

The Arc of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change Restore & Invest: FY '08 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The House 1 budget slashes essential services to families and individuals. The cuts include reducing residential service capacity for 55 people, cutting 1 day of day/work services to 1459 individuals and reducing family support services including staff availability to families. This is a time of expanding Federal reimbursement through new Medicaid Waivers.

Restore

- \$12 Million in service cuts and \$5.5 in personnel reductions
- 5920-2045 Community Residential 2,000,000 (2000 account)
 - 5920-5000 Turning 22 3,000,000
 - 5920-2007 Family Support 3,400,000 (3000 account)
 - 5920-2007 Employment/Day 3,400,000 (2025 account)
 - 5920-2007 Transportation 160,000 (5911-2000 account)

Invest

FLEXIBLE FAMILY SUPPORT , Line Item 5920-3000

Providing flexible family supports to a family with a child or adult with multiple disabilities is considered one of the most cost effective programs in the Commonwealth. Other than a \$500,000 increase in FY '06, this program has been level funded for nine years. Approximately fourteen thousand families receive some sort of support. Families report that it is this minimal support that keeps families from going into crisis. We request an additional \$5,000,000, bringing the total to \$58,094,228. This will allow 1,700 additional people with disabilities and their families to be served.

TURNING TWENTY TWO , Line Item 5920-5000

Each year, a number of young people with severe disabilities age out of the public school system when they turn twenty two. The number of students who require services from the Department of Mental Retardation has grown from 450 to a projected 580 to 600 for 2008 (583 in 2007). The increase may be due to the rise in autism as well as the number of children surviving complex medical conditions at birth. We request an increase of \$2,000,000, from \$8,500,000 to \$10,500,000. This allows each graduate to receive \$21,000 per year to cover employment or day programs, transportation and support services. Because some people require residential supports in addition to their day program, the cost per person varies widely. The annualization costs translate from \$17,600,000 to \$21,600,000.

WAGES FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND OTHER COSTS (RATES)

Direct Care Workers receive approximately \$10.50 per hour and turnover is constant. Providers have not received a cost of living allowance since 1987, while they have absorbed increased insurance and energy costs. The recent passage of Chapter 58, the new health care law, will mean additional outlays. The Arc is requesting \$44,000,000 for human services salary reserve for staff earning \$40,000 and less and, \$12.5 Million increase in residential rate relief funds contracted through the DMR (5920-2006 or new account 5920-2045)

CLOSE THE LARGE INSTITUTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Massachusetts continues to have six institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities for 1000 people at a cost of \$172,000,000. Though admissions have been closed since 1975, the Commonwealth still has a huge infrastructure of outdated facilities which include: Fernald in Waltham, Monson, Wrentham, Glavin in Shrewsbury, Templeton and Hogan in Danvers. It is important to move any savings into the community for clinical supports