Day Services + Employment

A Guide to Day Services and Employment for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, including Autism, in Massachusetts

**MASSHEALTH DAY PROGRAMS**

*Day Habilitation (Day Hab):*
Day Hab services provide assistance with self-improvement, acquisition, or retention of self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills. Services are based on a Day Hab plan, which identifies measurable goals and objectives, and prescribes an integrated program of activities and therapies necessary to reach that goal. Nursing services are also offered. People attend for 6 hours each day (weekdays) and transportation is usually provided.

*Adult Day Health (ADH):*
Covers services provided by a MassHealth agency-approved ADH provider. The service is for people with needs that require nursing care. It aims to provide an organized program of nursing services and health care supervision, developmental skills training, maintenance-therapy and socialization. People can attend from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., up to seven days a week. Curb-to-curb transportation is also provided.

**DEPT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (DDS)**

*Community-Based Day Services (CBDS):*
CBDS is a vehicle for individuals to explore and engage in meaningful and purposeful activities, based on individual preferences and needs as identified in their person-centered Individual Service Plan (ISP). CBDS can include employment related and nonemployment related activities, but must always be purposeful and supportive of the participant’s goals. Pre-planned CBDS activities should promote the full integration and inclusion of individuals with disabilities into mainstream society through positive community contributions and relationship development.
DDS PROGRAMS (CON’T)

Supported Employment:
Employment options including group employment or supported individualized employment that assist an individual to gain and maintain job skills.

Competitive Employment:
Integrated individual jobs that take place in the community with or without individualized supports provided.

Autism Coaching (Pilot Program):
Coaching is an individualized one-on-one service between a DDS eligible adult on the autism spectrum and a qualified profession coach who has both extensive knowledge about individuals with autism spectrum disorders and significant expertise in mental health issues. Coaches help their clients perform executive functioning (organizational/planning) tasks, access social opportunities, acquire skills necessary for employment, and independent living.

Individualized Day Supports:
Offers the ability to create their own schedule of meaningful activities. Individuals work with a provider agency to use this model.

MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION (MRC) VOCATIONAL SERVICES

MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program assists individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program helps individuals with physical, psychiatric, and/or learning/intellectual disabilities face the challenges of the modern workplace. This may include identifying job goals based on individual interests and aptitudes, providing funds for college and vocational training, assessing worksite accommodations, educating an employer about the Americans With Disabilities Act, or assisting an individual returning to work after adjusting to a new disabling condition. Vocational rehabilitation services can often reduce or remove barriers to employment. Priority is given to those individuals who have the most severe disabilities in areas such as communication, mobility, work tolerance, and work skills.

STEPS TO RECEIVING SERVICES:
1. **Referral:** You may be recommended or recommend yourself for MRC vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. To recommend yourself as well as to schedule an orientation, call or visit your local MRC at www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/vocational-rehab/vr-area-offices/

DOCUMENTS TO BRING TO YOUR INTERVIEW:

- School Records
- Completed VR Checklist (2 pages)
- Job History (if applicable)
- Job Training (if applicable)
- Recent Medical Records (including dates of hospitalizations or specialty examinations related to your disability)
- Any additional relevant information about disability or work status
2. **Orientation**: You will attend a meeting to learn about the program.

3. **Interview**: You will meet with a counselor to assess your eligibility and learn about the program. You may bring someone with you to this interview. Your counselor will ask about your disability, employment history, employment barriers, and income. You must bring your completed VR checklist to the meeting: found in the Appendix (pp. 43-44) at www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/mrc/consumer-handbook-2015.pdf

4. **Apply for Services**: After your interview, you may apply for services. Your counselor will help you complete the application.

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**INDIVIDUAL PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)**

This is a formal assessment between you and the MRC VR program.

It identifies your employment goal, specifies your responsibilities, and the services MRC will provide to help you become employed and keep a job. Keep a copy of this document for your records.

*Bring up any problems with the document BEFORE you sign it.*

You have the right to appeal unresolved disagreements by calling the MRC Ombudsman at 617-204-3603.

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**NEXT STEPS**

**MRC WILL OFFER A VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT:**

- Your counselor will gather information about you to identify your career goals.
- This assessment will identify services you need to find a job.
- It should examine your interests, abilities, aptitudes, education, work history, strengths, and weaknesses.
- At its completion, you and your counselor will create, finalize and sign an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).

**WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT VR CENTERS?**

Résumé preparation, job-seeking skills training, interview skills training, and job leads.

**WHAT SERVICES MAY BE OFFERED IN MY IPE?**

- **Vocational Counseling**: Includes personal adjustment counseling addressing medical, family or social issues, and other assistance necessary to get and keep a job.
- **Assessments**: Services provided to determine eligibility for VR services and to determine nature and scope of services you qualify for.
- **Training**: Helps you improve educationally and vocationally, or adjust to functional limitations of your disability.
- **Education**: Includes full or part-time academic training, usually above high school level, that leads to a degree or certification or job skill provided by a business, trade or technical school.
- **Assistive Technology**: Technology to address barriers to people with disabilities in education, employment, and independent living.

*Please note*: You must meet income eligibility for some services.
WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE AFTER I GET A JOB?
Once employed, notify your counselor immediately if you have difficulty on your new job. Your counselor may be able to help you with transportation, reasonable accommodations, additional training, or support services like job coaching to help you on the job. Once you have been successfully employed for 90 days, your case will be closed.

*If you are in need of assistance to keep your job, follow-up services are available for up to 3 years after your case had been closed. These follow-up services may include supports and tools required to keep your job, MRC staff working with an employer to resolve problems, or job coaching to meet and maintain skills necessary to perform a specific job.

HOW DOES WORK AFFECT YOUR BENEFITS?
If you are receiving SSI and/or SSDI, you may earn up to $1,130 (or $1,820 if you are blind) per month without losing these benefits. If you want to work without losing your benefits, there may be work incentive programs you can access such as Ticket to Work, Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Student Earned Income Exclusion, and Impaired-Work Expenses.

TRIAL WORK MONTHS
A person receiving Social Security Disability benefit has nine trial work months during which they will still get a full benefit check. Any month with earnings over $810 is counted towards the nine trial months trial. Months do not need to be consecutive and will be counted within a rolling 60-month period.

TICKET TO WORK
A Social Security Administration program for those between 18 and retirement age on SSI or SSDI. It helps individuals find employment through a service provider, employer network, or an employer of their choosing while maintaining their benefits and Medicaid/Medicare. For more information, call the Ticket to Work Helpline: (888)-968-7842

PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT (PASS)
Allows people who receive SSI or SSDI to work for a specific period of time towards a work goal. Income earned during this period may be set aside towards the work goal and is not countable income, so you will continue to receive benefits. For more information, visit www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-545.pdf

STUDENT EARNED INCOME EXCLUSION (SEIE)
The SEIE allows an individual who is under age 22 and regularly attending school to have their earnings (max. $7,180 per year) excluded from countable income, therefore retaining their disability benefits.

IMPAIRED-RELATED WORK EXPENSES
The IRWE will help by deducting the cost of certain impairment-related items and services that you need to work from your countable income. It does not matter if you also use these items and services for non-work activities. These item(s) or service(s) must have been paid for out-of-pocket, and enables you to work.

EXPEDITED REINSTATEMENT
If your benefits ended because you worked and had earnings, you can request to have your benefits started again without having to complete a new application. Your last monthly payment must be within 5 years.
PROJECT IMPACT
Provides individual benefit counseling to beneficiaries of SSI or SSDI who are employed or seeking employment. They can explain how work or increased earnings affect your benefits. For more information, see: www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/vocational-rehab/impact/impact-referral-form.html

BENEPLAN
Assists individuals who receive SSDI and/or SSI, who are looking for employment or are currently working, to understand how work earnings or wage increases impact these and/or other public benefits. If you have questions about the impact of your work on benefits, call: 1-877-YES-WORK (1-877-937-9675), and for general questions, call 1-866-968-7842 or 866-833-2967 (TTY).

MASSACHUSETTS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
The Human Service Transportation (HST) Office oversees an efficient, high-quality system of services for coordinated transportation to access medical, social, and day services in Massachusetts.

HST TRANSPORTATION BROKERAGE MODEL (CON’T)
• RTAs process requested trips, verifies eligibility, contract with local transport, and monitor service quality.
• Transportation is provided to eligible consumers, as determined by their funding agency, via two service models: “demand-response” (“dial-a-ride”) and “program-based.”
  • Demand-Response (“dial-a-ride”): Generally, transportation is authorized by the funding agency and consumers call to schedule their trips on an as-needed basis with varying destinations, frequency, and times. This model is typically used for medical appointments.
  • Program-Based: Transportation is authorized by the funding agency for specific destination-frequency, and time, usually operating on a daily or regularly schedule basis. This model is typically used for transportation to rehabilitation or developmental programs. It is likened to a school-bus route.

MASSMOBILITY
MassMobility is an initiative to increase mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-income commuters, and any others who lack transportation access in Massachusetts. In particular, MassMobility helps build the capacity of the Massachusetts community transportation network through raising awareness of services available, fostering collaboration, and sharing best practices.
WAYS TO TRAVEL (MBTA TRAVEL TRAINING PROGRAM)
Public transportation training program that teaches and familiarizes customers with MBTA trains and buses. You may register for the training by calling 617-222-5237 and leave your name, telephone number, the best time to contact you regarding the training, and if any reasonable accommodations will be needed during the training. You may also email your interest in the program to howtotravel@mbta.com.

MASSHEALTH TRANSPORTATION
As a MassHealth member, you may be eligible for non-emergency transportation to and from your MassHealth covered services when you are unable to access public or private transportation. Transportation services include (but are not limited to): doctors’ appointments, counseling, and day habilitation.

Who qualifies for MassHealth Transportation?
Any MassHealth member within a category that includes transportation-eligible coverage (Standard, CommonHealth, CarePlus, or others) may qualify. To find out if you qualify for transportation benefits, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-800-841-2900 (TTY).

If eligible, how would I apply for services?
Your MassHealth medical provider must complete and sign a Prescription for Transportation (PT-1) form on your behalf. This form can be completed online, faxed, or mailed to the CSC. Processing your PT-1 form can take up to three business days once received. If you need transportation sooner, your medical provider can contact the CSC for a verbal authorization at 1-800-841-2900 (TTY: 1-800-497-4648).

*For additional information about your Transportation Broker and frequently asked questions, please visit www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/hst/masshealth-transportation-consumer-brochure.pdf

DDS TRANSPORTATION
Limited transportation for adults enrolled in community-based day services and supported employment.

MRC TRANSPORTATION:
Transportation for individuals with disabilities to vocational rehabilitation services, community services, and other MRC-authorized locations or programs.
POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)
Congress has reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), including the Rehabilitation Act, through the year 2020. WIOA is intended to help workers—including workers with disabilities—to access employment, education, job-driven training, and support services that give them the chance to advance their careers as well as secure meaningful jobs. Transition age students and youth may be offered this assistance.

To learn about WIOA, please visit the following links:
• www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/IB31_F.pdf

EMPLOYMENT FIRST
A Massachusetts policy that identifies integrated individual employment as the preferred service option and optimal outcome. Integrated individual employment is defined as: an individual who is hired and paid by their employer, employment that takes place in the community with a focus on integration, and a position that is an individual job rather than a group employment model.

For more information, see: www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/blueprint-for-success.pdf