



Understanding Recent Immigration Policy Changes and Impact on the Disability Community

What is happening right now?

The Federal Government is changing immigration policies to impose more limitations on who can live and work in the United States by expanding deportation efforts and narrowing humanitarian initiatives and other immigration programs.

In Massachusetts, there is a high percentage of immigrants, with about [18% of the population being foreign-born](#). The proportion of immigrants in the workforce is specifically high within the human services and healthcare sectors.

In addition to the very concerning humanitarian impacts, the revocation of visas and mass deportations of immigrants are straining the already struggling human services workforce, including those who work with and support people with disabilities.

This is an evolving, overwhelming, and scary situation. This fact sheet aims to provide a high-level overview of the current situation and key definitions to help understand what is happening and how you can help. The Arc of Massachusetts will continue to share relevant information, resources, and advocacy opportunities.

Key Definitions

Temporary Protected Status (TPS): TPS is a humanitarian program that allows individuals from eligible countries to live and work in the United States when the conditions of their home countries make it unsafe for them to return. These unsafe conditions may include war, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary or temporary conditions. As of March 2024, Massachusetts was home to [28,000 TPS recipients, the majority from Haiti](#).

Note: There are many different types of immigration statuses, such as green card holders, asylum-seekers, and a range of other types of visas. TPS is just one of the many examples of status that a noncitizen immigrant may hold in the United States.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): ICE is a federal agency within the Department of Homeland Security which enforces rules relating to customs, trade, and immigration.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs): DSPs are skilled caregivers who assist people with disabilities in their daily lives, support their independence, and help them participate in their communities. Nearly [27%](#) of all direct care workers, including those who work with people with disabilities and elderly individuals, are immigrants.

What changes are being made to immigration policy?

The Trump administration is making many changes to immigration statuses and policies by revoking visas, expanding immigration enforcement, and narrowing humanitarian programs. The Department of Homeland Security has revoked Temporary Protected Status for many countries, including Venezuela and Haiti. The end date of TPS varies from country to country. For Haiti, this program will end on February 3, 2026. Nationally, this will likely mean that [500,000 people](#) will be at risk for deportation.

These specific changes, as well as the many new restrictions for immigration throughout the country, will impact the workforce and communities that rely on a range of services. In Massachusetts, immigrants, their families, and the disability community are already being impacted by these changes.

Who is being affected?

We recognize the fear, uncertainty, and hardship that immigrants and their families are experiencing due to recent immigration policy changes. These are human beings facing life-altering disruptions, and our entire community stands behind them. Immigrants with disabilities and their families are reporting fear of accessing government services, as well as facing general uncertainty about what could happen to them and their families. In addition to this, these policy shifts have far-reaching consequences for individuals with disabilities and the systems that support them.

In Massachusetts, a large percent of DSPs are immigrants, specifically immigrants from Haiti on TPS. The revocation of visas and humanitarian programs is changing the landscape of who can work in the country, which will directly impact DSPs. In an already strained system, this will cause the disability workforce to continue to shrink, hurting families, individuals, and providers. Crucial services and resources will likely be limited for individuals with disabilities without a thriving disability workforce. Staff shortages in group homes, nursing facilities, and day programs could deepen.

Many also fear what will happen to their loved ones if ICE picks up a caregiver while they are supporting an individual with disabilities in the community. Deportations and fear of enforcement destabilize caregiving arrangements. Some staff members have already chosen to self-deport or leave their jobs out of fear.

In an ongoing survey conducted by The Arc of Massachusetts, individuals are reporting the fear that they have for their loved ones amidst the severe changes to immigration enforcement:

- *“Many staff and contractors have work visas or other documentation to work legally in the US. I have seen a steep decline in... staff applications due to fear of immigration status of family members, including a caregiver who has been in ICE detention out of state for 5 weeks. The staffing issue is a major concern for most of our families and personally.”*
- *“I am worried that staff who are supporting my son in the community will be taken by ICE. Beyond that frightening and horrible act, my son could be left without supports!”*

[Share your story here.](#)

The Bottom Line and What Happens Next

Immigration crackdown measures do not only negatively impact immigrants and their families, but also extend across disability services, straining resources, disrupting care networks, and undermining supports for the disability community. Protecting access and stabilizing the workforce are urgent priorities and are more critical now than ever. The Arc's work helped support Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Representative Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick of Florida to file a bipartisan [amicus brief](#) in DC district court challenging the deportation of Haitian immigrants on TPS. The Arc is committed to working with providers, families, and individuals to share information and help prepare.

What can I do?

We must urgently voice our concerns to our congressional delegation regarding how **shifts in federal immigration policy are harming individuals with disabilities** and **straining the workforce** in Massachusetts.

- If you or someone you know needs help, or if you witness an immigration enforcement action and are unsure of your rights or how to respond, the following resources can provide information and support:
 - [ACLU's Know Your Rights](#)
 - [MA Attorney General's Office](#)
 - [LUCÉ Immigrant Defense Hotline](#): 617-370-5023
 - [MIRA Hotline](#): 508-293-1871
 - [City of Boston's Free Immigration Consultations](#): 617-635-2980 or immigrantadvancement@boston.gov (for city of Boston residents only)
- Contact your federal and state legislators and share your story of how workforce shortages, exacerbated by immigration policy, have impacted you or you loved one's access to disability support services. Stress that a stable care workforce is a disability rights issue. Find your federal legislators [here](#). Find your Massachusetts state legislators [here](#).
- Join us! Advocacy is more effective when individuals join together. Sign up for [The Arc of Massachusetts's action alerts](#) and [The Arc of the United States' action alerts](#) to stay informed and mobilize.
- We are here to help. We know that these changes are fast-moving and significant. Please reach out to us if you need support navigating service changes, connecting with resources, or engaging in advocacy. We encourage you to reach out if you have questions or need support by contacting The Arc's Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Partnership Nora Bent at nbent@arcmass.org.