

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD FOR MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CLIENTS

**Prepared by the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
December 2011**

What happens if an individual is found eligible for adult services from DDS?

Once an individual has been found eligible to receive DDS services as an adult and has turned age 18, DDS will assign a Transition Coordinator to work with the individual.¹ If a family has already been working with a DDS Children's Service Coordinator, that person may also continue to help the family.² The Transition Coordinator arranges and chairs a meeting or meetings in order to develop the Individual Transition Plan (ITP).³ For more on the ITP, see the Transition Planning Chapter.

The DDS Transition Coordinator also helps families learn about the services DDS offers to adults.⁴

Can an individual receive services from both DDS and MRC?

Yes, an individual may receive employment services from both agencies.⁵ MRC services tend to be time-limited and typically do not include long-term on-the-job supports.⁶ DDS, on the other hand, can fund long-term, ongoing support services after MRC has provided other job placement services.⁷ For example, MRC might pay for an initial job assessment, job development and placement costs, while DDS would pay ongoing job support costs.⁸

What services does DDS provide to those turning 22?

DDS provides those turning 22 with:

¹ DDS, *School Days to Pay Days: An Employment Planning Guide for Families of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities* (2010),

http://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/DDS_booklet_F.pdf, at 12.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*, at 13.

⁵ *Id.*, at 19.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

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- Work and day supports;
 - Some family supports.⁹

The goal of these services is to help individuals get the adult support they need within the context of the family home as long as possible.¹⁰

What about transition planning for DDS involved youth?

There are two laws that provide different types of transition requirements for students with disabilities:

(1) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that transition planning be part of each student's Individual Education Plan that is in effect when the student turns 16 (this is interpreted to mean that this planning should be included in the IEP that is developed when the student is 15 years of age). Transition related discussion and planning should be the beginning vision for adult life, and corresponding goals should be developed to address areas of need and related school services. These school services will help the student to live, work, or receive a post-secondary education as independently as possible when they leave special education services. The plan is reviewed annually by the educational team which includes student and family, and should change to reflect the student's more focused vision each year.

(2) Chapter 688 (also known as the "Turning 22 Law" provides a 2 year planning process for young adults with severe disabilities who will lose their entitlement to special education at the age of 22 or at the time of graduation from high school. To qualify for Chapter 688 services, the individual must:

- Be receiving special education paid for by the Commonwealth
- Need continuing habilitative services at the time of turning 22 or graduating from special education, and
- Be unable to work competitively (without specialized supports) for more than 20 hours per week at the time of leaving school

An individual is automatically eligible for Chapter 688 if receiving SSI, SSDI, or registered with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

To qualify for Chapter 688 services, a student must receive a 688 referral from the local school system while still in school, at least two years before a student graduates or turns 22.¹¹

⁹ The Arc of Mass., Building a Future: A Handbook for Families (3rd Ed. 2006), <http://thearcofmass.org/resources/children-families/>, at 8.

¹⁰ The Arc of Mass., Building a Future: A Handbook for Families (3rd Ed. 2006), <http://thearcofmass.org/resources/children-families/>, at 8.

¹¹ The Road Forward: A DDS Guide for Transition Planning (June 2009), <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/transition-planning-road-forward.rtf>.