

Admissions Guide

Fall 2025 Admission

Introduction

AHRC New York City's [Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program](#) at the City University of New York provides access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities. Students pursue lifelong learning, explore career goals, gain responsibility, and learn collectively with all members of the college community. The program is designed to prepare students with intellectual disabilities for adult life through higher education coursework, campus life, civic engagement, self-advocacy curriculum, and career development.

For more information about our college programs, visit the Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program webpage at www.ahrcnyc.org/services/school/college.

Program Overview

The Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program is a comprehensive program of study for unique learners who are motivated young adults with intellectual disabilities. Applicants will have typically received extensive special education supports as indicated on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) throughout their school experience. These applicants may earn a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) or Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential, and are therefore not eligible to apply to a typical college program.

Applicants are applying to a post-secondary education certificate program. Admitted students will receive person-centered supports and engage in a fully inclusive college experience. Students who successfully complete the program will be eligible to earn a [CUNY Unlimited](#) Credential in Academic and Career Studies and receive their personal portfolio upon graduation.

Participating Campuses and Program Length

AHRC New York City's Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the City University of New York is offered at five CUNY campuses for students with intellectual disabilities: the [Borough of Manhattan Community College](#), the [College of Staten Island](#), [Hostos Community College](#), [Kingsborough Community College](#), and [Queensborough Community College](#).

The Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program is a three-year program at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, plus one year of community-based alumni services. It is a four-year program at the College of Staten Island, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College, and Queensborough Community College, plus one year of community-based alumni services. The program is administered and maintained by [AHRC New York City](#) in collaboration with our [CUNY](#) partners.

Eligibility and Expectations

People with intellectual disabilities age 21 or over, who reside in New York City, may apply for admission to the Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the participating CUNY campus in their borough of residence. Applicants must be eligible for services from the [New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities \(OPWDD\)](#), enrolled in the [Home and Community-Based Services \(HCBS\) Waiver](#), and have a [Care Manager](#) from a [Care Coordination Organization](#).

Applicants are expected to demonstrate some basic literacy skills in reading and writing. They must have a strong desire to become an independent adult, and possess the stability and maturity to participate fully in the program. Applicants must have the desire and motivation to further their education and participate in campus life. They want to identify a career path for themselves, gain volunteer work experience, and build peer relationships. Applicants must be willing to become travel trained.

How to Apply

If you would like to be considered for Fall 2025 Admission to AHRC New York City's Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the City University of New York in partnership with the new CUNY Unlimited credential program, please visit our websites for the Fall 2025 application. To get started on the application process, visit www.cuny.edu/unlimited for Part 1 of the application packet and www.ahrcnyc.org/services/school/college/apply for Part 2. Refer to the Application Checklist for further details. The Application Deadline for Fall 2025 Admission is December 1, 2024.

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CUNY Unlimited Student Application

Applicants begin the application process by completing the CUNY Unlimited Student Application. Visit www.cuny.edu/unlimited and download the application for Fall 2025 Admission. Applicants should complete the application as independently as possible. Information on the application may be typed or printed neatly. You may attach additional information and pages for writing space if needed.

Submit the following documents to the CUNY Central Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives:

- CUNY Unlimited Student Application (Applicant Information and Applicant Profile sections);
- Proof of Citizenship; and
- Proof of High School Diploma or Credential (or Proof of High School Enrollment if you are still in school).

Refer to the Application Checklist for further details on Part 1. Send all Part 1 application materials by email to unlimited@cuny.edu.

AHRC NYC Supplemental Application Materials

Applicants must submit Supplemental Application Materials directly to AHRC New York City. To get started on Part 2, visit www.ahrcnyc.org/services/school/college/apply. Download and complete all Supplemental Application Materials. It is acceptable for the applicant to receive any support needed in completing this portion of the application. All information is confidential and will not be shared with any external organizations unless a written agreement is provided by those completing the application.

Submit the following documents to AHRC New York City's Referral and Information Center:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Psychological Evaluations (at least one type);
- Psychosocial Evaluation;
- Recommendations (two);
- Medical History Self-Report;
- Individualized Authorization for Release of Protected Health Information (HIPAA-2); and
- Cover Sheet.

It is important to obtain and complete all necessary documentation as directed. Refer to the Application Checklist for further details on Part 2. Send all Part 2 Supplemental Application Materials via email to referrals@ahrcnyc.org or by postal mail to:

AHRC New York City
Referral and Information Center
Attn: Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program
83 Maiden Lane, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Orientation Session

Applicants selected to move forward in the application process will be contacted to attend an orientation session with family and support staff. A parent, family member, guardian, or support staff must be present at the orientation session with the applicant.

Applicants will be given instructions to complete a personal project on their own. The assignment will provide us an opportunity to learn more about the applicants and provide insight into the types of support they may need.

Campus Visit

Applicants that have completed an orientation session will be scheduled to participate in a tryout session on the college campus and submit their personal projects. The agenda includes academic learning, participating in campus life, engaging with students, person-centered planning activities, and a series of observations to identify their motivation for post-secondary education and self-determination.

This portion of the application process is subject to change as we continue to monitor the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and additional public health guidelines from local, state, and federal authorities.

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Application Review

An Admissions Committee will review all materials and observations. The decision to offer admission to AHRC New York City's Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the City University of New York will be made by the committee in their best judgment and in the best interest of the applicants. Those accepted into the program will be notified by telephone and receive a letter of acceptance.

Admitted Students

Upon acceptance to AHRC New York City's Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the City University of New York, admitted students are expected to pay a \$65 Application Fee. The CUNY Central Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives will provide details on how and where to submit a check or money order to pay for the application fee.

For students born after 1956, both the New York State Public Health Law 2165 (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) and the New York State Public Health Law 2167 (Meningitis) requirements must be met completely. Students must complete immunization requirements before registering for classes, regardless of degree or non-degree status at a CUNY campus. All admitted students must complete and submit an Immunization Record and Physical Examination Form.

Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid

CUNY Unlimited is in the process of applying to become an approved Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) at all participating campuses. Information regarding tuition and program fees will be made available after CUNY Unlimited completes its CTP application process. Eligible students accepted for enrollment into a CTP program will have the opportunity to apply for federal financial aid.

CUNY Unlimited programs at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, Hostos Community College, and Queensborough Community College are already approved to provide federal financial aid as CTPs. The College of Staten Island and Kingsborough Community College are currently in the application process and are expected to achieve CTP status at a later date.

If you have an intellectual disability, you may receive funding from the [Federal Pell Grant](#), [Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant](#), and [Federal Work-Student](#) programs if you:

- Are enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a CTP program for students with intellectual disabilities;
- Are maintaining satisfactory academic progress; and
- Meet the basic federal student aid eligibility requirements, except that you are not required to have a high school diploma or TASC (formerly GED) and are not required to be pursuing a degree or certificate.

Students and their families must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process for every school year the student plans to attend in order to determine financial aid eligibility. Completing the FAFSA form is free. To get started, visit www.fafsa.gov. For students entering the 2025–2026 academic year, the deadline is June 30, 2026. Students and their families are encouraged to complete the FAFSA sooner, before entering their first academic year, with assistance from a financial aid advisor appointed by the CUNY Unlimited credential program. For more information about how students with intellectual disabilities may be able to obtain certain types of federal financial aid, visit www.studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the application process or want to learn more about AHRC New York City's Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program at the City University of New York, call **212-780-4491** (dial 711 for TTY users) or email AHRC New York City's Referral and Information Center at referrals@ahrcnyc.org.

If you have any questions about CUNY tuition and fees or want to learn more about CUNY Unlimited, call **646-664-8800** or email the CUNY Central Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives at unlimited@cuny.edu.