



## Disability Accommodation FAQs

### Is there a process for getting a disability accommodation at Cornell?

Yes. This process is set forth in University Policy 6.13, which applies to faculty and academic and nonacademic staff, including regular, temporary and casual staff members. [View the full policy.](#)

### Who do I contact?

Students may access [Student Disability Services](#) to begin the process; faculty, staff may begin the process with their supervisor, their HR representative, or by [contacting Medical Leaves Administration](#) directly.

*Request Forms:*

- [Students](#)
- [Faculty and Staff \(pdf\)](#)

### I need to park next to my workplace due to a medical condition. How do I arrange that?

Faculty, staff and visitors may contact [Transportation Services](#) to request accessible transportation options to campus to accommodate temporary or long-term medical conditions. For many individuals, a perimeter area parking permit and bus pass are viable, accessible transportation options. Short-term accessible parking permits for up to two months can be issued at the direction of a medical professional. Transportation Services will issue these permits at no charge for general accessible parking spaces across campus.

Faculty and staff members needing longer term accessible parking must obtain a municipal placard from the town/municipal clerk of their places of residence, or accessibility license plates from the Department of Motor Vehicles ([Department of Motor Vehicles Accessible Permit Application Form](#))[pdf]. With such identification, there is a variety of long-term accessible parking options. Note that the process does not automatically grant a permit that allows you to park next to your workplace, but works to determine the most reasonable transportation accommodation for you. For more information visit [Transportation Services](#).

### Do I need to request a disability accommodation for workplace evaluation or modification? I just want someone to look at my workplace setup because my back hurts at the end of the day.

**No.** The consultants of the [Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program](#) (MIPP) are available to assist all Cornell employees.

Faculty and staff may request evaluation, training and design/planning consultation to prevent injury or disability and to enhance work comfort and productivity. Typically, services are available at no charge courtesy of HR Services & Transitions Center. Employees experiencing discomfort at work or having difficulty meeting job demands are encouraged to contact the MIPP for help in determining if work environment or practices can be adjusted.

As an integral member of the [Medical Leaves Administration](#) team, the MIPP is also a valuable resource in response to injury or formal disability accommodation. On-site workplace evaluations with Occupational Therapists and certified ergonomics evaluation professionals help to ensure that employees can remain at work successfully. Examples may include:

- Improving access to the work environment
- Accommodating medical and light-duty restrictions
- Matching job responsibilities with worker capabilities
- Recommending adaptive equipment

For more information, contact the [Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program](#) (MIPP) at t. 607.255.1360 | f. 607.255.1888

## What medical conditions are considered a disability?

Under the law and Cornell policy, a disability is defined as follows:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. The impairment must be of permanent or of extended (at least three months) duration; conditions that are intermittent or are in remission qualify as a disability if, when active, the condition substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Major life activities include “major bodily functions” and such activities as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, sitting, reaching, interacting with others, and working.
- Examples of conditions that are considered covered disabilities include deafness, blindness, intellectual disability, partially or completely missing limbs, autism, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, major depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Examples of conditions that are not considered covered disabilities include the common cold, seasonal or common influenza, a sprained joint, minor and non-chronic gastrointestinal disorders, a broken bone expected to heal completely, appendicitis, and seasonal allergies.

Major bodily functions include functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, circulatory, respiratory, endocrine, hemic, lymphatic, musculoskeletal, special sense organs and skin, genitourinary and cardiovascular systems, and reproductive [functio\[LLCH1\]](#) .

## Who makes the decision?

The process is a confidential, interactive one, with possibly several individuals involved.

- The employee is responsible for initiating requests for a disability-related workplace accommodation by contacting their supervisor, human resources representative or Medical Leaves Administration (MLA) to engage in the interactive process with MLA and the department. To initiate the process, fill out the [disability accommodation form](#)[pdf]and return to MLA. (The contents of the form are confidential, and the form will not be placed in the employment record file.)
- MLA will need [medical documentation](#)[pdf]to support the request. Do not give medical records to your supervisor.
- Supervisors notify the appropriate human resources representative of any employee accommodation requests brought to their attention.
- Human Resource representatives refer employees to MLA when notified of a request for accommodation.
- Applicants for employment requesting an accommodation for a disability so that they may participate in the selection process should contact the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations (WPLR).
- MLA and WPLR review these requests in accordance with the policy, make a determination and then a recommendation for reasonable accommodation.
- The supervisor and the department are responsible for implementing the recommended accommodation.
- The HR representative is available to assist with the implementation of the recommended accommodation.

# **I can get to work just fine until it snows. Then what do I do?**

Cornell has a voluntary program for faculty and staff with short or long-term mobility impairments who have difficulty getting to or around their worksite during inclement weather. To see if the program meets your needs, please take this [survey](#)(pdf), or obtain a printed copy from the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations at 254-7232 or [equalopportunity@cornell.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@cornell.edu)

See also: [Addressing Inclement Weather Challenges for Individuals with Disabilities web page](#).

## **I can't access information on a Cornell website. What should I do?**

Cornell University is committed to making our websites accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. To report a problem or to request an accommodation to access online materials, information, resources and/or services, please contact [webaccessibility@cornell.edu](mailto:webaccessibility@cornell.edu). In your message, include the website address or URL and the specific problems you have encountered.

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