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Important Facts about the Turning 22 Crisis

Turning 22 Students Graduating in Need for Adult Services and Assistance

In 2017, it's projected that 950 students will need Turning 22 services through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Most will require a combination of employment or day and transportation assistance. Of the 950, 230 to 250 individuals will need residential services as well. A number yet to be determined will need autism omnibus services (5920-3020). This is a new group of adults who have developmental disabilities and autism (or Prader-Willi or Smith Magenis syndromes-low incidence disabilities.) These students are newly eligible for adult services through the Acts of 2014.

In 2010 there were 630 graduates Turning 22. By 2017, we have witnessed a rise of 50%. As children grow up, some require more assistance, even with basic needs, others need less, but no one should be left behind based on their disability.

This line item will assist the 950 students turning 22. The FY'2008 budget included \$7.7 Million for Turning 22 (600 graduates) but the line item decreased during the 2009 recession. During the last three years, the Commonwealth began to address most of the needs of these young adults. Unfortunately, this year the allocation of \$7.5 is too shy of what is needed. A combined shortfall of Turning 22 and DDS employment and day funding means a supplemental budget of \$15 million is needed, \$5 million for employment services and the remainder for Turning 22 and students who are funded through autism omnibus. Next year, \$22 Million is the amount needed to assist the graduating class.

We list several years of DDS Turning 22 graduating classes needing adult services:

2010	630	2015	804
2013	760	2016	901
2014	794	2017	950

What is Turning 22?

The Turning 22 program helps utilize a transition to adult services as students with intellectual or developmental disabilities age-out of the entitlement for special education (22nd birthday in Massachusetts).

Children and youth 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. When an individual parts from the special education system, the local school system no longer has any responsibility,

regardless of the severity of the disability. Once a student graduates from the public education system at 22, their special education services expire.

Most youth with disabilities graduate and receive no additional services as an adult. Approximately eight percent have significant support needs. They are assigned to a state agency through an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) under Chapter 688, Massachusetts' Turning Twenty Two Law. Individuals with intellectual impairments and those with developmental disabilities with certain conditions (autism, Prader-willi, Smith magenis) are assigned to the Department of Developmental Services. Chapter 688 does not always require adult services for the students and this means some students, even those assigned to DDS will fall between the cracks.

Two broad groups are represented in the Turning 22 population

1. Individuals living with families at home attending local, regional, collaborative or private high schools – this equals about 70% of the Turning 22 group
2. Individuals already living outside the family home, e.g., 24-hr Residential school funded by LEA(local school districts), DSS funded school, foster care, etc., Mass. Hospital School, etc. DDS in the past estimated 28% are in this group

What happens when there are no services? What is the effect of Turning 22 funding not keeping pace with rise in graduates?

- There is no way to address emergencies
- DDS has limited options if any to address the service needs of sons/daughters of caregivers who are in their senior years (elders)
- DDS has no way to increase more family support allocations or several other areas such as employment and transportation
- Some families give up and may or may not remain on caseload. Students end up at home, parents leave work and the young people re-surface in an emergency.

The Line Items affected by this growing population that relate to day/employment supports only:

5920-5000	DDS Turning 22
5920-2025	DDS Day/Employment Services
5920-3020	DDS Adult Omnibus

For more information contact Empowerment team at The Arc of Massachusetts.

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