

## Student's Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A personal care attendant (PCA) is defined as an individual hired by a University of Pennsylvania ("Penn") student with a disability to provide medical or health care on a regular basis. If students at Penn would like to request an accommodation to have a PCA accompany such students in Penn's residence halls, such students should reach out to the Disability Services office at Penn. To start the process to request an accommodation for a PCA to have access to and be permitted in Penn's residence halls, the student in need of a PCA must submit a request for accommodation through Disability Services to obtain authorization for the PCA to access their residence.

Disability Services will then review the accommodation request. Approval for a PCA is determined in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Fair Housing Act, University of Pennsylvania's policies and applicable laws. If the request is approved by Disability Services, Residential Services and College Housing will receive detailed information regarding the scope of the accommodation relating to the PCA's access privileges to the student's residence.

### Penn Requirements for PCAs on Campus:

- For purposes of maintaining campus safety, no person can provide recurrent services at Penn without an approved background check. As such, background checks are required for PCAs on campus
  - Background checks should be required even if the individuals chosen to act as PCAs are the students' relatives or loved ones
- All accommodation requests granted will be communicated and coordinated between Disability Services, Residential Services, College Housing, etc.
- PCAs are expected to abide by all applicable laws, as well as Penn's policies, procedures, and guidelines.
  - Failure to follow such law, policies, procedures, or guidelines may result in expulsion of the PCA from campus
    - Such expulsion may result in the student being required to select a new PCA
    - Such expulsion should not in and of itself affect the approved accommodation.
- A PCA is to be granted access privilege to a student's residential building and room in accordance with the accommodation approval letter issued by Disability Services.
  - A PCA's role depends upon students' need and the scope of the students' granted accommodation.

- A student might have substitute PCAs to supplement coverage when a PCA is not available, unless the PCA works for a recognized caregiver staffing agency, which conducts background checks on all caregivers hired by the staffing agency. If a student uses more than one PCA, the same conditions are in effect. All PCAs must have a background check to access the student's residence.
- Disability Services should work with the student to ensure that an accommodation approval letter identifies the names of the PCAs and/or the staffing agencies who will provide the PCAs for the student, who will have access privileges to the student's space.
  - To the extent the PCA is to be family member or loved one of the student, the approval letter shall only include the name of the family member(s)/loved one(s) who will actually serve in the capacity of a PCA.
- Only the names listed on the approval letter are permitted to access the student's room. This approval letter is to be provided to Residential Services and College Housing, and the letter is made available to the front desk staff in the student's residential space in a College House.
  - PCAs must sign-in at the front desk and provide a photo ID. If the PCA has a Penn issued identification card, they can access the residence through the turnstile.
- PCA's shall be required to comply with the vaccination protocols of Penn in place at the time the PCA will be on campus.
- The PCA may be able to dine in the cafeterias and dining halls at the College Houses, but only upon coordination among the student, PCA, Disability Services, and Dining Services. will need to coordinate a meeting to discuss how to handle the access to dining.

## Student Responsibilities Regarding PCAs:

- The student is responsible for the selection or hiring of the PCA and for payment of the PCA's services.
- The student is responsible for ensuring the PCA has undergone a background check. This background check must be provided to Disability Services upon approval of an accommodation request for a PCA.
  - The student is responsible for covering the cost of the PCA's background check.
  - Upon request and at the students' cost, Penn may be able to assist in securing background checks.
- The student is responsible for supervision of their PCA. Depending on the facts and circumstances, a student could face disciplinary action if their PCA violates Penn policies. The student should familiarize their PCA with applicable Penn policies and refer the PCA to the [Residential Handbook](#) for detailed information about policies mostly likely applicable to the PCA.

- PCAs should not spend time in lounges or community areas unless accompanied by the student or unless utilizing a community area to perform an activity in support of the student (i.e., doing laundry for the student, or obtaining food for the student.)
- It is prohibited for a PCA to sleep in a common area within a College House.
- Full-time PCAs shall, with the help of the student, work with Disability Services to secure approval for a Penn issued identification card. The cost of the card will be covered by the Disability Services auxiliary budget. Disability Services is not responsible for covering the cost of a replacement card in case the card is lost.
- The student must provide in advance instructions authorizing Residential Services to provide an electronic or brass key to their caregiver to enter their residence upon check-in or have them wait at the front desk until the student meets with them.

This document serves as a collaborative endeavor among Disability Services, Residential Services, and College Housing. This document can be amended in accordance with policies that might be updated in the future.

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