The partnership between University Housing and the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) on the University of Illinois campus is truly exceptional. It has led to Beckwith Residential Support Services (BRSS) being housed in Timothy J. Nugent Hall. Nugent Hall includes state-of-the-art physical accessibility features that exceed federal law and regulations. These physical attributes and BRSS support students with physical disabilities by helping them increase their independent living knowledge and skills. The inclusive environment of Nugent Hall also provides an opportunity for potential growth for residents without disabilities in knowledge, interaction, and awareness toward people with disabilities. This is an award-winning collaboration, with University Housing and DRES/BRSS receiving the Paralyzed Veterans of America’s 2012 Barrier Free America Award.
Room Features
The physical features of Nugent Hall, specifically first floor east, are state-of-the-art in design and technology. Twenty-six single room suites (two single bedrooms with a shared bath) support residents with severe physical disabilities with a variety of amenities. Each bedroom includes:

- A proximity reader on the outside and inside of the room. Residents use their student identification card as a proximity card to open and close their room door without physically having to use a key or swipe a card. Additionally, each room has ADA vertical auto operators that can be used to open the bathroom and room door from the inside.

- A SureHands® ceiling lift system that extends from over the resident’s bed to the bathroom, with the option of using the body support or sling for transferring.

- Adjustable furniture, including but not limited to desks, nightstands, and a hospital bed in each room. All furniture, including the bed, is similar in design and looks like other student rooms throughout the residence hall.

- A sink with motion detector faucet, cup faucet, and mirrored medicine cabinet, in addition to the sink in the shared bathroom.

- Wireless paging system for notifying staff serving as the “floater” that assistance is needed.

- Push-button room-darkening blinds.

- Individual room thermostat control.

- In-room wireless Internet and cable TV access.

BRSS Program Spaces

- Adaptive computer lab, with three work stations, is available for those who want to use accessible software and hardware. One computer station is self-contained with voice-to-text software.

- Instructional kitchen with integrated AV equipment and adaptive cooking equipment is used as a meeting room for social programs and teaching basic cooking skills.
Housing Support Services

Laundry and housekeeping services are provided to residents in the Beckwith Residential Support Services Program. Routine laundry is done on a weekly basis with non-routine laundry being completed as needed. Daily housekeeping services include making the bed, sweeping the floor, emptying garbage, and cleaning the shared bathroom.

To see floor plans and furniture dimensions, go to: www.housing.illinois.edu/NugentDimensions.

Student Dining & Residential Programs (SDRP) Building

In addition to the physical design elements of individual student rooms, all Nugent Hall residents have access to the SDRP. This building includes a library, computer lab, TV rooms, game room, exercise room (with accessible exercise equipment), lounges, music practice room, and the Ikenberry Dining Hall.

The Ikenberry Dining Hall includes seven food stations and can accommodate up to 1,200 people at one time. Ikenberry Dining Hall is connected to Nugent Hall. Residents who require minimal assistance receive the following assistance from University Housing Dining Services:

- Assistance obtaining food and beverages, including a flexible straw.
- Help taking tray to dining room location and returning it to the accumulator following the end of the meal.
- Assistance with adaptive utensils, and cutting solid food into smaller bite-size pieces.
A variety of Beckwith support programs serve current and potential residents within Nugent Hall. These include the Personal Assistant Program, Transitional Disability Management Program, and the Mentoring Programs. These programs as well as a description of Beckwith staff are discussed in more detail within this section.
Administrative Staff

Five administrative staff members, including the director, associate director, disability specialist, and two disability advocates coordinate BRSS programs. There is always at least one administrative staff member within Nugent Hall to provide support as needed when the program is in operation during the academic year. In addition, the administrative staff work with academic support staff within DRES to provide a comprehensive team approach for academic success and increased empowerment within the University.

Personal Assistants

The Personal Assistant (PA) Program provides staff support to assist with activities of daily living. Beckwith-supported residents receive up to 5 or 7 hours of PA services a day and have access to 24/7 staff assistance through a staff member designated as a “floater.” Residents who need to be fed receive up to 7 hours of PA service each day and pay a higher fee for PA services than those who receive 5 hours/day. A Beckwith professional staff member develops a pool of PAs through recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and implementing a general training. The residents are then responsible for contacting individuals from this pool and following through with interviewing, hiring, and individually training them according to their needs. Typically there are 70-90 PA staff who work within the Beckwith program with more than 95 percent of them being University of Illinois students. All Beckwith staff are required to have criminal background checks completed through digital fingerprinting.
Transitional Program

The Transitional Disability Management Program (TDMP) is designed to assist residents during a variety of post-secondary education transitional phases through individually developed plans. First-year Beckwith-supported residents meet with professional staff weekly to guide them through the multitude of transitional issues they face, from time management to working with non-family members for personal care. Other areas that residents focus on within their TDMP may include self-advocacy, moving into an apartment, internships or study abroad, accessing University resources, etc. The TDMP process does not help the resident identify internships or employment opportunities, but instead works on the logistics of disability management within those new environments and experiences.

As the Beckwith residents and staff live and work within Nugent Hall, we continue to challenge each other to live out our motto each day:

“Making Important Choices... Leading Empowered Lives.”
Mentoring Programs

The Mentoring Program provides support to current and prospective residents and their parents during transitional periods.

- The New Student Mentoring Program includes current Beckwith residents mentoring first-year residents. These relationships begin spring semester before entering the University and continue through the Beckwith New Student Orientation program, before classes begin, and throughout a resident’s first year on campus.

- The Alumni Mentoring Program matches Beckwith alumni with current residents who are planning on graduating or moving into other living environments. Each BRSS resident is matched with an appropriate alum based on the goals/needs of the resident (e.g., professional, independent living, disability specific or utilizing a service animal, etc.).

- The Parent Mentoring Program targets two groups — parents of incoming Illinois students and parents of high school students. This is an interactive program in which there are specific questions and answers, video clips, and the opportunity to blog or communicate directly with current parents and students.

- The High School Mentoring Program uses current Beckwith residents to mentor high school students throughout the country regarding life as a college student, how to prepare, and what to expect when living away from family. It is structured similarly to the Parent Mentoring Program.
HOW TO APPLY

We look forward to welcoming you to campus!
Once you’re admitted to the University of Illinois:

1. Apply to receive services from the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services at http://go.illinois.edu/DRESApply; then,

2. Complete your housing contract at www.housing.illinois.edu/apply. Under “Other Resident Details” in the application, write a statement that says you need personal assistant services.

Please note that residency within BRSS is based on availability and is secured on a first come, first served basis. A limited number of scholarships are available to Beckwith-supported residents based on merit and financial need.

CONTACT US

For additional information about Beckwith Residential Support Services, or for an alternative format of this document, please visit us online at http://go.illinois.edu/Beckwith. You may also contact the director at beckwithinfo@illinois.edu, or call (217) 333-3316 or TTY (217) 244-9738.