

# BRIDGE

A Diversity Action Alliance



## GUIDE TO GRADUATE LIFE IN STATE COLLEGE

Compiled by the Penn State Psychology Department's BRIDGE Diversity Alliance

*Last Updated: August 2023*

# Welcome

Welcome to State College! This area guide was created by the BRIDGE Diversity Alliance, to assist members of underrepresented and diverse populations in transitioning to life in Central Pennsylvania. BRIDGE is a diversity action alliance consisting of faculty members, staff, and graduate students in the Department of Psychology who are interested in promoting and addressing diversity-related issues within our program community.

For more information on BRIDGE, information that may be of interest to underrepresented or diverse populations, and additional resources, please visit BRIDGE's website (<https://sites.psu.edu/bridgediversityalliance>).

We are also on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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## General Diversity Issues

**Q: How tolerant is the State College community of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds? My graduate training will involve various types of contact with community members either through research or through clinical work. Are there situations I should be aware of where I should be concerned about my personal safety?**

A: As with any town, there is great variability in how accepting and open individual people are to cultural differences. Overt instances of race related problems, especially problems related to physical safety are infrequent. Students and faculty have encountered inappropriate jokes/comments, as well as situations where they feel people are staring at them/watching them extra carefully due to their race. Feel free to talk to BRIDGE members about their experiences.

**Q: How do I get personal support about my diversity-related concerns?**

A: Feel free to contact anyone in BRIDGE individually - we'd be happy to talk one-on-one with you! Our BRIDGE TA often offers office hours (to find out more information, email us at [bridgepennstate@gmail.com](mailto:bridgepennstate@gmail.com)). In addition, there are affinity groups that have been started for students of marginalized identities to gather and support one another (e.g. Queer Students in Psychology, Psychologists of Color, International Students, etc.). The POC affinity group also has a Slack channel for extra support in-between affinity group meetings.

Furthermore, you are always encouraged to talk to faculty members – including faculty outside your advisor or your area of training. There are differences in faculty member's comfort level, openness, and commitment to discussions surrounding diversity issues. If you would like to speak with a faculty member, but are unsure of who you want to talk to, we can suggest faculty who have been particularly helpful to students in the past.

The university also has student groups and advocates. The [Multicultural Resource Center](#) (located in Grange Building) would be a good place to go to find out about these resources, and other available resources for specific groups.

In addition, starting Fall 2021, the Psychology Department will have an associate head of DEI, who you can contact to get support for your diversity-related concerns.

## Research and Funding Opportunities

**Q. Is there university funding support for doing research with diverse populations? Are there diverse communities to do research on?**

A. Yes. Many students have won grants to do their own research with diverse populations from those in central Pennsylvania to those in other countries, such as South Africa. Special PSU centers dedicated to diversity in graduate school include the [Parent and Children Together \(PACT\)](#), American Indian Leadership Program African Research Center, the Commission on LGBT Equity, Commission for Women, and the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity. For more on these resources and other diversity resources:

<http://equity.psu.edu/diversity-resources> or <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/diversity/>.

**Q. I'm an international student, and I'm not sure if there are grants that I am eligible to apply for. Where can I find more information?**

A. While a lot of federally funded grants are not available for international students to apply for, there are a few out there where citizenship doesn't matter! Check out this spreadsheet as a starting point for grants/fellowships that international students may be able to apply for:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kZ9RXETavqX9x2pccHzPamAsk3KO5hliu-D3qfmm0QU/edit#gid=0>

**Q. What are some external grants/fellowship opportunities for students from marginalized groups to apply to?**

A. Yes, the Ford [Predoctoral](#), [Dissertation](#), and [Post-Doc](#) Fellowship is a graduate student fellowship program that provides three years of funding. Priority and preference is given to individuals of minority racial and ethnic groups (only US citizens/permanent residents are eligible for this fellowship).

Additionally, there is the Soros Fellowships for New Americans (they have a [long list for eligibility](#)), which is intended for immigrants and children of immigrants in the US pursuing graduate education.

General list of other funding resources and opportunities by field [Here](#)

**Q. Are there any internal funding opportunities if I am interested in diversity-related work?**

A. The Psychology department offers an admin TA position for BRIDGE, and students who are in this position are able to dedicate time to help support BRIDGE initiatives. Generally, the BRIDGE TA is also part of the Steering Committee and is compensated for their time working on DEI in the department. Contact Dr. Soto for more information.

Additionally, the Graduate Alliance for Diversity and Inclusion also sends out a call for applicants for the GADI administrative assistant, funded through the GRIP program in the College of Liberal Arts. Calls for applications usually go out during March, and are due in April. This position is the equivalent of a 20 hr TA-ship, so there would be no additional TA requirements.

**Q. I am getting paid/funding over the summer - do I need to register for anything?**

A. If you are getting paid over the summer, it is recommended that you register for research credits and apply to the Summer Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) for tuition assistance. This is available to all graduate students. You will receive emails about when to register for classes and apply for the program.

Additionally, if you would like to register for courses over the summer, STAP will also provide assistance for that.

## Financial Concerns

**Q. Is there an emergency fund if I encounter any financial hardship?**

A. There is a [Student Emergency Fund](#) that graduate students are eligible to request emergency funds from (of note, **international students** are eligible to receive money).

[Here](#) is a comprehensive list of financial resources for any graduate students, including:

- Where to apply for emergency funds
- Food stamps and local food pantries
- Support for living expenses, and low-income housing
- Where to find legal help
- Medical Insurance/Assistance
- Tax Prep Help
- Childcare Support

## Food

**Q: Where can I get international groceries?**

A: There are several options! Here is a list highlighting some:

International Grocery Stores:

- [Far Corners Oriental Market](#) (1012 W. College Ave.) - This is the largest and most popular Asian market in town
- [East Asian Market](#) (215 Blue Course Dr.)
- That Oriental Store (451 Railroad Ave.)
- [International Market](#) (328 S. Allen St.) - This market has a wide range of groceries. The store owner is very friendly and if they don't have something that you want, they will usually order it for you.
- [Krishan Indian Grocery](#) (230 W. College Ave #A)
- [Eastern European Market](#) (2110 N. Atherton St.)
- [Momezon Korean Market](#) (1518B N Atherton Street) - they have in-house made side dishes, and on Thursdays and Fridays have ready made foods like kimbap

American Markets with International Options:

- Wegmans (345 Colonnade Blvd.) - Wegmans is a great option for international options
- Trader Joe's (243 Patriot Ln.)

- [Nature's Pantry](#) (2331 Commercial Blvd.)- This is a local organic market.
- Giant (255 Northland Ctr, on North Atherton; 222 E. College Ave.)
- Weis (560 Westerly Pkwy.; 110 Rolling Ridge Rd.; 1471 Martin St.)- The Weis on Westerly Pkwy maintains a large international section, including international produce, because many international students live nearby that market.
- Wal-Mart (1665 N. Atherton St.; 373 Benner Pike.)- Although Wal-Mart does not have many international groceries, they do have a great selection of cooking gadgets used for international cuisine, including Latin cooking.

**Q: Where can I find Kosher Food?**

A: Wegmans has a selection of kosher meats including Empire chicken, steak, and occasionally turkey. Trader Joe's, Weis, and Giant also have kosher items. Kosher meals can also be found through the Penn State Hillel, and Chabbad, which offer Shabbat dinners and holiday meals. The Pollock Dining Commons also offers Kosher options.

**Q: Where can I find Halal Food?**

A: The [Islamic Society of Central Pennsylvania](#) maintains a Mosque Meat Store, and some Halal food can be purchased from Wegmans and the International Market. Halal lunch and dinner options are available on campus in the North Food District. Many restaurants in town also cater to Halal diners, including India Pavilion, Kaarma, Pita Cabana Grill, and Penn Kebab.

**Q: Are there vegetarian and vegan restaurants?**

A: You can find vegetarian options in most State College restaurants. There are also many vegan options. You can also refer to [this State College dining guide](#) created by the Penn State Vegetarian Club. Note that some restaurants have moved locations (e.g., My Thai) or have closed (e.g. Cafe Verve, Say Sushi). [Juana's](#) also has vegetarian and vegan options.

**Q: Where can I find good Asian food?**

A: There are many good Asian restaurants in town, and we recommend trying different restaurants to find your favorites. Here are a few suggestions to start:



For Chinese food, Little Szechuan, Fuji Jade, Big Bowl Noodle House, and Yummy Cafe offer a lot of different options on the menu. Tadashi (206 W. College Ave) and Maxx Ramen have good ramen. For sushi, there is Tadashi (100 S Atherton), Kondu and Kamrai. Pho 11 offers a range of Vietnamese food. Cozy Thai Cafe, My Thai and Kamrai are great Thai options. For Indian food, Kaarma and India Pavillion. And lastly, Korean Table and Kimchi have Korean food.

## Spirituality

### **Q. How can I find a place of worship?**

A. The Pasquerilla Spiritual Center is a good resource, as there are many religious groups on campus. BRIDGE members are always happy to help you find individuals in the department who might be able to direct you to a place of worship that fits your interests and needs.

### **Q. I'm Muslim and looking for a mosque. Are there any in State College?**

A. Although there are no mosques in State College, the [Islamic Society of Central Pennsylvania](#) offers a place for Friday prayers, regular Islamic classes/ halaqas, outreach programs to non-Muslim community, weekend Islamic school, chaplaincy services to Muslim inmates and many other special programs.

### **Q. I'm Jewish and looking for a synagogue at which to worship, are there many in State College? Are they reform, conservative, or orthodox?**

A. There are a few different options. Penn State maintains an active [Hillel](#) and Chabad, and State College is home to one synagogue. Although the Hillel primarily serves undergraduate students, it is also home to a growing number of graduate students (join the Facebook group Penn State Jewish Graduate Students for more information about graduate student events). In addition to the Shabbat dinner and service provided by Hillel, Chabad also offers dinner and services for Penn State students. If you would prefer a local congregation, [Congregation Brit-Shalom](#) is a great option. The congregation is a Reform synagogue, and also offers a monthly potluck dinner.

### **Q. I'm Mormon and looking for an LDS church. Are there any in State College?**

A. There is a Church of Jesus Christ of LDS located at 842 West Whitehall Road, State College, PA 16801-4375. The telephone number is (814) 238-4560.

**Q. I'm Christian and fairly left-leaning politically. Are there any churches in town that have tolerant/accepting beliefs towards issues like gay rights, etc.?**

A. [St. Andrews Episcopal Church](#) is a wonderful, warm, accepting and left-leaning congregation. The [United Church of Christ](#) is also a historically liberal denomination. The [Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Centre County](#) – while not specifically a Christian organization– is a welcoming and liberal religious community for people of all faiths and sexual orientations

## LGBTQIA+

**Q. Is there an LGBT-QIA+ community in State College?**

A. Yes. It is just not as visible as in other, larger cities. [The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#) (Located in 101 Boucke Building on campus) is a great resource. The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity also has a film/lecture series, weekly gatherings for students, and an extensive library on LGBT issues. In 2016, Penn State was ranked one of the top 10 schools LGBTQ students by bestschools.com for its LGBTQA Student Resource Center, course offerings, and related funding support.

The Centre LGBTQA Support Network is a grassroots organization centered around enhancing the lives of LGBTQA+ members and their friends and families in Centre county/region. They hold monthly and featured events (e.g., **LGBT+ Support Group**, **Friday Night Live**) which are listed on their calendar [here](#).

**Q. Are there any LGBT bars/clubs in State College?**

A. Yes, [Chumley's](#) is located downtown at 108 W. College Ave.

**Q. Where can I access more queer events outside of PSU in State College?**

A. There is a State College LGBTQ+ Happy Hour hosted by an independent group that is not affiliated with PSU. State Queens hosts drag shows which attract those in town and at PSU and provides a relaxed atmosphere to get to know others. There is an annual [Pride event](#) in June hosted by the local Centre LGBTQA+ Support

Network. Also look for events on the Centre LGBTQA+ Support Network website, like the free gender-affirming clothing exchange at Three Dots every week on Tuesdays.

Q. Can I mentor LGBTQ+ undergraduates? Can I receive mentorship from another queer person while in graduate school?

A. Yes and Yes! The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity hosts a [mentor program](#) for mentors and mentees. In addition, Division 44 of the APA and The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (APAGS-CSOGD), hosts a [free mentor/mentee program for graduate students to be mentored by a queer peer](#).

Q. What resources exist in terms of seeking out affirming healthcare as a queer person in State College?

A. With graduate student insurance, you can access care through University Health Services. There are two information sites on the student affairs website related to [Transgender and Gender Diverse Care](#), as well as [LGBTQ+ Health](#). Outside of PSU, there are a few important resources. One is the Department of Health Office on Hamilton Street in State College. We have noticed that this office sometimes has important information prior to UHS. In 2022, some were able to access monkeypox vaccines through the department of health office prior to UHS carrying them, for example. If you are looking for related services, it may be worth consulting them at (814) 865-0932. In addition, the AIDS Resource Center has an office in State College, (814) 272-0818 and may be a source of relevant healthcare information and services outside of UHS.

## Community and Outreach

Q. How do I connect with the broader Centre County Community?

A. Facebook group for [Centre County Latinx](#)  
Facebook group for [Centre LGBTQA Support Network](#)

Q. Are there any volunteer opportunities to connect with Spanish-speaking community?

A. Yes, [El Colectivo](#)

**Q. Where do you go in State College to dance? Are there any clubs that have a Latin night?**

A. There are several dance clubs in downtown State College. Ask current students where they like to go! Additionally, the Ballroom Dance Club has weekly Latin dancing sessions, as well as other types of specialty dance sessions. They also host regular parties that are internationally themed. More information on their events is available [here](#). Other dance activities include student-run organizations (e.g., modern, swing, Latin parties, Persian dance events, and Indian dance clubs) that are open to both undergraduates and graduates. Dance competitions and exhibitions are also hosted at least once or twice a year. Some bars and coffee shops (e.g., Webster's Café) also host occasional Latin nights (events may be limited or affected by COVID-19 pandemic).

**Q. Are there places in town where you can watch/rent movies in languages other than English?**

A. [The State Theatre](#) shows artsy movies, often movies that are in other languages a few nights a week. You can also rent Hindi movies at Krishna's Indian Grocery Store on College Ave. The public library also rents videos and DVDs. And you can always order videos that you want through the PSU library, which is free.

**Q. Where can I go for events and activities unique to my culture or to meet people similar to me?**

A. There are currently approximately 70 different student organizations on campus, some of which are unique to only graduate students and have regular events. Groups that graduate students in our department have been involved in include the [Black Graduate Student Association \(BGSA\)](#), [Graduate Alliance for Diversity and Inclusion \(GADI\)](#), [Latin American Graduate Student Association \(LAGRASA\)](#), among many others.

For a full listing, see <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/involvement-student-life/student-organizations>

**Q. How can I connect with diverse people to live with if I were to move here?**

A. Most graduate student organizations can often help incoming students find housing for people of similar backgrounds using their social networks.

Additionally, there are two non-PSU affiliated community living houses that particularly promote diversity through housing and hosting special events. For the past decade, [Houseasaurus](#), aka the Central Pennsylvania Community Housing, has served as a hub in the community for promoting environmental sustainability, socially responsibility, queer positivity, and egalitarianism. They host weekly cafes that discuss a diverse range of issues, host community dinners Sundays through Thursdays at 7 pm, and host monthly parties or larger events celebrating a range of identities and causes. Houseasaurus is located at 833 W. College Ave. Another newer hub in the community is the [co.space](#). They focus on creating a global network of residents with diverse interests. They are located at 244 E. Nittany ave. People can either take part in these groups' events without being a resident or apply to live at either location if they are looking for housing options with people of different backgrounds and interests. Various other non-PSU affiliated, community organizations dedicated to diversity issues are also spread throughout town.

## Self-Care

**Q. Are there health service providers in town who are tolerant and flexible to cultural differences? Are there places with translators for people where English may not be the primary language?**

A. Yes. Students primarily use University Health Services (UHS). The physicians there are used to working with a diverse group of students from varied backgrounds and are generally sensitive to differences among students. In addition, there are physicians from minority groups on staff as well as physicians with particular interests in working with diverse groups of students. If there are language concerns for yourself or family members, you can request a translator to accompany you on the visit (there are translators available for over 50 different languages). See <http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/> for more info.

**Q. Are there resources to find culturally competent therapists in the area?**

A. All practicing therapists in the State College area can be found [here](#) and can be sorted through by insurance. In addition, it allows you to search by issue, cultural competence training, race, gender, and other characteristics. To find therapists that are covered by the graduate student health insurance, you can use the “United Healthcare” insurance search option in the aforementioned database. People at [CAPS](#) may also be able to help, and you can connect with them at their phone number (814) 863-0395.

**Q. Where can Black folks go to get a haircut, braids, sew ins,perms, and/or natural hair services and products?**

A. There are several options:

- [Visions Multicultural Hair](#) (375 E Calder Way)
- [Thee Lasting Look](#) (800 Pike St., Lemont)
- [S’Hair-eng Styling Salon](#) (139 Kelly Alley)
- [Fitted Cuts](#) (112 S Fraser Street)

There are also stylists at other salons such as [Cherry Lane Salon](#) who have experience styling Black hair, but you would want to call and ask specifically when making an appointment.

**Q. Are there any hair salons that specialize in cutting and styling Asian hair?**

A: [SZ Styling](#) is located downtown on 311 W Beaver Ave.

## Travel

**Q. I don’t own a car - how can I get around without one?**

A. RidePass offers a reduced price for the CATAbus pass. For more information:

<https://transportation.psu.edu/ridepass-graduate-students>

Biking to campus is also a great alternative mode of transportation that is quite safe given the many accessible biking routes. It is suggested that you [register](#) your bike if you plan on riding it on campus. There are bike stations on the routes as well to pump your tires etc. For all the routes here is a great interactive map →

<https://transportation.psu.edu/route-maps-resources>

Q. Where can I park if I am driving to campus?

A. There is a commuter lot (Beaver stadium) which is on the other side of campus from the Psychology building Moore. You can get a commuter parking pass/ permit for a year or per semester and then take a commuter shuttle/bus to close to Moore [Off-Campus Student Permits | Penn State Transportation Services \(psu.edu\)](#). Another option is parking in the lots on campus but you have to pay \$1 per hour and they often get filled or students may be turned away from parking there.

**Q. Flying out of the State College airport can be expensive - what are some ways I might be able to cut down on costs of flights and travel expenses?**

A. Flights from State College can be expensive, but there are quite a few major airports around State College, such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Newark, and D.C. Students with cars could look into driving and parking at the airport (sometimes it may be cheaper than flying out of State College), or look into bus/train options to major airports.

Weather-related delays and cancellations may also impact the number of flights flying out of State College's local airport (SCE); you can take the [megabus](#) to Philadelphia airport (PHL) for more direct flight options. Transportation resource:

<https://global.psu.edu/article/transportation>

## Career Resources

Q. Are there any resources for me if I am considering a career or job outside of academia?

A. Apa has put out resources for those considering nonacademic career paths. You can find this here: [How Did You Get That Job? Video Series | Watch Now \(apa.org\)](#). Penn State also has a great Career services office that is available to all its students (not only for undergrads). You can make an appointment at any time for career advice and planning [Career Services | Penn State Student Affairs \(psu.edu\)](#).

## Reporting Issues

Here are some helpful links compiled by the Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA):

- [University Ethics Office: Resources for Reporting Wrongdoing](#)
- [Penn State Policy AD85](#) (Sexual and/or Gender-Based Harassment or Misconduct)
- [Title IX](#) (Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response)
- [Report Bias or Intolerance](#)
- [Graduate Student Ombudsperson Program](#)

\*BRIDGE peer support office hours are available by appointment to discuss existing resources, share and process issues related to discrimination, navigate life in State College as a member of a marginalized community, and/or learn about or give feedback about BRIDGE. If interested, please contact current administrative TA.

## Other Resources

Graduate Alliance for Diversity and Inclusion (GADI) has also created an extensive resource guide that can be found [here](#). Additional resources can also be found on the [GADI website](#).