



Student Housing Accommodation and ESA Request Process

On-Campus Housing

SMCC does not require students to live on campus. SMCC offers communal housing via dorms located in South Portland, Portland, and Brunswick. Dorms consist mainly of double and triple rooms with shared baths and common areas. SMCC does not offer population-specific living-learning communities. However, SMCC dorm life provides students the opportunity to practice independence and learn interpersonal communication skills in a supportive, close-knit community. **Students applying to live on campus are choosing to be community members and should expect to be assigned a roommate(s).**

Students with documented disabilities impeding access to and participation in student housing are encouraged to request accommodations. Examples include students needing additional space to store medical equipment, requiring elevator access, or requiring auxiliary aides such as bathroom grab bars or strobing fire alarms. Requests for waivers of distance restrictions should be made directly to Residential Life at SMCCResLife@mainecc.edu. SMCC's Housing Application is fully accessible. Students with disabilities receive equal consideration in the application process based on the application submission timestamp and are not given priority placement.

SMCC prohibits students from having pets in the dorm at any time, for any length of time. Residential students with a documented disability may be eligible to request an ESA under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). **An ESA is not a pet.** It is an assistance animal prescribed by a qualified provider as part of an individual's treatment plan to mitigate disability-related symptoms. By FHA definition, ESAs can include dogs, cats, small birds, rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, other rodents, fish, turtles, or other small, domesticated animals traditionally kept in the home. **Students requesting uncommonly held household animals, such as reptiles, farm animals, monkeys, and other non-domesticated animals, must provide documentation explaining why they cannot reap the same benefits from a commonly held household animal.**

Students requesting housing accommodations or ESAs should have an established @mainecc.edu email address and be registered for classes.

Requesting Accommodation

Step 1: Students requiring accommodation or requesting an ESA must self-identify by completing the [Housing Accommodation and ESA Student Request Form](#). Students who prefer to complete a paper copy of this form should email SMCCSAS@mainecc.edu to request a copy. **This form is in addition to the Housing Application found under "Student Life" on SMCC's website. Students should be registered for courses in the semester for which they are requesting accommodation.**

Step 2: Students must provide disability documentation demonstrating the severity of the functional impairment and how this impairment impedes access to and participation in housing. For ESAs, the documentation must specifically address the ESAs purpose in the student's treatment plan.

Documentation must be authored by a **Qualified Provider** licensed to assess and treat the functional impairment related to the disabling condition. Students with multiple disabilities may need to submit documentation from various providers. If appropriate, one Qualified Provider may provide documentation for both housing accommodations and ESAs.

Qualified Providers include medical doctors, doctors of osteopathic medicine, physician's assistants, psychiatric nurse practitioners, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors/therapists, occupational and physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, optometrists, and audiologists.

All documentation must be recorded on the [Housing Accommodation and ESA Provider Documentation Form](#). Providers who prefer to complete a paper copy of this form should email SMCCSAS@maineccc.edu to request a copy.

Eligibility Determination

Once the Housing Accommodation and ESA Student Request Form and the Housing Accommodation and ESA Provider Documentation Form(s) are received, the request will be forwarded to the Housing Accommodations Committee (HAC). The HAC includes the Director of Student Accessibility Services, the Director of Residential Life, the Director of Social Services, and the Student Life Office Coordinator. The Committee meets weekly during peak housing season and as needed in the off-season.

The HAC will determine the student's eligibility for the requested housing accommodation(s) and/or ESA. Accommodations ensure access not preference. The Housing Committee may propose alternative accommodations as appropriate.

ESA eligibility does not constitute ESA approval. ESA eligibility applies to the owner. ESA approval applies to the animal. An approved ESA must meet the following criteria:

- Statement of Good Health from DVM - REQUIRED for ALL ANIMALS
- Pest Free - REQUIRED for ALL ANIMALS (can be included in Statement of Good Health)
- Fully Housebroken/Litter trained - REQUIRED for DOGS and CATS
- Alteration - REQUIRED for DOGS and CATS
- Fully vaccinated and registered (when applicable)
 - **DOGS REQUIRE:** Rabies, Distemper, Parvovirus, Leptospirosis, and Bordetella and registration in South Portland or municipality of residence. ADDITIONALLY, DOGS MUST HAVE NEGATIVE FECAL SCREENING AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION AND EVERY SIX MONTHS THEREAFTER, AND BE REGISTERED IN THEIR TOWN OF RESIDENCE
 - **CATS REQUIRE:** Rabies, FVRCP (FVR/FHV-1, FCV, FPV), FeLV (kittens)

Complete records can be emailed to SMCCSAS@maineccc.edu, faxed to 207-741-5678, or hand-delivered to our office in the Campus Center, 1st Floor, directly across from the vending machines. Records should be labeled with the requesting student's name prior to sending. **Health records and registrations must be updated annually. The Committee will not review student requests for housing accommodations or ESAs until both the student request and all provider forms are received.**

ESA Ownership Agreement and Approval

Eligible students who have submitted complete veterinary and registration records will be sent the ESA Ownership Agreement for review and signature. This document reviews the rules and expectations for ESAs and Owners and requires students to upload a photo of their ESA. Once the [ESA Ownership Agreement](#) is submitted, an ESA Approval Notice will be forwarded to the student, their Resident Director, and SMCCResLife@maineccc.edu instructing the student to meet with their Resident Director **to schedule a date and time to bring the ESA to campus. You may NOT bring your ESA on campus before meeting with your Resident Director. ESA Ownership Agreements must be reviewed and renewed annually.**

Request Deadlines for Priority Consideration

Priority consideration applies only to those requests received before the deadline. Deadlines for priority consideration are as follows:

- Summer 2026: March 31, 2026
- Fall 2026: April 24, 2026
- Spring 2027: November 15, 2026

Both forms must be received by the deadline for priority consideration. Students whose requests or documentation are received after the deadline will be reviewed for eligibility and will likely experience a significant delay in receiving their accommodation. **SMCC does not displace currently housed students to implement ESAs and accommodations determined after the deadline.**

Notification

All students will receive a Housing Accommodation and ESA Eligibility Determination notice via email@maineccc.edu. The Eligibility Determination will include the following information:

- The disability and diagnosis considered in the determination.
- The name of all Qualified Provider(s) who provided documentation on your behalf.
- The determination status; Approved or Denied.
- If denied, an explanation of the denial.

Reconsiderations & Appeals

Students who disagree with the Housing Accommodations Committee's eligibility determination can request a review. There are two review options: Reconsideration or Appeal.

Reconsideration: Students whose accommodation request was denied due to a lack of evidence **AND** who have additional **Qualified Provider** documentation to submit for review may request a Reconsideration. Supplemental documentation should be submitted using the [Housing Accommodation and ESA Provider Documentation Form](#). Providers who prefer to complete a paper copy of this form should email SMCCSAS@maineccc.edu to request a copy. Once received, the HAC will review the original request and documentation, along with all new provider documentation. An updated eligibility determination notice will be sent to the student's email@maineccc.edu. **Submission of additional documentation does not guarantee a change in eligibility determination.** Students who disagree with the reconsideration determination have the right to appeal following the steps below.

Appeal: Students who disagree with the Housing Accommodations Committee's initial eligibility determination or reconsideration, who do not wish to submit additional documentation, should request an

Appeal. Appeals are reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academics in consultation with the Associate Dean of Students. Appeals should be addressed to Holly Gurney, Associate Dean of Academics, hgurney@maineccc.edu or 207-741-5545. A written appeal determination will be sent to the student's email@maineccc.edu.

Questions & Concerns

Please contact Heather Jackson, Director, Student Accessibility Services, 207-741-5923 or hjackson@maineccc.edu.

Resources

[Maine Community College System Service & Support Animals Policy 214.1](#)

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistance Animals](#)

[Joint Statement of The Department of Housing and Urban Development & The Department of Justice: Reasonable Accommodations Under the Fair Housing Act](#)

[FHEO-2020-01: Assessing a Person's request to Have an Animal as a Reasonable Accommodation Under the Fair Housing Act](#)

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)

[Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)