

The Arc of Massachusetts Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change

FY'09 Budget Priorities

Maintain Service Levels and Support People and Families in the Community

Turning 22- DMR Line Item 5929-5000

The Issue

Children with intellectual and developmental disabilities are served by the public school system through their 22nd birthdays. As they come into the adult system in the Department of Mental Retardation they will need a number of services to help them transition to being productive citizens with a good quality of life. These services include job training, day services of some sort and transportation. Turning 22 dollars, although increasing, have not kept pace with the number of people turning 22 each year in the state. The increase in the number of children with autism spectrum disorder and the number of children who have survived with medically complex needs are probably the main reasons for this increase. In the Governor's budget for FY 2009, the money for this transition was decreased to \$6.1 Million from \$7.7 Million last year. The projection is that \$10.6 Million is needed and \$21.6 Million in annualization. This would allow \$3 million in employment to be set aside for the majority of those turning 22 who remain living with families.

The Impact

Massachusetts will have an estimated 610 young people turning 22 in FY 2009. Unless this line item is increased, more than 60% of these young people will have nowhere to go and nothing to do. These students, beginning with early intervention and continuing through the school system, have made strides in learning. Many have learned how to function well in the community. The better school programs have taught them workplace, community safety and independence skills. If this line item is not adequately funded many will be required to stay at home waiting for services. Without needed services people will lose these skills and knowledge they have acquired over the years of support. If young people are at home parents may need to leave their jobs to care for their children resulting in not only lost wages to families but also lost tax revenue for the state. This is an undesirable scenario during these tight fiscal times.

Action Requested

Fund Line Item 5920-5000 at \$10.6 million for individuals turning 22 at DMR with annualization.

Additional information: arcmass@arcmass.org or call 781-891-6270