

General Housing Accommodation Policies

Section I. Introduction and Background

Young Harris College (“YHC” or the “College”) recognizes the importance of providing reasonable accommodations in its housing policies and practices where necessary for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the College Residence Life program. This Policy explains the specific requirements and guidelines that govern requests for reasonable accommodation in College Residence Life programs.

The policies of Young Harris College are under continual examination and revision. This policy is not a contract; it merely presents the policies in effect at the time of publication and in no way guarantees that the information contained herein will not change.

Section II. Scope of Housing Accommodation

Housing accommodations apply to students who reside in College housing. Housing accommodations are made to the housing agreement and last for the term of the agreement. Accommodation requests for future housing agreement terms should follow procedures set forth in this policy. All other accommodation requests should be made using the information provided by Disability Services at <https://www.yhc.edu/student-life/disability>.

Section III. Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Housing Accommodation

(Excluding Requests for Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act)

The YHC Housing Accommodation Committee (“HAC”) is responsible for evaluating whether to grant or deny requests for reasonable accommodation in the College Residence Life program and will meet at regular intervals to consider requests. In evaluating the request, the HAC will consult with the Office of Disability Services (“Disability Services”), the Office of Residence Life (“Residence Life”), and the YHC ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, as necessary, to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable.

Individuals with a disability who reside or intend to reside in College housing who believe they need a reasonable accommodation must initiate the process by registering with Disability Services.

Requests for reasonable accommodation in College housing policies and practices are governed by the following requirements:

1. Priority Deadlines and Processing Housing Accommodation Requests

YHC will accept and consider requests for reasonable housing accommodation in the College Residence Life program at any time. The individual making the request for a housing accommodation should provide a complete housing accommodation request (see #2 below) to Disability Services as soon as practicably possible before moving into College housing. **However, if the request for accommodation is made after the following deadlines, YHC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual’s accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.**

For Fall Semester: June 15

For Spring Semester: November 1

If the need for the accommodation arises when the student already resides in College housing, the student should contact Disability Services and complete the Request Form as soon as practicably possible. **YHC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received.**

Absent exceptional circumstances, the College will provide a written response to a reasonable housing accommodation request within twenty (20) business days of receiving a completed request. Please see item #2 (below) for what constitutes a completed housing accommodation request.

Business Day(s) refers to a Business Day or Business Days in which the College is open for business. This is generally Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and excludes weekends, holidays, designated closures including but not limited to weather delays and closures.

2. Information That May Be Requested for Housing-Related Reasonable Accommodation Requests

A completed housing accommodation request should consist of the following components.

- i. Disability Housing Accommodation Request Form: An individual with a disability must complete the [Request for Housing Accommodation Form](#) to request a reasonable accommodation. If the individual requires assistance in completing the Request Form because of his/her disability, Disability Services will provide assistance in completing the form.
- ii. Third Party Verification: Young Harris College shall limit its requests for information to only the information necessary to verify whether the individual making the request has a disability and/or to evaluate if the reasonable accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing.
- iii. Individual Consultation: Disability Services will meet with each student making a housing accommodation request to review the request as an integral part of the individualized interactive process.

Obvious Disability

If the individual's disability and the necessity for the accommodation are obvious (e.g. an individual with a physical disability using a wheelchair needs an accessible room), the individual need only explain what type of accommodation she is requesting. No verification of disability and/or necessity is required under these circumstances.

Non-Obvious Disability/Necessity

- i. If the disability is obvious but the need for the accommodation is not obvious, the College may require the individual to complete the Reasonable Accommodation Verification Form for College Housing ("Verification Form") and designate a reliable third party who can verify that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing but may not seek information about the individual's disability.
- ii. If the disability and necessity for the accommodation are not obvious, Disability Services will require the individual to submit documentation from a reliable third party who can verify that

the individual has a disability and that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing. Documentation from a reliable third party should follow the [Housing Accommodation Documentation Guidelines](#).

A reliable third party is someone who is familiar with the individual's disability and the necessity for the requested accommodation. A reliable third-party includes, but is not limited to, a doctor or other medical professional. For accommodations based on a mental health disability, a reliable third-party should be a mental health care provider (e.g. a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a licensed professional counselor, a licensed clinical social worker, etc.). A general practitioner, physician's assistant, nurse, or nurse practitioner may not be considered an appropriate source of documentation for a mental health disability.

Absent exceptional circumstances, within fifteen (15) business day of receiving the completed Verification Form from the third-party, the Housing Accommodation Committee, after consultation with the YHC ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer and Disability Services, will determine if the accommodation is necessary because of a disability to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing.

If the third party returns the Verification Form without sufficient information for the Housing Accommodation Committee to determine whether an accommodation is necessary, the Director of Disability Services will inform the individual in writing of the verification's insufficiency and may request additional information, including speaking directly with the individual supplying the third-party verification, within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the verification.

The individual making the request for accommodation must cooperate with Disability Services in a timely manner in providing all information needed to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary.

3. Determination of Reasonableness

The YHC HAC is responsible for evaluating whether to grant or deny requests for reasonable accommodation in College housing facilities. In evaluating the request, the HAC will consult with Disability Services, Residence Life, and the YHC ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, as necessary, to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable. The YHC HAC may deny the requested accommodation if it is unreasonable.

An accommodation is unreasonable if it: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters College housing policies; (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including College property; and/or (4) is otherwise unreasonable to the operation of the College.

4. Approval of Accommodation

If the YHC HAC determines a requested accommodation is necessary and is reasonable, the Director of Disability Services will contact the individual, in writing, within five (5) business days of its determination, to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of the accommodation.

5. Denial of Accommodation

If the YHC HAC determines a requested accommodation is necessary but unreasonable, the Director of Disability Services will contact the individual, in writing, within five (5) business days of its determination and engage in an interactive process with the individual to determine if there are alternative accommodations that might effectively meet the individual's disability-related needs.

If the individual is unwilling to accept any alternative accommodation offered by Disability Services or there are no alternative accommodations available, Disability Services will provide a verbal explanation and written notification to the individual of the denial, the reasons for the denial, the right to appeal the decision, and the procedures for that appeals process. The notification shall be in writing and made within five (5) business days of the notification from the individual of his/her unwillingness to accept any of the alternative accommodations offered or the determination that there are no alternative accommodations available.

6. Appeal

Students may appeal housing accommodation decisions to YHC's ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer. If the appeal is denied, YHC's ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer shall provide written notification of the denial to the individual and a written explanation with all of the reasons for the denial.

An individual may also use the grievance procedure provided under the general College antidiscrimination policies. This grievance procedure can be found at the web site for ADA and Section 504 Grievance Procedures .

7. Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

In processing requests for reasonable accommodations, the College will take all steps required by federal, state, and/or local law to protect the confidentiality of any information or documentation disclosed in connection with the requests. Such measures may include limiting access to such information to individuals specifically designated to determine and implement requests for reasonable accommodations, who will disclose the information only to the extent necessary to determine whether to grant the request, determine if the request is unreasonable, and implement any request granted, keeping all written requests and accompanying documentation in a secure area to which only those designated individuals have access, except as otherwise required by law.

8. Non-retaliation Proviso

YHC will not retaliate against any individual because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in College housing.