

University Health Services (UHS) at UC Berkeley  
Social Services Department

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# Student Resource Living Guide



**A comprehensive list of campus and community resources, with information and links to help students address academic, financial, legal, and health-related needs**

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**Note:** An asterisk (\*) represents a community resource unaffiliated with UC Berkeley

# Basic Needs

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The UC Berkeley [Basic Needs Center](#) supports students with food, housing, and financial needs with the goal of basic needs security and equity among diverse communities. The center also affirms that mental and physical health and wellness are critical parts of basic needs support.

## Basic Needs Center Interactive Resource Guide

- The [Resource Guide](#) contains links to general resources for food, housing, finances, health care, mental wellness, and dependent care.

## Basic Needs Assistance Form

- Students may share their needs and contact information in the [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#), and a staff member will reach out for individualized support.

## Food/Grocery Needs

- Short-term food relief is available through the [Food Pantry](#), which is located at BNorth (lower level of the MLK Student Union); information is regularly updated on the [Food Pantry website](#).
- Chronic food insecurity can be addressed via CalFresh
  - FAQ about the program: <http://calfresh.berkeley.edu/faq/>
  - CalFresh Eligibility Criteria: <http://calfresh.berkeley.edu/eligibility/>
  - For general questions, contact: [calfreshsupport@berkeley.edu](mailto:calfreshsupport@berkeley.edu)
  - Students may [click here](#) to join a virtual group application session
- \*For emergency food resources in the community, check out [Food Now](#) to search for a pantry or soup kitchen near you or call the *Emergency Food Helpline* at 510-635-3663.

## Housing Needs

- Students who are homeless or at risk of losing safe and stable housing are encouraged to complete the [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#) to schedule an individual care coordination appointment for short-term, emergency housing support
- For campus and off-campus housing resources, check out this list of [housing tips](#)

## \*SSI/SSDI

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Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are public benefits that provide financial assistance to low-income individuals and/or those living with disabilities that impact their ability to be employed. Please note that international students are not eligible for public benefits, and using these benefits can impact their immigration status. Visit the [BIO Public Charge webpage](#) for more information.

- Use the [Social Security Administration Office Locator](#) to locate an SSA office near you.
- For information on eligibility and application processes, visit the [SSA Disability Benefits Webpage](#)

### Medical and Mental Health Providers

- Please refer to the [SSDI LTR Instruct Template and Sample Doc](#)

## \*MediCal & Medicare

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MediCal is California's Medicaid program, providing public health insurance to low-income residents and those with disabilities. It is also available for individuals under 21, pregnant women, and those enrolled in certain government programs including CalFresh, CalWorks, and SSI. Please note that international students are not eligible for public benefits, and using these benefits can impact their immigration status. Medicare is available for individuals 65 and older and those who are younger with disabilities.

### MediCal Eligibility Criteria

- <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/DoYouQualifyForMedi-Cal.aspx>

### MediCal Application & Enrollment Steps

- <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/Steps-to-Medi-Cal.aspx>

### Medicare Eligibility & Enrollment

- <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/>

## \*Rx Assistance Programs

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### GoodRx

- GoodRx provides prescription coupon savings that can be used at participating pharmacies: [www.goodrx.com](http://www.goodrx.com)

## Financial Aid & Grants for Medical Expenses

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Options for financial assistance available to undergraduate and graduate students with medical emergencies and/or significant medical expenses.

### Financial Aid

- Students may apply for a [Short-Term Emergency Loan](#) online through the Financial Aid Office. For ongoing medical fees impacting the student's education, they may complete a Cost of Attendance Form and speak to a Financial Aid advisor to discuss adjustments to their aid package.

### Health Opportunity Fund

- Students who are recipients of the Pell Grant or DREAM Aid (or graduate students with Pell Grant equivalency), and students registered with the Disabled Students' Program (DSP), may access the [UHS Health Opportunity Fund](#) to cover costs at the Tang Center. Fund amount may vary by year.

### General Student Grants

- Students who have **urgent** medical needs resulting in **unanticipated** out-of-pocket expenses while receiving community medical or mental health care may be eligible for grants including The Orion Fund, the Richard & Ruben Rosillo Grant, the University Section Club, and the Basic Needs Center Holistic Fund. **Note:** Standard copays for ongoing services typically do not meet the criteria for grant funding.
  - Please refer to the [Grants for Cal Students with Urgent, Unanticipated Medical Expenses Doc](#)
  - Students may call UHS Social Services Department at (510) 642-6074 to schedule a grant phone consultation with a staff clinician to learn more about appropriate grants

## Berkeley International Office

- International students with **unanticipated** medical costs may be eligible for BIO's [Need-Based Medical Fund](#)

## Undocumented Student Program

- Undocumented students who are Dream Aid recipients can apply for a [USP Emergency Grant](#) to cover urgent medical expenses
- Undocumented students who are accessing mental health services off-campus can apply for co-pay reimbursement through [USP Mental Health Refund](#)

## Hospitalization Financial Assistance

For low-income students who are hospitalized at Alta Bates Hospital and cannot afford hospital fees (may cover admission, but will not cover ambulance or physicians' fees):

- Eligibility and application process (pp. 2-5):  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q70zgpIiv-nlM1qnUIOYqISgH1duATjl/view?usp=sharing>
- Example patient/student application letter:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g\\_8RD70woTWLlzw\\_OBspetIXP\\_iBgpFp/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g_8RD70woTWLlzw_OBspetIXP_iBgpFp/view?usp=sharing)

## Disabled Students' Program

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The Disabled Students' Program (DSP) strives to promote an inclusive and accessible campus environment and supports students who are managing disabilities by providing services and accommodations to help them succeed during their time at Cal. Students who wish to register with DSP can learn more about the [application process](#) online.

## DSP Supportive Documentation - Forms for Healthcare and Mental Health Providers

- <https://dsp.berkeley.edu/students/new-students/documentation-dsp>

## Contact Information

- Carolyn Swalina, Director of DSP - [cbs@berkeley.edu](mailto:cbs@berkeley.edu)
- General Office Email: [dsp@berkeley.edu](mailto:dsp@berkeley.edu)
- General Office Phone: 510-642-0518

## Emotional Support Animals

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Students who are seeking registration for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in California to help them navigate a mental health diagnosis or disability are required to receive an assessment and obtain a formal letter of support from a CA-licensed mental health provider.

Completing an assessment for an ESA is at the discretion of the mental health provider. If a provider is not comfortable completing an ESA assessment, they can help their client connect to a community provider or another UHS mental health colleague who has experience in this area.

Please refer to the [Emotional Support Animal Assessment & Letter Template Doc.](#)

## \*Compensation for Survivors of Trauma & Crime

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Residents of California who have experienced physical or emotional injury or a threat of injury resulting from a crime may be eligible for financial compensation to assist with household modifications, relocation costs, income loss, and medical or mental health services.

Please refer to the [Survivors/Victims of Crimes Fund Info Doc.](#)

## \*Legal Support & Services

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The following agencies provide legal assistance throughout the Bay Area.

### Family Violence Law Center

- (510) 540-7233
- Contact: Tenisha Keys

## Bay Area Legal Aid

- Advice Line: (800) 551-5554

## East Bay Community Law Center

- Contact Clinical Director Seema N. Patel ([seema.patel@berkeley.edu](mailto:seema.patel@berkeley.edu)) or EBCLC Clinical Administrative Assistance Jelitza Herrera ([jherrera@ebclc.org](mailto:jherrera@ebclc.org)); <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/admitted-students-transfer-special-status/our-clinics/east-bay-community-law-center/>

# Reduced Course Load

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Students are required to take a minimum of 13 units each semester unless they have an approved Reduced Course Load (RCL). Students with an approved RCL are still considered full-time students that pay full tuition and fees (unless approved for a rare tuition reduction. See the Registrar's information L&S Advising can approve an RCL for students who meet one of the following criteria, found here (see "Overview & Eligibility" under "Unit Minimum & Maximum FAQs").

## For international students

- [Meet with a BIO advisor](#) before taking any steps to reduce course load. Additionally, BIO has its own process and forms for immigration RCL approvals, and DSP accommodation letters do not meet federal requirements. For more information, see the [BIO Enrollment Webpage](#)

## Forms

- [Reduced Course Load Petition](#)

# Medical Withdrawal

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Students managing a significant medical or mental health condition that is impacting their academics or ability to continue with their program may consider an academic adjustment or medical withdrawal from the university.



Before pursuing a medical withdrawal or academic adjustment, students may visit the [Social Services website](#) to learn more about the process. Other areas that may be impacted by withdrawing from school include:

## Financial aid

- For general concerns, contact Cal Student Central, 120 Sproul Hall, at (510) 664-9181. Students are also encouraged to meet with a Financial Aid Advisor to discuss the financial impact of withdrawing from the university. Website: <https://financialaid.berkeley.edu/>

## Housing

- <https://housing.berkeley.edu/>

## Registration fees

- <https://registrar.berkeley.edu/>

## Visa/immigration status

- If you are an international student (on an F-1 or J-1 visa), you should talk to an advisor at the Berkeley International Office, 2299 Piedmont Avenue, (510) 642-2818. [Meet with a BIO advisor](#)

## Course registration

- A withdrawal will cancel all enrollment, current and future. You may not attend summer sessions while on withdrawal status. <http://summer.berkeley.edu/>

## Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

- SHIP coverage remains active for the current semester if paid for. More information about SHIP: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/ship>

## Medical Withdrawal Information Sheet

- Withdrawals late in the semester may result in an undergraduate's inability to enroll in the subsequent semester due to college deadlines. In addition, ten days after a withdrawal is filed with the Office of the Registrar it is irrevocable, so please make sure all of your questions are answered prior to proceeding with your request. **View form:** [https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/medical\\_withdrawal\\_infosheet.pdf](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/medical_withdrawal_infosheet.pdf)

# Student Parent Resources

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The UC Berkeley [Student Parent Center](#) is a centralized, multi-purpose campus resource, where students can seek informed advice, develop leadership skills, engage in informal study groups, celebrate achievements, recover from setbacks, and form lasting friendships. This section is designed to meet the unique needs of student parents through campus and community resources.

## Student Parent Resource Guide

- This [robust guide](#) offers community and campus resources for student parents both on and off-campus including childcare, basic needs, mental health, legal support, housing, rental assistance, educational resources for kids, and parenting resources.

## SPC Contacts

- Tomie Linear, SPC coordinator, [tlinear@berkeley.edu](mailto:tlinear@berkeley.edu). Book appointment at: [tomielinearspc.com/youcanbook.me](http://tomielinearspc.com/youcanbook.me)
- Anita Adams, SPC Success Coach, [anitaadams@berkeley.edu](mailto:anitaadams@berkeley.edu). Drop-In hours: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM ([tinyurl.com/anitadropin](http://tinyurl.com/anitadropin))

## Drop-in Hours for Counseling

- Tuesdays, 2:00 AM - 3:30 PM, Jason Straussman, [jstraussman@Berkeley.edu](mailto:jstraussman@Berkeley.edu) or (510) 561-8199

## Financial Aid Services

- Financial Aid: Sarah Christensen ([sarahchr@berkeley.edu](mailto:sarahchr@berkeley.edu))
- Student Parent Financial Aid Advisor: Shannon Harrison ([Sharrison@berkeley.edu](mailto:Sharrison@berkeley.edu)). Shannon offers drop-in aid the first three Thursdays of the month (10:00 - 12:00 PM)

## Academic Resources

- Kendra Van Nyhuis, Ph.D. Student Parent Advisor: Book an advising appointment [here](#)