

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 Penn students request an accommodation to have a PCA accompany them in Penn's College Houses, students should reach out to the Disability Services office at Penn's Weingarten Center. To start the process for a PCA to have access to and be permitted in Penn's College Houses, the student in need of a PCA must submit an accommodation request through [Disability Services](#) to obtain authorization for the PCA to access their residence.

Disability Services will 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 will receive detailed information regarding the scope of the accommodation relating to the PCA's access privileges to the student's College House.

Penn Requirements for PCAs on Campus:

- For purposes of maintaining campus safety, no person can provide recurrent services at Penn or have special access to College Houses 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 friends.
 - The background check is waived if a Penn student lives with the student requesting the PCA and serves as the student's PCA.
- All accommodation requests granted will be communicated and coordinated between Disability Services and Residential Services.
- PCAs are expected to abide by all applicable laws, as well as Penn's policies, procedures, and guidelines.
 - Failure to follow such laws, 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 College House and room in accordance with the accommodation access letter issued by Disability Services.

- The access letter specifies dates for the PCA to have access to the student's room. This letter is posted at the front desk in the student's College House.
- A PCA's role depends upon the students' needs and scope of the students' granted accommodation.
 - A student might have substitute PCAs to supplement coverage when a PCA is not available. If the PCA works for a recognized caregiver staffing agency, which conducts background checks on all caregivers hired by the staffing agency, then the student needs to alert Disability Services and Residential Services about the substitute PCA. 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 access letter identifies the names of the PCAs and/or the staffing agencies who will provide the PCAs for the student and who will have access privileges to the student's space.
 - To the extent the PCA is to be family member or friend of the student, the approval letter shall only include the name of the family member(s)/friend(s) who will serve in the capacity of a PCA.
- Only the names listed on the access letter are permitted to access the student's room. This special access letter is provided to Residential Services, and the letter is made available to the front desk staff in the student's College House.
 - PCAs must sign-in at the front desk and provide a photo ID if not issued a Penn access card. Otherwise, if the PCA has a Penn issued identification card, they can access the residence through the turnstile.
- PCAs shall be required to comply with the vaccination protocols of Penn in place at the time the PCA works on campus.
- The PCA may access the cafeterias and dining halls at the College Houses, but only upon coordination among the student, PCA, Disability Services, and Penn Dining Services. Disability Services will coordinate a meeting with Penn Dining Services to discuss how the PCA accesses the dining halls.

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 students should consider having a back-up PCA.
- 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 and Residential Services. This document can be amended in accordance with policies that might be updated in the future.

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