

What is the parent/student role?

A possible 688 referral should be discussed at the IEP Team meeting *at least two years before the student is expected to graduate or turn 22*, as part of transition planning. Ask the school to submit a 688 referral for your child. It must be signed by the parent, legal guardian, or by the young adult who is 18 or older. Request a copy of the form that is submitted.

In addition, the parent/student may want to consider applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for any individual who may meet the 688 eligibility criteria. (See Additional Resources)

For more information about 688 and transition requirements of IDEA, visit the Massachusetts Department of Education Special Education Transition Planning webpage at:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html> or call The Parent Training Information Center at the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688.

For Chapter 688 specific questions contact the Director of the Bureau of Transitional Planning (BTP) within The Executive Office of Health and Human Services, (EOHHS) at 617-573-1600.

Resources:

State Human Service Agencies

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

617-626-8000 or 617-727-9842 (TTY)

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

617-727-5608 or 617-624-7590 (TTY)

Department of Public Health (DPH)

617-624-6000

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

617-748-2000 or 617-261-7440 (TDD)

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)

617-727-5550 or 800-392-6450

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)

617-740-1600 (Voice) or 800-882-1155 (Voice/TTY)

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

617-204-3600 (Voice/TDD/TTY)

800-245-6543 (Voice/TDD/TTY)

Additional Resources:

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility or any other issue affecting you or your son or daughter who is disabled:

Social Security Administration

800-772-1213

Legal Information:

Disability Law Center, Inc.

11 Beacon Street, Suite 925

Boston, MA 02108

617-723-8455 (Voice/TTY) 800-872-9992

Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council

1150 Hancock St. 3rd Floor

Quincy MA, 02169

617-770-7676 617-770-9499 (TDD)

Arc Massachusetts

217 South Street

Waltham, MA 02453

781-891-6270

Massachusetts Independent Living Council

280 Irving Street

Framingham, MA 01702

508-620-7452 (voice/TTY)

866-662-7452

Asperger's Association of New England

51 Water Street

Watertown, MA 02472

617-393-3824

Massachusetts Brain Injury Association

30 Lyman Street, Suite 10

Westborough, MA 01581

508-475-0032

800-242-0030

United Cerebral Palsy Association

71 Arsenal Street

Watertown, MA 02172

617-926-5480 617-926-8051 (TTY)

A Guide To Chapter 688

Transition Planning for Students
with Disabilities

Bureau of Transitional Planning
Executive Office of Health and
Human Services

Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education
Special Education Planning and Policy
Development Office

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What is Transition?

For the purposes of this brochure, Transition refers to the progression from youth to adulthood, and the specific individual planning processes available to certain students with disabilities as they shift from life as a student to life as an adult.

School Related Transition Activities: For Massachusetts students receiving special education services, “transition” is a time that begins when they turn 14 (or earlier, if the IEP team agrees). From age 14 until they graduate or turn 22, students on IEPs receive “transition services” from their public school districts. Transition services are defined by federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA) as a “coordinated set of activities...designed to be within a results oriented process...to facilitate the student’s movement from school to post-school activities.” Transition services are based on the individual student’s needs, taking into account his/her strengths, preferences, and interests. These are school services which will help ensure that young adults will live, work, and/or go to postsecondary school as independently as possible when they leave public school.

“Chapter 688” Related Transition Activities: (what is Chapter 688?)

Massachusetts Chapter 688 of the Acts of 1983 (also known as the “Turning 22 Law”) stipulates that a student receiving special education, who because of the severity of his or her impairment may require continued disability-related services upon exiting school (by graduating or turning twenty-two years of age, whichever occurs first), shall be offered specific, coordinated transition planning. As such, the statute establishes the Bureau of Transitional Planning (BTP). The primary function of the BTP is to insure that for all students referred under Chapter 688, formal transition planning occurs in accordance with the process and outcomes described in the statute.

How does the Chapter 688 process work?

A student’s IEP team should make a referral for Chapter 688 transition planning at least two years prior to the student’s graduation or turning 22.

Who is Eligible for 688?

Persons who are automatically eligible for Chapter 688 include:

Anyone receiving SSI and/or SSDI based on his/her own disability

Or

Anyone listed in the registry of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

All young adults referred to Chapter 688 must be:

Receiving special education services in Massachusetts paid for by the school district (LEA)

And

In need of continuing services because of the severity of their disability

And

Unable to work 20 or more hours per week in competitive employment

To make the referral, the school district must ask the parent, young adult, or guardian to sign the consent in order to send school records to the appropriate local human services agency (DDS, DMH, MRC, DCF, etc.), generally selected based upon the most reasonable match between the student’s disability support needs and the agency’s area of expertise.

The human services agency must then develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) with the family, young adult and school system personnel.

If the student’s IEP team has difficulty selecting **one** human service agency, the 688 referral form, as well as copies of the current IEP and the most recent assessments, should be submitted to the Bureau of Transitional Planning, which will then designate an agency to develop the ITP.

The ITP is completed no later than six months prior to the date the student exits school, and contains a description of the student’s disability related needs which will require support after exiting school, as well as the agency or entity responsible for the provision of such services. **Please note: adult eligibility processes for a student requesting services from a state agency must still be completed, usually concurrently with ITP development.**

Once agency eligibility is determined, the ITP enables the agency to understand the student’s needs and to begin programmatic and fiscal planning required to provide necessary services.

What are the benefits of 688?

Although young adults are free to apply directly to the human services agencies outside of the 688 process, going through the process ensures that the agencies have enough time to set up the most seamless transition possible, and that time-sensitive transition needs such as housing or college applications can be identified and implemented in a timely manner.

The 688 process ensures that students are working with the appropriate human service agency before exiting special education, and that for those individuals who do not meet state agency adult eligibility requirements, there is time to plan for alternative supports to meet their needs.

It is important to note: Chapter 688 is NOT a continuation of special education, and it does NOT entitle young adults to state agency services after age 22. Also, it is NOT intended for the many young adults who have received special education services and are now able to work 20 or more hours per week in competitive employment, and lead independent lives as adults.

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