

Request for Information Regarding Update to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2018 Olmstead Plan

Greetings:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), along with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to get comments from a variety of people about updates to the state's 2018 Olmstead Plan.

An Olmstead Plan, named after a 1999 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court about the right to receive supports and services in settings other than institutions, is a state's roadmap for supporting housing and services for people with disabilities in settings that are appropriate to their needs.

In 2018, Massachusetts updated its 2008 Olmstead Plan. The [2018 Olmstead Plan](#) recorded the progress made since 2008. It also includes four main goals to guide the state's continued progress. We're especially interested in community feedback about the state's 2018 Olmstead Plan's four goals for supporting people with disabilities:

1. expanding access to affordable, accessible housing with supports
2. enhancing community-based long-term services and supports
3. promoting community-integrated employment of people with disabilities
4. investing in accessible transportation for people with disabilities

Submitting feedback is easy. Here's how.

1. Go to Section 2 to find the questions we'd like you to answer. You can respond to as few or as many as you'd like.
2. Go to Section 3 to find instructions that explain how to submit your feedback.
3. Be sure to submit your responses no later than February 29, 2024.

EOHHS and EOHLC will use the feedback from this RFI when developing updates to the 2018 Olmstead Plan.

Thank you in advance!

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
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**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OLMSTEAD PLAN UPDATE**

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

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SECTION 1. OVERVIEW

Massachusetts is committed to helping people with disabilities live, work, and thrive in their chosen communities. We work on this goal in many ways, including

- making it easier to get community-based services and supports;
- making it easier to get affordable, accessible housing;
- helping people move from facilities, like nursing homes (“facility-based settings”), to other kinds of settings (“community-based settings”); and
- striving to prevent homelessness.

In 2008, Massachusetts created its first Olmstead Plan to achieve these goals. In 2018, Massachusetts updated its 2008 Olmstead Plan. The [2018 Olmstead Plan](#) records the progress made since 2008. It also includes four main goals to guide the state’s continued progress:

1. expanding access to affordable, accessible housing with supports
2. enhancing community-based long-term services and supports
3. promoting community-integrated employment of people with disabilities
4. investing in accessible transportation for people with disabilities

The Healey-Driscoll administration is updating the 2018 Olmstead Plan. As part of this process, we seek to record the progress made since 2018, while also charting a path forward for the next five years.

Our first step is to ask you for information through this RFI. We want insight from Massachusetts residents with disabilities, their families, advocates, and other stakeholders. This is an opportunity for you to provide feedback on how Massachusetts can better support people with disabilities. Your feedback will help us develop a strong, sustainable plan.

We are especially interested in hearing from people with firsthand knowledge: Massachusetts residents with disabilities, whether they live in facility-based settings or in community-based settings.

SECTION 2. QUESTIONS

If you’re a person with a disability, the family member of someone with a disability, a provider, or anyone else interested in this topic, please answer as many of the questions as you’re interested in. If a question doesn’t apply to you, feel free to skip it or answer “Don’t Know.”

Respondents should enter their answers on Attachment A (Response Form). If you need more space to write any of your answers, you can send a separate Word document. You’re welcome to provide feedback on *any or all* of the RFI topics.

Topic 1. Expanding Housing Access

Many people with disabilities need affordable housing that is accessible. They may also need services to help them find community-based housing in order to move out of a facility, like a shelter or nursing home, or avoid having to move into one.

Please give us your feedback about Massachusetts housing options and what you believe is necessary going forward to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

1. Are you aware of programs and policies that work well to provide affordable housing that is accessible for people who use wheelchairs, can't climb stairs, or need changes because of hearing or visual disabilities? Which programs and policies have worked well for you?
2. Are you aware of programs and policies that work well to provide affordable housing that includes services for people with disabilities? Which programs and policies have worked well for you?
3. What new services or policies would help people with disabilities get affordable and/or accessible housing?
4. Are you aware of housing programs and policies that work well to prevent people with disabilities from becoming homeless? What programs and policies have worked well for you?
5. What services or policies are you aware of that help people with disabilities keep their housing if they have problems with their landlord?
6. What other services or policies would help prevent people with disabilities from becoming homeless?

Topic 2. Enhancing Long-Term Services

It's important to us to make sure people with disabilities have access to a broad range of community-based services. This helps people move into, and stay in, community-based settings. Each person should get to choose the services they need and have ready access to. People need access to services like medical, mental health, substance use, personal care, and other services to thrive in their homes and communities.

1. What services are working now? What are the strengths of Massachusetts's services and supports for helping people with disabilities move into, and stay in, community-based settings?

2. What are the biggest challenges related to services for people with disabilities in Massachusetts who want to live in community-based settings? What could Massachusetts do to help overcome those challenges?
3. What services, programs, or policies are needed to improve the promotion of community-based services as an alternative to facility-based care?
4. How can the state improve its existing programs and policies for promoting community-based services as an alternative to facility-based care?
5. How could Massachusetts make it easier for people with disabilities to get long-term services and supports?

Topic 3: Promoting Employment

We want to make sure people with disabilities have competitive job opportunities that are not segregated. This means they should be able to get the same opportunities and benefits, in the same work setting, as people without disabilities.

1. What programs and policies work well in Massachusetts to provide competitive, nonsegregated employment opportunities for people with disabilities?
2. How could Massachusetts improve access to and availability of competitive, nonsegregated employment opportunities for people with disabilities?

Topic 4: Investing in Transportation

Many people with disabilities rely on local or regional transportation systems. People with disabilities routinely say that transportation issues are a crucial concern.

1. Are you aware of programs and policies that work well to provide accessible transportation for people with disabilities? What programs and policies have worked for you?
2. How could Massachusetts improve access to, and availability of, transportation for people with disabilities?

Topic 5. Important General Questions

In addition to the four topics above, please tell us how else we can hear from people with disabilities, ensure equity, measure progress, and keep providing support for people with disabilities.

1. How could Massachusetts regularly collect and consider input from people with disabilities, including those who have experienced homelessness, to improve services and ensure respect for each person's preferences and choices?
2. How can Massachusetts ensure that support for people with disabilities is equitable regardless of race, ethnicity, income, and other factors?
3. What information should the state use to measure its progress in helping people with disabilities live, work, and thrive in their chosen communities? What data should Massachusetts collect?
4. If you could change one thing about Massachusetts's approach to helping people with disabilities in Massachusetts thrive in their chosen communities, what would you change?
5. If you have a disability, what contributes most to your wellbeing and your ability to live in your chosen community? This includes your social connections and community resources that support your overall wellbeing, not just state programs.

Please tell us about yourself.

I am (check all that apply)

- a person with a disability
- an older adult
- a family member of a person with a disability
- an advocate
- a service provider
- a housing provider
- an interested community member
- other (please specify) _____

If you are willing, please tell us more about your personal housing and service needs.

The part of Massachusetts (for instance, the county, city or town, or neighborhood) that I am most familiar with is:

Where do you receive or provide most of your services? (Check all that apply.)

- at home
- at work
- at a medical office
- in a day program
- in a hospital
- in a nursing facility
- in an assisted living facility
- in a rest home
- in a professional, nonmedical institution
- in a foster home or group home
- in jail or another correctional facility
- in someone's home
- other (please specify)

SECTION 3. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

We are issuing this RFI only to collect information. The RFI does not obligate EOHHS or EOHLC to take any action based on information received. We will not notify you when we receive your response, and we cannot return any part of it to you after you send it.

Response Submission.

All responses to this RFI are due **February 29, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.** Email us your responses on Attachment A (Response Form), with "Commonwealth of Massachusetts Olmstead Update" as the subject line.

Responses must be submitted electronically. Please direct the RFI responses to the following contact person:

Bessie DiDomenica, Procurement Coordinator
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
eohts-procurement@mass.gov

SECTION 4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1. Electronic Distribution

This RFI has been distributed electronically using the Commonwealth Procurement Access and Solicitation System (COMMBUYS). COMMBUYS is an electronic mechanism used for advertising and distributing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's procurements and related files. No individual may alter (manually or electronically) the RFI or its components except those portions intended to collect the respondent's response. Interested parties may access COMMBUYS at the following address: <http://www.commbuys.com>. Questions specific to COMMBUYS should be made to the COMMBUYS Help Desk at commbuys@mass.gov.

4.2. RFI Amendments

Interested parties are solely responsible for checking COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications that are subsequently made to this RFI. The Commonwealth and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodation to interested parties who fail to check for amended RFIs.

4.3 Use of RFI Information

EOHHS reserves the right to accept or reject, in part or in full, any information contained in or submitted in response to this RFI. The RFI is not binding on EOHHS and shall not obligate EOHHS to issue a procurement that incorporates any RFI provisions or responses. Responding to this RFI is entirely voluntary, will in no way affect EOHHS's consideration of any proposal submitted in response to any subsequent procurement, and will not serve as an advantage or disadvantage to the respondent in the course of any procurement that may be issued. Responses to this RFI become the property of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are public records under the Massachusetts Freedom of Information Law, M.G.L. c. 66, § 10 and c. 4, § 7, cl. 26, regarding public access to such documents. However, information provided to EOHHS in response to this RFI and identified by the respondent as trade secrets or commercial or financial information shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from disclosure as a public record (see M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26). This exemption may not apply to information submitted in response to any subsequent procurement.

Attachment A: Response Form

Olmstead Plan RFI