
MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS & YOUNG ADULTS

THE ARCTRANSITION CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2019



GOALS FOR TODAY

- MRC Overview
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Benefits Counseling
- High School and Referrals to MRC
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Community Living Programs
- Wrap Up!!

MRC OVERVIEW

MRC is a state agency that provides services to persons with disabilities.

- There are three divisions of MRC:
 - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
 - Employment Supports for persons with disabilities, ages 14 and up
 - Disability Determination Services (DDS)
 - Determines eligibility for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
 - Community Living (CL)
 - Community Based Services (Statewide Head Injury Program, Acquired Brain Injury, Money Follows the Person Community Based Programs)
 - Protective Services
 - Independent Living & Assistive Technology Programs
 - Home Care Assistance Program

MRC OVERVIEW

- MRC works with students and adults that have many different types of disabilities. Our clients may have:
 - Physical Disabilities
 - Emotional Difficulties
 - Learning Difficulties
 - Substance Use Disorder

... or a combination of the above.
- Our job is to help students:
 - Understand their disability and some of the difficulties they may face
 - Identify their strengths and things they are good at doing, or would like to become good at
 - Identify supports they might need to reach their goals

MRC OVERVIEW

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Transitional to Adulthood (TAP)

Young Adult Supported Living (T22)

Youth Leader Forum (YLF) and Youth Leadership Network (YLN)

Benefits Planning

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

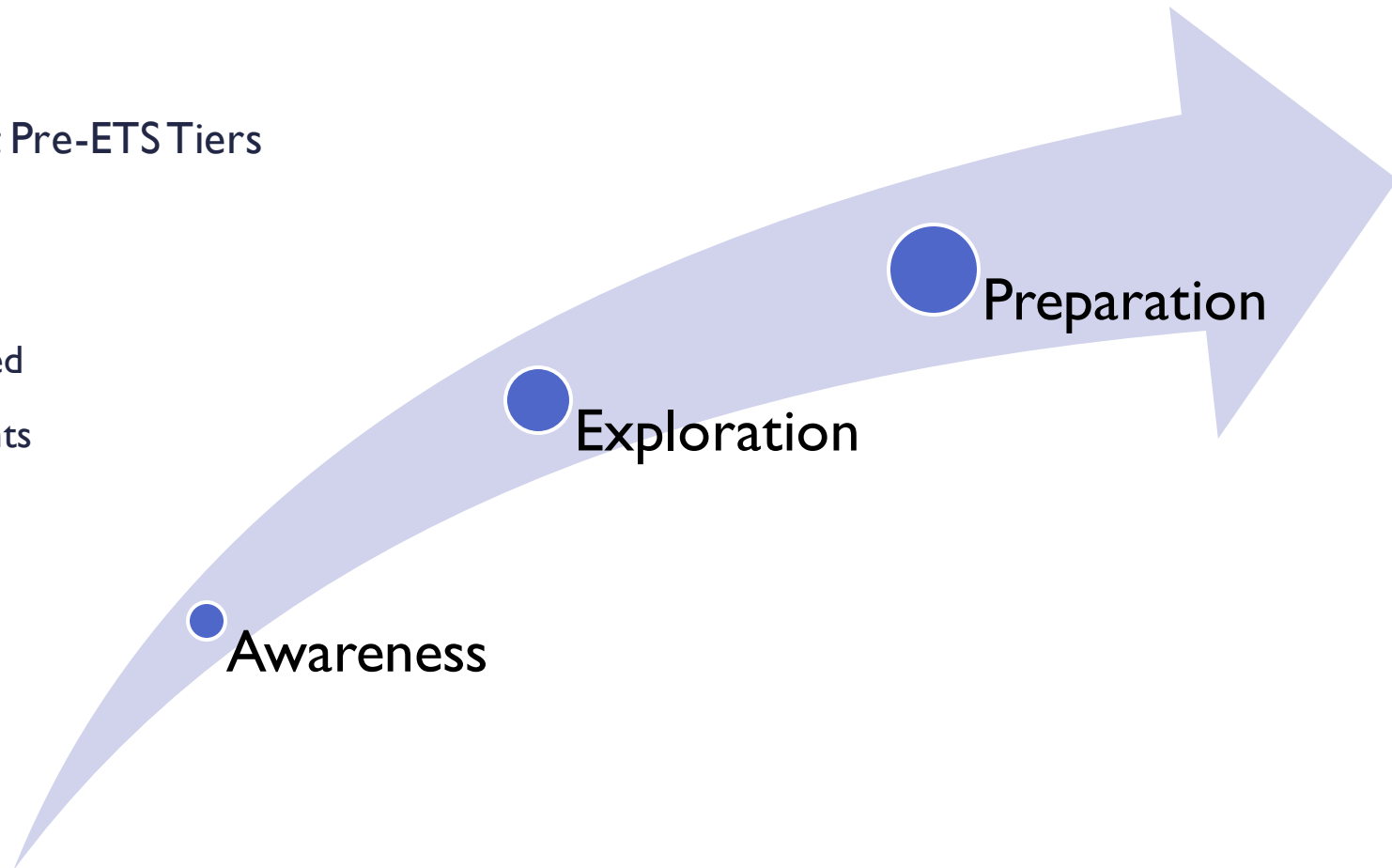
- **Focus:** Pre-ETS focuses on preparing, exploring, and increasing awareness to post-secondary employment and education options.
- **Age:** 14 – 22
- **Eligibility:** Documented disability, enrolled in high school or post-secondary institution, between 14 – 22 years old.
 - Students do not need to be enrolled in vocational rehabilitation services to participate.
- **Service Provision:** Services are provided by approved local providers; students can directly contact local providers or ask their schools MRC Liaison, school personnel, or MRC Area Office for a list of available programs.



PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

The vision and values: Pre-ETSTiers

- All students
- Equal access
- Community based
- Preparing students
- Flexibility



PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Intention:

- Develop a new model for students to access services while they are younger and still in school
- Students don't need to apply to VR
- Short term/time-limited/flexible
- Learning goals
- Typically unpaid
- Serves as exploration

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Pre-ETS Provider Community of Practice

- Problem solving
- Sharing of knowledge
 - Examples: Paid work experiences, Working with schools, Creative practices for students
- Sharing of resources
- More opportunities for students

Life Trajectory Worksheet

The diagram illustrates a 'Life Trajectory Worksheet'. It features a starting point on the left with two arrows pointing to the right. A solid black arrow points to a large purple-bordered box with rounded corners, labeled 'VISION for a GOOD LIFE' at the top. A dotted black arrow points to a smaller red-bordered box with rounded corners, labeled 'What I DON'T Want' at the top and containing the text 'LIST the things you don't want in your life...'. Below the starting point is a horizontal row of eight circular icons representing different life stages or roles: a person, a group of people, a person with a magnifying glass, two people, a person with a graduation cap, a person with a briefcase, a person with a gear, and a person with a lightbulb. At the bottom left, there is a small text line: 'My UH Career Portfolio is a template of the UMKC/UCD, LICEDD. More materials at @recoursetool.com'. At the bottom right, there is a small text line: 'OCTOBER 2016'.

Charting the Life Course!!!- What do you want? What do you NOT want?

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

- To connect with a Pre-ETS program students can...
 - Directly contact a provider
 - Ask the school MRC Liaison what providers are available in their area
 - Call their local MRC area office and ask what providers are available in their area
- Students can receive 1 or more of the 5 pre-ETS services
 - No consecutive order
 - Based on interests and goals for skill development
 - Groups and peer support-youth development model

BENEFITS COUNSELING

- **Focus:** Benefits counseling is available to youth with disability who are receiving SSI/SSDI benefits
- **Age:** 14 and older
- **Eligibility:** Receiving SSI or SSDI, completed information release paperwork
- **Core Services:** Individuals who are receiving SSI/SSDI who meet with a benefits planning counselor will be advised on how their benefits are impacted by employment, reporting requirements, and related information.
- **Service Provision:** MRC Benefits specialist are available regionally and can meet individuals at a pre-determined location or local MRC area office.

MRC BENEFITS SPECIALIST

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HIGH SCHOOL AND REFERRALS TO MRC

After High School a student may or may not need MRC services. It is important to discuss with the student and their service team at least 2 years prior to exiting high school what supports an individual will need to be successful.

- If a student does not need MRC services, they should work with their service team to identify community resources that will be available to them including local career centers, education and job training programs, and other community organizations.
- If a student will need ongoing MRC services, they can apply for VR services and go through MRC's eligibility process.

HIGH SCHOOL AND REFERRALS TO MRC

Pre-ETS Referral

Students 14-22- Paper Form to Provider

Pre-ETS Referral for Pre-ETS services with contracted MRC Provider

Who: Students in school who are interested in exploring and developing their employment related skills

Goal: Gain skills to prepare student for employment or further education.

Chapter 688

2 years from graduation or turning 22 whichever comes first- Virtual Gateway

Chapter 688 Referral for those students who will need ongoing supports at the time of graduation/turning 22 due to the severity of their disability

Who: Unable to work competitively without supports for more than 20 hours per week at the time of leaving school

Goal: Develop an Individual Transition Plan which includes identifying supports and resources beyond employment

Direct VR Referral

2 years from graduation or turning 22 whichever comes first - Paper form

Direct Referral for Vocational Rehabilitation to MRC Area Office.

Who: Students with disabilities interested in employment/ post-secondary education.

Goal: Obtain employment or further vocational or post-secondary education opportunities

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Referral
- Processing List
- Intake & Application
- Eligibility Determination
- Plan Development (and ITP, if needed)
- Service Provision
- Case Closure
- Post-Employment Services

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Once found eligible for services, the MRC counselor will work with students to develop vocational goal(s) and together with the student, will write the Individual Plan for Employment (“IPE”).
- The IPE is a written document that outlines and reflects:
 - The vocational goal
 - All services that will be provided/needed to achieve the goal
 - The time frame expected for the student to meet these goals, and
 - The cost breakdown for the services the student will need.

COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAMS TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD (TAP)

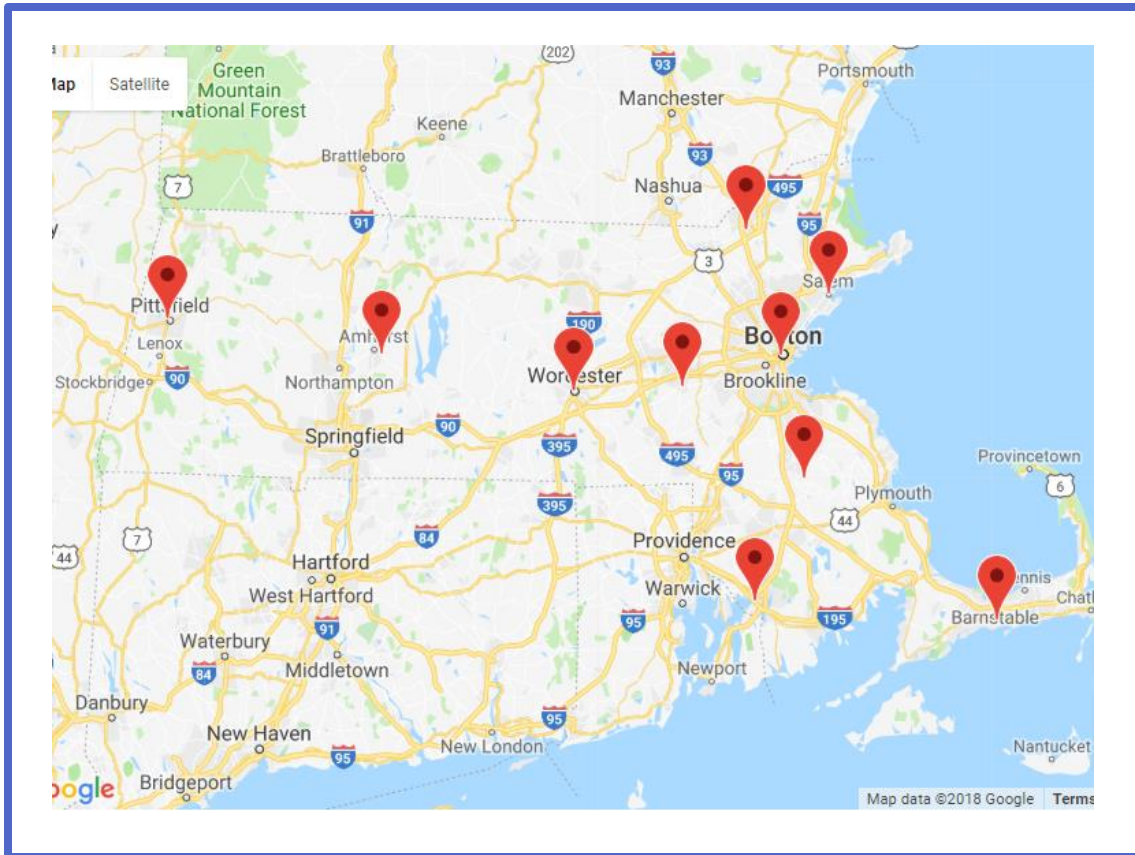


Image of Google Map with pinpoint locations of Independent Living Centers throughout Massachusetts.

- **Focus:** TAP supports students to develop the skills to live independently in the community of their choice. The year-around program builds self-confidence & resources to prepare students for life after high school.
- **Age:** 14 – 22
- **Eligibility:** Student who identify as living with a disability
- **Core Services:**
 - Skills Training
 - Peer Support
 - Advocacy
- **Service Provision:** Services are provided by all ten Independent Living Centers (ILCs)

COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAMS YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF)

- **Focus:** Annual conference for youth living with any type of disability with the goal of building leadership skills.
- **Age:** 16 – 22 (delegates), 18 – 25 (peer leaders)
- **Eligibility:**
 - Delegates: Young adults with a disability who are out of high school and are currently working and/or taking college classes.
 - Peer Leaders: Youth with a disability either in their last 2 years of high school or attending a transition program and interest in developing self-advocacy and leadership, begin career planning, and networking.
- **Core Services:** Participants of the YLF engage in small and large group workshops on...
 - Employment readiness
 - Community Participation
 - Independence
 - Systems and individual advocacy
 - Peer networking
 - Leadership skills
- **Service Provision:** The conference is organized by service provider, Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD). More information can be found here: <https://www.pyd.org/programs/youth-leadership-forum/>

COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAMS YOUTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK (YLN)



Image from Easter Seals MA webpage and images of the Youth Leadership Network. Six individuals are participating in an activity facilitated by a staff member.

- **Focus:** State-wide monthly meetings to promote self-advocacy, self-awareness, and life and employment skills.
- **Age:** 14 – 26
- **Eligibility:** Identify as a teen or young adult with a disability between the ages of 14 and 26
- **Core Services:** Hands-on groups/activities/discussions on...
 - Communication
 - Teamwork
 - Community service
 - Disability rights
 - Career interest
 - Employment Skills
- **Service Provision:** Services are organized by Easter Seals and hosted at a local ILC (Boston, Springfield, Worcester, and East Bridgewater). More information can be found here: <http://www.easterseals.com/ma/our-programs/youth-services/youth-services.html>

COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAMS

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

MassMATCH

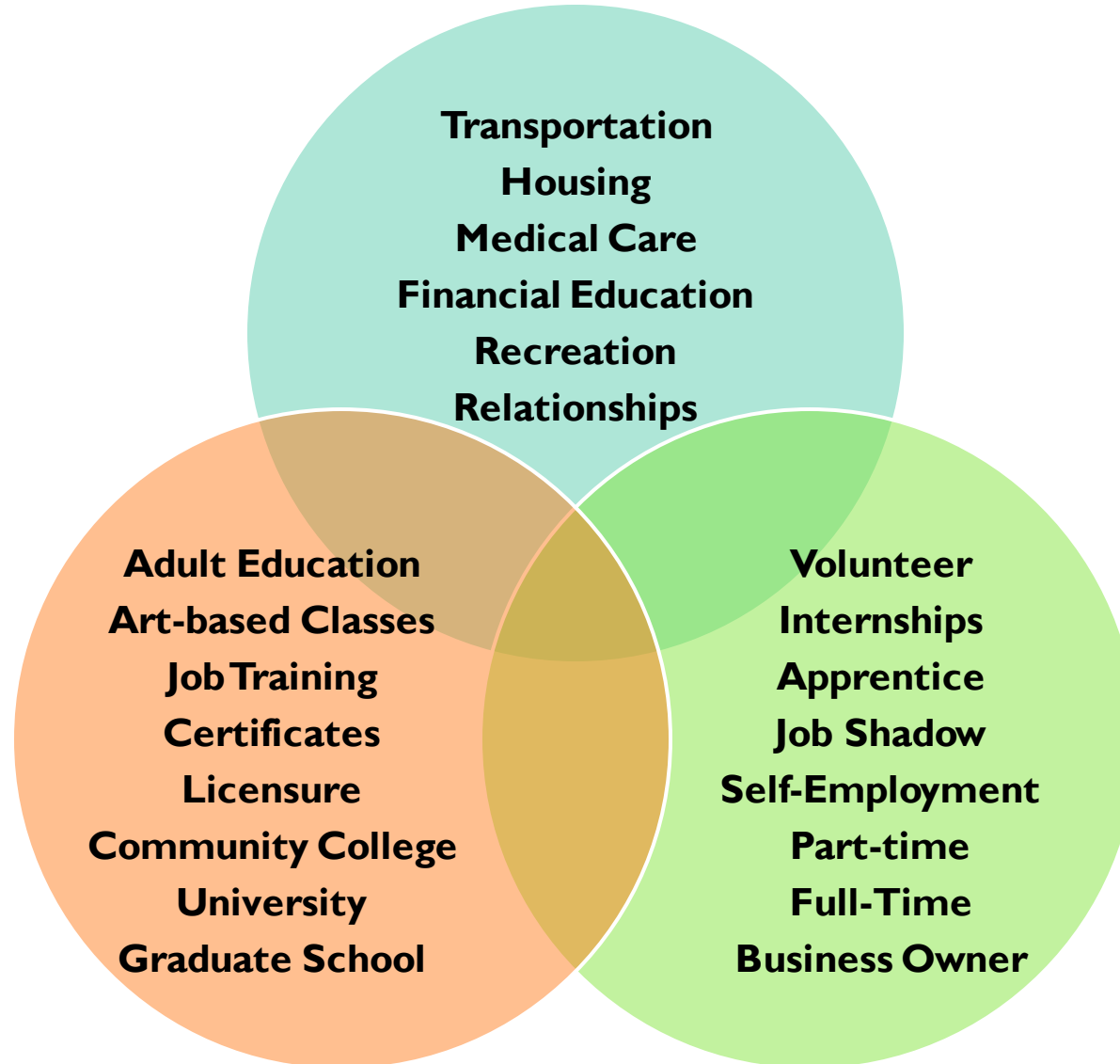
- MA's initiative to enhance the independence of persons living with disabilities.
- www.MassMATCH.org
- Device Demonstrations
- Short-term/long term device loans
- AT Loan Program:
www.massATLoan.org
- Device Exchange:
[Http://getATStuff.com](http://getATStuff.com)
- Reutilization program:
ReEquipment:www.dmerequipment.org

Assistive Technology IL

- Provides low- and high-tech solutions to increase independence in life.
- Provides devices, training, and other supports
- Financial eligibility requirements

Independent Living

Education



Employment

Image of a Venn diagram representing overlap related to the continuum of options in Education, Employment, and Independent Living.



WRAP UP!!!!
Q & A

CONTACT INFORMATION

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