

## 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 Betty Anne Ritcey, 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)**

617-573-7600 or 617-727-9842 (TDD)

#### **Department of Mental Retardation (DMR)**

617-624-7590 or 617-624-7783 (TDD)

#### **Department of Public Health (DPH)**

617-624-6000

#### **Department of Social Services (DSS)**

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

617-753-8455 (Voice/TTY) 800-872-9992

#### **Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council**

1150 Hancock St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Quincy MA, 02169

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

#### **Arc Massachusetts**

217 South Street

Waltham, MA 02453

781-891-6270

#### **Autism Society of America**

789 Clapboardtree Street

Westwood, MA 02090

781-329-4244

#### **Boston Center for Independent Living**

95 Berkeley Street, Suite 206

Boston, MA 02116

617-338-6665 Or 617-338-6662 (TDD)

#### **Massachusetts Brain Injury Association**

30 Lyman Street

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: Massachusetts' Transitional Planning Program

Special Education to Adult Life

Bureau of Transitional Planning  
Executive Office of Health and  
Human Services

Department of Education  
Special Education Planning and Policy  
Development Office

## What is Transition?

There are two laws that provide very different types of transition requirements for youth with disabilities. These different requirements can be confusing because although they both are called “transition” and they involve many of the same players (parents, school district, human service agency representatives, and the young adult); the two transition processes do very different things.

1) **IDEA** -- The federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains a number of requirements related to transition, which focus on the **school district’s** obligation to provide transition services **before** a young adult graduates or turns 22 and exits special education. These are school services which will help ensure that young adults will live, work, and/or go to post-secondary school as independently as possible when they leave public school.

2) **688** -- Chapter 688 (commonly referred to as the “turning 22 law”) establishes a planning process which identifies services or supports which may be needed through the adult service system once the student has graduated or turns 22 and special education entitlements have terminated

Chapter 688 is a law developed in partnership with parents, advocates and educators to address the needs of young adults who will lose their entitlement to special education services upon graduation or at age 22. It provides a two-year planning process for young adults with severe disabilities who meet the eligible criteria listed below.

As part of the 688 process, an adult human service state agency will work with 688 eligible individuals to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). 688 **IS** designed for the young adult with severe disabilities who, if provided appropriate support services, will continue to learn and develop throughout his/her life.

Chapter 688 is **NOT** a continuation of special education, nor is it an entitlement which guarantees services after age 22. It is not intended for the many young adults who have received special education services and are now able to begin competitive employment, continue on to college and lead independent lives as adults.

### 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

### How does the Chapter 688 process work?

At least two years prior to graduation or turning 22, the school district, through the IEP Team, makes a referral if a young adult will need additional services after leaving special education.

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 (DMR, DMH, MRC, etc.)

The Human Services Agency must develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) with the family, young adult and school system personnel.

The ITP outlines the day, vocational, residential, and the support services the individual may need, and the agencies responsible for providing those services once eligibility has been determined. The ITP should be completed **before** the young adult finishes his or her education or turns 22 whichever occurs first.

If more than one agency seems appropriate, the 688 referral form, copies of the current IEP and the most recent assessments should be submitted to the Bureau of Transitional Planning.

Although the 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 a seamless transition.

### What are the benefits of 688?

The 688 process ensures that 688 eligible individuals are working with the appropriate human service agency before exiting special education, and provides very specific timelines which ensures sufficient planning for a smooth transition to the new agency.

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

The ITP does not create an entitlement to the services and supports listed; the services and supports are contingent on the funding of the state agency. By specifying an individual’s needs before exiting special education, the family and agency can plan and advocate as appropriate.