



## Students Going to College or Vocational School

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If you decide to go to college or vocational school, you may have legal rights to some services. You will need to know your rights and how to ask for them.

### **Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act & the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

If you have a disability that substantially limits a major life area, then Section 504 and the ADA may apply to you. A substantial limit is when your disability



prevents you from doing something or makes it very hard for you to do something. Major life areas are things like taking care of yourself, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Section 504 applies to schools that receive federal money such as Pell grants for financial aid. The ADA applies to places that provide public services, like schools, but it doesn't apply to religious organizations.

Section 504 and the ADA say that schools cannot discriminate against you because of your disability. They must make sure that their programs and their buildings are accessible to you. This includes extracurricular activities, like sports events.

The school must work with you to give you the same chance as other students to benefit from your courses. The kind of supports you receive will depend on your disability. Schools cannot charge you for making their buildings and programs accessible.

### **How to get things started**

It will take time to prepare for the accommodations you need. You should contact the student disability services office shortly after being accepted into the school. Tell them about what worked for you in high school and help plan for what you need now. You must be your own advocate to get what you need.

You may also talk to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Eligible students may be able to receive assistance with: college tuition, devices to assist with your education, or applying for jobs. Call (800) 372-7172 or visit <http://ovr.ky.gov>.

### **What if I run into problems?**

Try calling the student disabilities services office first. If it can't help or if there is no office, call the school's ADA or Section 504 coordinator. If that doesn't work, you can file an internal grievance with your school. All government-funded schools must have an internal grievance procedure. Many private schools do, too.

You can also file an ADA or 504 complaint with the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education. You only have 180 days to file a complaint after the school discriminates against you. You can find out more about your rights under Section 504 and the ADA by visiting the Office of Civil Rights at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html> .

### **College dorms and housing**

In Kentucky, all public colleges, community colleges and technical schools must give students with disabilities the first chance at first floor housing. You can find out which private schools must by calling the Council on Postsecondary Education at (502) 573-1555. If there isn't any first-floor housing, the school must let you live somewhere else on campus or off campus.



You have the right to a copy of the school's housing and security policy for students with disabilities. If you think the school's policy or your housing assignment doesn't accommodate your disability, you can appeal the school's decision. You'll find the school's appeal process is in its housing and security policy. You can also appeal if you think your housing assignment is a danger to your health or safety.

### **Mental Health Services**

Attending college can be a very stressful time for students. Most college campuses have counseling services available through student health. If you are in a crisis situation and can't find the phone number for your local mental health crisis line, please call the National Hopeline Network: (800) 784-2433.

**Call the Kentucky Protection and Advocacy office at 1-800-372-2988 for more help or visit <http://www.kypa.net>.**

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