



*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities*

The Arc of Massachusetts
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Achieve with us.

Scott Borchardt
President

Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director

June 7, 2022

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
State House
Boston, MA

Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
State House
Boston, MA

Re: FY'2023 Budget Conference Committee

Dear Chairpersons Rodrigues and Michlewitz and Members of the Conference Committee:

Thank you for the support for the Commonwealth's disability community and their families reflected in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget passed by the Senate and the House. The proposed FY'23 budget demonstrates the legislature's efforts to alleviate the significant barriers and service disruptions individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), including autism, and their families have faced over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are pleased to see the Senate and House budgets propose increases in the DDS line items above the Governor's budget proposal that benefit our community, including Supportive Technology and Autism Omnibus. We appreciate that the Senate and House budgets maintained the Governor's proposed funding including Residential services, Family Support that grew by \$5 million, DESE, and the Turning 22 account, which received a \$4 million increase to keep pace with graduates.

However, several thousand adults with IDD continue to have little or no services and are still waiting. We ask that several important differences between the Senate and House budgets be resolved to best serve and support the IDD/autism disability community, which are outlined below:

1. We request the House version for the following DDS line items:
 - a. Community Day and Employment (DDS 5920-2025) at \$278,362,283 to provide increased utilization of employment support, education, and training.
 - b. Transportation (DDS 5911-2000) at \$33,869,314 to manage increased costs for drivers, vehicle price increases and need for program flexibilities.
 - c. Children's Autism (DDS 5920-3010) at \$13,933,900 to alleviate the COVID impact on early intervention and address increased behavioral health needs.

The Arc in Massachusetts Includes the Following Local Chapters:

Berkshire County • Bristol County • Brockton Area • CCI/Lower Cape • Center of Hope Foundation • Charles River Center
Communitas, Inc. • Greater Haverhill-Newburyport • Incompass • Lifeworks, Inc. • Minute Man AHS • Northeast
Opportunities for Inclusion • The Arc of Opportunity • Plymouth and Upper Cape Cod • South Shore • The United Arc

Maintaining these amounts are vital for individuals with IDD and autism. The House increases funding capacity in Employment/Day and Transportation Accounts to 85% capacity, while the Senate budget remains at or close to the 60% projected in the Governor's request.

2. We request combined House and Senate language for 5920-2025, for which we included a draft (further below)ⁱ
 - a. The House version provides language (bridge) to address limited services post-COVID and workforce shortage as well as funding at 85% of pre-COVID utilization.
 - b. The Senate language provides increased flexibility between line items, and it authorizes a pilot, which funds adults with complex behavioral conditions to receive applied behavioral analysis supports (ABA).
3. Senate version for the following line items or items of language:
 - a. MassHealth disability and senior line item (4000-0601) increase at \$3,750,795,619.
 - b. Senate section #139 that creates a Disability Commission to study and report on the history of state institutions for people with IDD and mental health needs in the Commonwealth
 - c. A \$4 million allocation for MA Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (7099-9600) and language that will support more high school students (ages 18-22) with IDD with access to higher education opportunities.

Thank you again for listening and responding to many of our budget requests. As we continue to navigate the direct support workforce crisis, we look forward to sharing ideas and innovations to address the immediate and long-term needs of our community. We are also grateful of the continued commitment to enhance and support the lives of the individuals with IDD, including autism.

Thank you for your public service and dedication.

Sincerely,



Leo Sarkissian
Executive Director, The Arc of Massachusetts

Maura Sullivan, Senior Director of Government Affairs & Health Policy
Ellen Taverna, Public Policy Director
Charlie Fiske, Government Relations Specialist

cc: Senator Cindy Friedman
Senator Patrick O'Connor
Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante
Representative Todd Smola

ⁱ **House/Senate 5920-2025 Recommended merged language**

5920-2025 For community-based day and work programs and associated transportation costs for adults; provided, that the department of developmental services shall provide transportation which shall be prioritized by need; provided further, that the department shall support individuals with disabilities who transitioned from employment services offered at sheltered workshops to community-based employment as part of the commonwealth's employment first initiative; provided further, that any public-private partnerships with employers and nonprofits shall encourage the highest level of independence among individuals with disabilities and shall provide options to maximize community involvement and participation; provided further, that not more than \$15,000,000 of additional funds provided in fiscal year 2023 shall be expended by the department to: (a) re-design the service system to respond to the new needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring new day services components or modalities, including but not limited to: remote and virtual supports, and in-home or in-community services; (b) provide "bridge" funding for community-based provider agencies to re-design their current service model, including but not limited to: recruiting and hiring new staff, training staff for new roles and providing technology supports for staff during the transition; (c) develop a new, more fluid service model based on the real-time, individual needs of constituents otherwise unable to engage in traditional day services; and (d) plan for increased service need that may occur during the fiscal year in response to increased vaccinations and any improvement in the public health emergency; and provided further, that not later than March 3, 2023, the department shall issue a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing: (i) the number of eligible individuals employed in community-based employment in fiscal year 2022 and the number estimated for fiscal year 2023; (ii) the number and types of community-based employment partners; (iii) the outcomes measured; and (iv) recommendations for expansion; 2022 shall not revert but shall be made available for fiscal year 2023; provided further, that not less than \$200,000 shall be expended for The Arc of Massachusetts to create a pilot program for individuals currently enrolled in day habilitation programs with a developmental disability, an intellectual disability or an autism spectrum disorder to receive applied behavior analysis services for a 6-month period; provided further, that such individuals shall be 21 years of age or older; provided further, that the pilot program shall occur from September 1, 2022 to March 1, 2023; provided further, that not later than May 1, 2023, The Arc of Massachusetts shall submit a report on the results of the program to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities; provided further, that such report shall include, but not be limited to: (a) the total cost of providing applied behavior analysis services; (b) the number of individuals served by the program; (c) the cost of services per individual; (d) savings associated with the provision of applied behavior analysis services; and (e) aggregated benefits to individuals associated with applied behavior analysis services; provided further, that funds appropriated in this item in fiscal year 2022 shall not revert but shall be made available for fiscal year 2023; provided further, that the commissioner of developmental services may transfer such funds from this item to items 5920-2000, 5911-2000, 5920-3000, 5920-5000 and 5930-1000; and provided further, that the commissioner shall notify the house and senate committees on ways and means not less than 30 days in advance of any such transfer\$ 278,362,283