



advocacyassistance@achieva.info
1.888.272.7229 x486

Access to Higher Education Using Medicaid Waiver Funding

If you have an adult child who receives Medicaid waiver funding, you may be able to use those funds for payment of higher education tuition, fees, and support services.

The Pennsylvania Person/Family Directed Support Waiver is designed to help individuals with an intellectual disability, autism, or developmental disability to live more independently in their homes and communities and to provide a variety of services that promote community living. There is no age limit for this waiver and it can be used for education support, transportation and housing transition.

The waiver's education support service category enables payment for the following:

Tuition and Fees: Tuition for adult education classes offered by a college, community college, technical school or university (institution of postsecondary education). This includes classes for credit, classes that are audited, classes that support paid or unpaid internships, remedial classes and comprehensive transition programs. At least 75 percent of the time the participant spends on campus must be integrated with the general student population (this can include time spent in a dorm room).

Pennsylvania requires that a student must attend inclusive classes. The Pennsylvania service definition also specifies that students take a minimum of six credit hours per semester, and that students have an employment outcome in their service plan.

Waiver also covers general fees charged to all students. This includes but is not limited to fees such as technology fees, student facilities fees, university services fees and lab fees. Room and board are excluded from educational support services.

Education Coach/Peer Mentor Support: Some college students are supported by peer mentors. Peer mentors are usually students who are also enrolled at the college and who provide individualized support to students with intellectual disabilities. Mentors

assist students with tasks related to the college environment, such as getting around campus or navigating living skills necessary for dorm life.

Career Services: Employment support can sometimes be a component of a college program. In this case, waiver funding might include coverage for activities needed to obtain and sustain paid work, such as a coach for a paid job, internship, job shadowing, or other employment experiences. Waiver employment services can also include support for learning underlying job skills, such as community workplace conduct, attending to tasks, problem solving, workplace safety, and mobility training.

Education Support Services can be delivered in Pennsylvania, Washington D.C. and Virginia, as well as in states contiguous to Pennsylvania.

Home and Community Habilitation waiver services can be used to support students on college campuses in the following ways:

- **Safety on Campus:** Support to learn how to navigate the campus; how to walk safely between classes, back and forth to the dorm and eating hall.
- **Laundry/ Housekeeping:** Supervision and instruction with laundry and/or apartment/dorm room upkeep.
- **Time Management:** School/Social Life balance/Study strategies. Support in establishing routine, study habits, free time activities, etc.
- **Health and Wellness:** Support to identify and participate in health and wellness opportunities. (gym/fitness, social activities)
- **Accessibility:** Assistance in navigating layout of campus to determine accessibility and best way to navigate throughout their day.
- **Support Systems:** Companion services to identify and develop support systems on campus. (Counselors, Mentors, Assistive Technology, etc.)
- **Money Management:** Identifying school supplies, necessary books, purchasing personal care items, ensuring balance of funds on meal plan /dining cards. Budgeting. Safety with money/securing money, valuables, and personal items.

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