and responsibility for completing all the steps. But you also have helpers. Using the supports that are available is a wise way to get where you want to go. Some steps have to be completed by your family and school counselors. It's important to have conversations with your family to agree on a plan, and so they know what steps are needed to support you.

Check out these tips for Applying to College,
to help you with college research and applications.

4 Paying for College

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- College costs
- Types of financial aid
- Applying for financial aid, including scholarships
- Disability factors with financial aid
- Making the financial decision about which college you will attend

College Costs

College costs include tuition, fees, books and supplies, as well as housing, food, and travel costs which add up to the **Total Cost of Attendance (COA)**. Some of the costs are paid directly to the college. Some are considered "indirect" costs that you need to plan for, such as supplies and travel to campus. Indirect costs can also be disability-related needs.

Financial Aid for College

You may receive financial aid to cover all, most, or some of the COA. Most financial aid comes from the federal government, state government, and colleges. Financial aid can include:

- **Grants and scholarships**, which are sometimes called "free money" as you do not have to pay them back.
- **Loans**, which you have to pay back whether you complete the college program or not.
- **Work study**, another form of financial aid which provides students access to part time jobs on campus.

Eligibility for Financial Aid

Eligibility for most financial aid is based on financial need. Financial need is determined by family income and other factors. **For most financial aid, you need to be a United States citizen, permanent resident of the United States, or other eligible noncitizen.**

- **For students who are undocumented**, you may be eligible for financial aid through the DREAM Act for noncitizens.
- **For students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents with undocumented parents**, you are eligible to get financial aid through FAFSA.

Applying for Financial Aid

To receive any financial aid, you need to complete financial aid applications. Talk to your college advisor or guidance counselor to learn more about these forms and their processes.

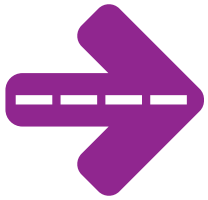
FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS		
What is it Called?	**What is it for?**	**Should I complete it?**
FAFSA	The FAFSA is an application to be considered for financial aid from the federal government. Other financial aid providers, such state governments, also use the FAFSA as part of their application process. The FAFSA is considered the foundation of your financial aid process, with other forms following the FAFSA.	**Yes**, if you are a citizen, permanent resident, or eligible noncitizen; discuss with your school counselor.
TAP	Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is financial aid from New York State for eligible NYS residents.	**Yes**, if you are a NYS resident applying to any colleges in NYS.
CSS PROFILE	Some private colleges require applicants to submit the CSS PROFILE, in addition to the FAFSA and TAP. These colleges use the CSS PROFILE to determine if students are eligible for scholarships or other aid from the college's own resources.	Only if you are applying to colleges that require this form in addition to the FAFSA.

Scholarships

You can also apply for special scholarships. There are many scholarships, and they all have different eligibility criteria. You can find out more about scholarships here:

- Federal Student Aid—Scholarships
- College Board's Big Future
- Career One-Stop Scholarship Search

There are some scholarships specifically for students with disabilities. The NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) provides information about scholarships for people with disabilities.



How Much Aid Will You Receive?

From each college that offers you admission, you will receive a **financial aid award letter**. This letter:

- Summarizes your financial aid package
- Outlines the total cost of attendance (COA)
- Lists any financial aid you have been awarded to help cover the costs
- May be a summary in your application account on the college portal
- May include more than one type of financial aid

Making Financial Decisions About College

Many factors go into choosing a college. One major factor is the cost—choosing a college is a financial decision. With your family, college advisor, and other trusted people, discuss the impact of the financial aid packages different colleges offer you. Some colleges may offer you a lot of grant aid and have lower cost, so you don't need to borrow money. Other colleges may only offer you large loans, and little grant aid.

There are online tools to help you evaluate financial aid offers from college. All of these tools, including college cost calculators, help you and your family understand the affordability of each college and the repayment details for any loans. Your guidance counselor or college advisor can help you answer these questions. You can also contact college financial aid offices to request information.

RESOURCES TO HELP UNDERSTAND COLLEGE COSTS

https://studentaid.gov/

This is the United States Department of Education website which contains information about college costs and how to apply for financial aid. The Federal Student Aid Estimator helps students predict their eligibility for federal financial aid.

https://www.hesc.ny.gov/home/

This website for the Higher Education Services Corporation of NYS provides information about NYS financial aid, as well as financial aid more generally.

https://finaid.org/

This website is run by a public service nonprofit that provides information to college students about financial aid and tips for how to manage college expenses. Finaid.org offers a number of calculators to help you make financial decisions about college.



Accepting a Financial Aid Offer

Once you review financial aid award letters with your family and advisor, you will need to take a few steps to officially accept a school's offer for admission and financial aid:

- Decide which college you will attend,
- Log into your account on the college's portal
- Click the different financial aid that you accept.
- Contact the college's financial aid office if you are not sure how to accept the financial aid package offered to you.

Financial Aid Exceptions for Students with Disabilities

Most financial aid requires you to attend full time, and covers a limited number of semesters. However, if you are a student with a disability, there may be some exceptions to these requirements. You can find more information here.

Be aware that you apply for financial aid every year you attend college.
Your eligibility for financial aid is re-evaluated each year, based on your parents' and your income and other factors. This process is done through your FAFSA and any other financial aid forms, such as the TAP application, you are required to submit.

For more information and tips on financial aid applications check out Paying for College.

5 Accommodations in College

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Your IEP does not apply in college
- College accommodations
- Determining what accommodations you need
- Requesting accommodations
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Medical Release and Health Proxy

When you go to college, your IEP no longer applies. Any school-based services or accommodations you receive in high school will not continue in college. You need to return any devices provided by your school as part of your IEP.



However, as a college student with a disability you may be eligible for accommodations.

Colleges also have a variety of supports and services to help all students succeed, such as tutoring, academic advising, professor office hours, mentoring, career advising, and health services.

Accommodations and How You Get Them

Accommodations are adjustments meant to ensure students with disabilities have the same access to opportunities as all other students at a college. Sometimes colleges use the term “academic adjustments” to mean the same thing as accommodations provided for college classes.

Unlike high schools or school districts, colleges do not have a legal duty to identify students with disabilities. You do not have to disclose that you have a disability when you apply to a college, nor when you attend. However, if you need an academic adjustment or any type of reasonable accommodation, **it is up to you to start the process**.

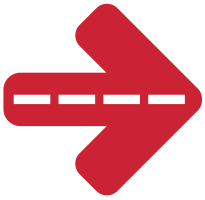
As a student in NYC, you also have the opportunity to have your disability-related documents shared electronically with a higher education institution of your choice upon your graduation from high school. This can help support the accommodation eligibility process by ensuring all the latest documents, such as your IEP and most recent evaluation results, are shared on your behalf in a timely manner. Talk to your IEP team to learn more about this process.



It’s up to you to start the process.

After you request accommodations, and are approved, you receive an accommodations plan. This plan outlines the specific accommodations you will receive in your courses or other college activities. Sometimes this is called an "accommodations letter." You must request accommodations every semester (or quarter) in order to receive a new accommodation plan.

ALL ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS: SOME KEY TERMS	
Accessibility Services	Accessibility Services is a college or university department that coordinates accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Colleges may use other similar names such as Disability Services, Center for Accessibility Resources, or Office of Accessibility.
Alternate Formats	Alternate Formats are different ways learning materials are made available, other than standard print. Alternate reading formats can include electronic text, Braille, or audio recordings.
Assistive Technology (AT)	Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, software, tool, or program that helps you with functions such as reading, writing, or movement. AT can include electronic devices as well as apps on your phone. Other similar terms are adaptive technology and adaptive equipment. You can learn more here. As a reminder, you have to return any devices provided by your high school or college.
Documentation	Documentation is when you provide written evidence of your disability. This can include medical reports, your most recent IEP and evaluation. Be sure to check what documentation a college requires, if any, before you request accommodations.
Self-Disclosure	Self-Disclosure is when you give personal information about your disability so you can receive ADA accommodations in college or in a workplace. Disclosing your disability is your choice. Colleges must maintain your confidentiality beyond the purposes of providing accommodations.
Universal Design	Universal Design is an approach to creating buildings, products, learning experiences, or services so they are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.



Accommodations can mean a lot of different things, depending on your needs.

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- Extended time for exams
- Priority seating in a classroom
- Special designated space for exams
- American Sign Language interpreters in a classroom
- Use of assistive technology to read or type
- Voice recordings of lectures
- Lecture notes
- Assistance with taking notes
- Frequent feedback on academic performance
- Breaks in class time
- Advanced notice of assignments and exams
- Access to audio books
- Use of speech to text software
- Service animals
- Reduced course load (while maintaining full time status for financial aid)

EXAMPLES OF NON-ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- Housing-related accommodations, such as having a room in a building with an elevator or having a single room
- Support animal on campus
- Dining-related accommodations, such as particular food being available

Learn About the Accommodations Process

As you research colleges, learn about the process for receiving accommodations, especially for the colleges you have a strong interest in attending. You can find this information on a college's website.



Requesting Accommodations

Once you choose a college, **contact the office of accessibility to learn about and start the process of requesting accommodations**. You may request an accommodation at any time, but connecting early will help ensure the college has adequate time to review your request and provide appropriate adjustments.

Requesting accommodations is an interactive process between you and the disability office. There is not a predetermined set of accommodations for a specific disability. All accommodations depend on your college courses, your housing and health care situation, and your needs.



Contact the office of accessibillity to learn about and start the process of requesting accommodations.

You can also ask the accessibility office about other resources and services on campus that might interest you. You can find out about:

- Individual or group skills-based workshops (e.g. time management)
- Counseling services
- Health services
- Mentoring programs
- Student-led organizations for people with disabilities on campus

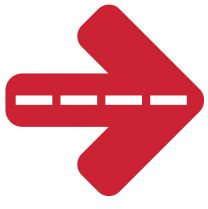
Once your accommodations are approved, the accessibility office will summarize them in a letter. Typically this letter is sent to the relevant instructors. In some cases, you will be required to send the letter to your instructors to indicate you will be using the accommodations listed. The letter does not disclose your disability or diagnosis. It outlines that you have been approved for specific accommodations.

Keep in touch with the accessibility office. If you encounter any challenges, let them know as soon as possible to explore solutions.



CHECKLIST FOR REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

- [ ] Review your courses: Identify barriers which will require an accommodation plan (letter).
- [ ] Prepare a list of accommodations that will address the barriers.
- [ ] Review your housing and dining needs (if you are going to live on campus) to identify any barriers which need an accommodation plan.
- [ ] Read the guidance on your college website to understand the steps to request accommodations.
- [ ] Look for forms or letter templates for requesting accommodations on your college website to help you write your request.
- [ ] Set up an appointment with the accessibility office to discuss your request.
- [ ] Submit your request for accommodations.
- [ ] Ask staff at the accessibility office about other activities or supports that might be useful to you.
- [ ] Follow up on your request if you don't hear back in the timeframe you were given.
- [ ] Review the accommodations plan to ensure you understand it, and it contains what you believe you need. (If not, you can talk to the office to discuss possible changes.)
- [ ] Follow the steps for informing your instructors of your accommodations plan.



The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA)

There is also a law related to access to your educational records and personal information. The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that says parents and guardians have the right to access their children's education records, the right to ask to have the records corrected, and the right to some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records.

When you turn 18 years old, or you are a college student of any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from your parents to you. This means that college staff can only share information with you directly—not your parents, guardians, or anyone else. However, there may be times when you need your parents or another person in your life to be able to communicate with the college about you. In this case, you would need to sign a release form or a FERPA waiver. (There are also other types of FERPA waivers where you waive your right to see records, such as a recommendation letter from a professor.)

As you think about the accommodations you will need in college and prepare to request them, you should also consider if you want or need your parent or caregiver to have access to your academic records and information to speak on your behalf.

Medical Release and Health Proxy

Healthcare providers can not release your medical information to anyone when you are a college student. However there may be some cases where you want or need your parent, or another trusted person, to have access to your medical information, and be able to speak to your health care providers. To allow this, you can sign a medical release or a health proxy. Discuss with your family, and learn more about this as early as possible. You should have the appropriate forms completed before college. College websites have information on medical release forms. For more information on health proxies: https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf

In **Chapter 6, Additional Resources,** you will find links to the directory of all accessible services offices for CUNY, SUNY. You can search online for accessibility services at other colleges.

6 Additional Resources

KEY IDEAS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Directories to find the accessibility services office at SUNY and CUNY
- Information about disability rights and services
- Supports for transition planning, college admissions, and financial aid

College Accessibility Services and Disability Programs

Find information about accessibility services and disability programs at **City University of New York (CUNY)** and **State University of New York (SUNY)**.

CUNY

CUNY has colleges and universities across the City. Each one has its own Disability or Accessibility Services Office responsible for coordinating academic accommodations and support for students with disabilities.

CUNY Disability & Accessibility Services: find information about many CUNY programs and services for students with disabilities, and find the contact information for Disability and Accessibility Services Offices at each CUNY college listed here.

To begin the process, please complete the Confidential Accommodations Request Form, where you can securely upload medical or disability-related documentation for review.

To learn more, visit the CUNY Accommodate Launch Page, which includes a growing library of helpful resources. If you prefer written instructions, students may also download the CUNY Accommodate Student User Guide.

SUNY

SUNY has colleges and universities across New York State. Each one has its own office for students with disabilities.

SUNY Disability Services Offices: find information about SUNY programs and services for students with disabilities here, including contact information for accessibility services office at each SUNY college here.

Disability Information and Legal Rights

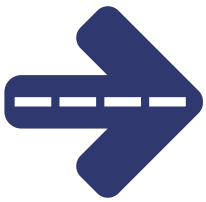
Find information about disabilities, disability civil rights, and resources to support you as a college student.

- **National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD):** The NCCSD is a federally-funded national center with information and resources for future and current college students with disabilities, including those in part-time programs and graduate students. NCCSD's website has information on a wide range of topics for students, families, teachers, professors, and anyone with questions about disability and higher education.
- Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
  - Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities
  - Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities
  - Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators
- American with Disabilities Technical Assistance Programs
- Department of Justice, ADA
- NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
- **Learning Disability Association of America**
  - Resources for Students

Disability Service Systems and Providers

Find information about New York State agencies which provide services to people with disabilities.

- **ACCES-VR**: ACCES-VR is a New York State agency that assists individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living. You can apply to ACCES-VR as early as your junior year of high school to receive career and vocational evaluation, as well as training and career counseling. Depending on a student's career goals and college plan, ACCES-VR may be able to provide supports for students with disabilities. Discuss whether you are eligible for ACCES-VR with your school counselor, and learn more on the ACCES-VR website and college related information here.
- **Commission for the Blind:** The mission of the New York State Commission for the Blind is to enhance employability, to maximize independence and to assist in the development of the capacities and strengths of people who are legally blind.
  - For more information or to find a local District Office please call: **1-866-871-3000** or email the district office closest to you.



- **Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)**: The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is responsible for coordinating services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, Prader-Willi syndrome and other neurological impairments. OPWDD provides services directly and through a network of approximately 450 nonprofit service providing agencies.
- **Independent Living Centers**: Independent Living Centers (ILCs) provide an array of services that assist New Yorkers with all disabilities to live fully integrated and self-directed lives. ILCs assist with all aspects of living, learning and earning. They identify and facilitate removal of architectural, communication and attitudinal barriers to full participation in local communities and beyond.

College Access Programs and Transition Planning Resources

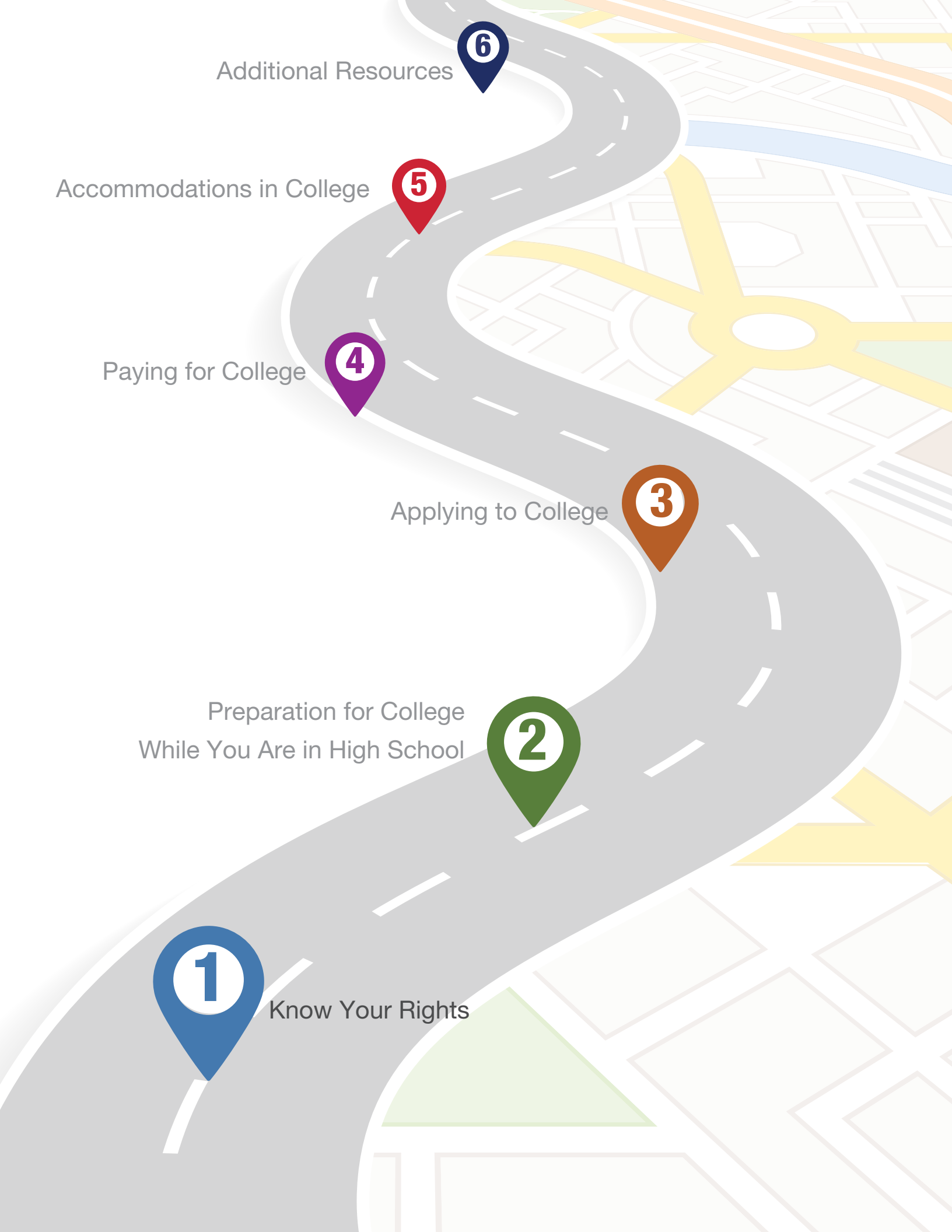
Find information and programs that provide college and career advising.

- TCACs
- INCLUDEnyc
- Think College
- New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), **Family Guide to Transition Planning**
- Federal TRIO Programs
- Gear UP

Financial Aid for College

Find information about how to manage college costs and apply for financial aid.

- Federal Student Aid
- HESC
- UAspire
- Understanding FAFSA
- Finaid
- Foster Youth College Success Initiative


6
Additional Resources
5
Accommodations in College
4
Paying for College
3
Applying to College
2
Preparation for College
While You Are in High School
1
Know Your Rights

NYC Public Schools

College Planning Guide

for Students with Disabilities, Students with IEPs & 504 Plans

Please scan to access a digital version of the guide.