

The Arc of Massachusetts

Restore and Invest: TURNING 22 Department of Mental Retardation Line Item 5920-5000

BACKGROUND:

Children from the ages of three to twenty-two who are in special education, receive funding from their local city or town's education budget. If they are in residential schools, there is cost sharing between the Department of Education (Circuit Breaker Account, 7061-0012) and the local city and town.

Once a person leaves special education, the local school system no longer has any responsibility, regardless of the severity of the disability. Most people move on with their lives as individual citizens and receive no further services. About five to eight percent are so severely disabled, they need ongoing supports and are assigned a state agency through an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) under Chapter 688, Massachusetts' Turning Twenty Two Law. Most people are assigned to the Department of Mental Retardation, an additional twenty or thirty go to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and about eight to ten who are blind and mentally retarded are assigned to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

CURRENT ISSUE TO ADDRESS:

Chapter 688 was put into law in 1984. Since that time, the Commonwealth has used 450 people as the number assigned to the Department of Mental Retardation who are expected to Turn Twenty Two each year. This estimate was fairly accurate up until the last few years when the number of people increased from 450 to close to 600 (the dramatic increase has been anecdotally linked to the rise in children with autism and children who survive infancy with complex medical conditions). In FY 07, the allocation was increased from \$6,400,000 to \$8,500,000. Many families are headed by single parents and care for their children at home. A full day program for one's son or daughter is critical. In addition a significant number of students (average of 160 each year) have an immediate need for adult residential supports.

BUDGET REQUEST:

The Arc of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change are requesting an increase of \$2,000,000, from \$8.5 million to \$10.5. This will allow 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 per-person cost varies dramatically. As people turn twenty-two over the course of the year, the annualization costs translates to \$21,600,000 from \$17,500,000.

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<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Appropriation - first year</i>	<i>Class Size</i>
1993	\$3,000,000	129
1994	\$3,000,000	241
1995	\$4,400,000	263
1996	\$4,400,000	327
1997	\$4,400,000	365
1998	\$4,400,000	450
1999	\$6,950,000	562
2000	\$6,950,000	446
2001	\$6,950,000	462
2002	\$6,467,670	535
2003	\$6,467,670	453
2004	\$6,467,670	502
2005	\$6,467,670	513
2006*	\$6,467,670	580

First year funding is annualized for a full year of spending during the subsequent fiscal year. From 1999 through 2006, the legislature annualized Turning 22 spending at \$13,600,000 across three separate DMR accounts.