

Inclusive Employment and Career for Boston Youth With Disabilities

Pathways to the Talent Pipeline

Resource Guide

The Workforce Development Task Force
Of the Boston Special Education Transition
(B-SET) Project

www.b-setforcareer.org

Resource Guide for Boston Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities

Table of Contents

State Agencies & Service Providers

1. Disability specific state agencies	3
2. Community based disability service providers	5
3. Youth development agencies with programs for youth with disabilities	11
4. Youth development agencies that may include youth with disabilities	12

Education

5. Public schools	15
6. Alternative Education	16
7. Higher education	16

Business and Labor

8. Leading disability friendly companies	17
9. Collaborations/associations/networks	18

<i>Intermediaries</i>	19
------------------------------	----

Advocates /advisory boards/accountability mechanisms

10. Advocacy organizations	22
11. State agency internal and public boards	24

<i>Web Based Resources</i>	25
-----------------------------------	----

<i>Selected Reports</i>	28
--------------------------------	----

<i>Sources of employment data</i>	30
--	----

State Agencies & Service Providers

1. Disability Specific State Agencies

A. [Department of Developmental Services \(DDS\)](#) is the primary state agency that provides an array of services and supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Individuals are assessed for eligibility at age 18 (families with children who qualify based on their intellectual disability (ID) diagnosis can receive supportive services) at which time planning begins through an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and a “688” referral process from the school district to DDS for when the young adult turns 22.

DDS contracts with a variety of provider agencies, each with different service options, that offers families a choice for their son or daughter. Currently, there is sufficient capacity in the system. The Boston area office works closely with the special education department at Boston Public Schools and with STRIVE (BPS special education transition program) in order to ensure a smooth transition for young adults determined eligible for adult services. Many of the provider agencies have job developers to help find competitive, integrated and supported employment, as needed, for their clients. In Massachusetts, the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS) initiated an Employment First policy in 2010 and published a 2013 [Blueprint for Success: Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Massachusetts](#) for a major statewide change that will result in a phase out of sheltered workshops by June 30, 2015, transitioning adults into individual or group supported employment in integrated settings that pay at least minimum wage.

B. [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#)

The two offices within the department most responsible for addressing transition are the Office for Special Education Planning & Policy ([OSEPP](#)) and the department of Career Vocational Technical Education ([CVTE](#)) which provide compliance monitoring, technical assistance/guidance, and professional development for the field. Transition work focuses specifically on [Indicators 13](#) (transition) and 14 (post-secondary outcomes). CVTE works with high school and community colleges for career and technical education around equal access to CVTE programs, compliance and quality improvement. Both work closely with Offices of College and Career Readiness, Program Quality Assurance, Curriculum and Instruction and Accountability and Targeted Assistance.

OSEPP provides leadership statewide through technical assistance and monitoring to assure full implementation of the transition provisions of the special education law. Major initiatives related to transition planning include 1) [revision of the IEP](#) to include a strong emphasis on student self-determination as the most important characteristic of successful transition, and 2) the introduction of **Individual Learning Plans (ILP)** for ALL students beginning in 6th grade focused on future planning. This initiative recognizes that the earlier students begin thinking about their futures in terms of education, work, community life and the more directly schools can connect students with resources the more likely it is that the student will be successful.

Career Vocational Technical Education - The Office for Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) provides oversight of state and federal programs through monitoring and technical assistance to public schools to ensure access and progress through CVTE programs for all students, including students with disabilities. Districts are held accountable to ensure stakeholders involved in career/vocational technical education are committed to strongly promoting and supporting post-school employment opportunities for students with disabilities as they transition to competitive employment and adult life.

C. [Department of Mental Health \(DMH\)](#) provides services to youth and young adults age 16-25 in the Boston area. Services are provided through contracts with Boston-based providers. DMH has a [variety of transition age services](#) and through a collaboration with MRC coordinates job placement for DMH clients. Eligibility is more stringent at age 18, requiring a serious mental illness diagnosis. Finding and staying in jobs are very difficult for young adults with mental illness, as they need a strong support system. A model that works well for these young adults is a “drop-in” space where they can hang out or access food, technology, laundry and peer mentors. Among the models is the “Spot” - that is operated by young adults themselves and has programming that is specifically targeted to an at risk population - those not yet diagnosed with mental health issues.

Among its programs for young adults is STAY Together, a partnership between DMH and the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). This program offers a model of wraparound programming for young adults - [Achieve My Plan](#) - along with young adult support groups, a Young Adult Advisory Group and two (2) part time young adult peer mentors at Community Service Agencies operating across the state. In Boston, the lead agency is the Home for Little Wanderers.

The young adults take a 12 week course at the [Young Adult Resource Network \(YARN\)](#) in Dorchester. Once trained, they are hired as peer mentors to outreach to 18-21 year olds eligible for mental health services through CBHI but resistant to participate in the wraparound teams. Becoming a peer mentor also provides them with a career ladder, a place to build social relationships, and access to housing, adult services and medical coverage.

The adult system has developed some innovative programming in its clubhouse model in Worcester - Genesis House - and at its recovery learning center in Worcester. DMH has also designed a Community Based Flexible Support program in the western part of the state that is specifically for young adults. DMH worked in collaboration with Work Without Limits and UMass Medical School to create an employment website specifically designed by young adults for young adults (www.reachhirema.org).

D. [Massachusetts Commission for the Blind \(MCB\)](#) provides employment-related services to eligible participants of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program (MRC). The MCB Employment Specialist works cooperatively with the VR counselor to prepare individuals for the job search process. Direct services to a job seeker can include: resume development, cover letter and business correspondence creation, mock interviewing, and employment networking strategies. These activities have been recognized as problem areas for any job hunter, but pose unique difficulties for an individual who is

blind. These services are typically provided statewide and are quite flexible based on the consumer's need. Employment services can also assist in job searches and provide information on job fairs or hiring events.

E. [Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(MCDHH\)](#) provides accessible communication, education and advocacy to consumers and private and public entities so that programs, services and opportunities throughout Massachusetts are fully accessible to persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. MCDHH is mandated to provide or ensure provision of direct specialized services including but not limited to case management, interpreter services, technology services including telecommunication and assistive listening devices, independent living services, information services, and such other services as it determines are needed. Families and youth are provided with 688 transitional services case management through the department of case management services.

F. [Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's \(MRC\)](#) Vocational Rehabilitation Program is the primary state agency to assist a broad spectrum of individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. It provides these programs for Boston youth and young adults age 16-24 directly through staff in area offices (downtown, Roxbury and Brookline) and through contracts with multiple providers. It provides a wide array of services, including college or vocational training, job placement assistance, counseling and guidance, supported work, skills training, and job coaches and tutors. The current 18 month limit on services is expanding to 24 months beginning July 1, 2015 under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).¹

Referrals are made through school district's special education office for students with more severe disabilities (688 process) or through direct referrals to the area offices for students with milder or more moderate disabilities. MRC also provides short-term vocation rehabilitation for clients of DDS and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each. MRC serves youth/young adults with all types of disabilities; the two most common are learning disabilities and psychiatric disorders.

Due to federal regulations, there is a 90 day waiting period between the referral and the delivery of services. Thus it is important for schools, families and individuals to plan ahead when seeking services. MRC also provides job placement and support services and can provide training to employers on related issues (e.g., providing accommodations) through its contracted vendors. It has an employer council with representation from area businesses.

2. Community Based Disability Service Providers

A. [The ARC of Massachusetts](#) The mission of The Arc of Massachusetts is to enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The ARC provides

¹ WIOA impacts on the role of the Vocational Rehabilitation, workforce and education systems is discussed below in Appendix 5, "Conditions for Change," pg. 40.

education and systems advocacy to consumers, families, human services organizations, the public, legislators, other public officials, and the executive branch. Its focus is full integration into the community for all activities. The ARC provides individualized transition clinics for families with a transition age youth or young adult. It has played a major role in the planning of DDS' Employment First, to increase integrated employment opportunities.

B. [Asperger/Autism Network \(AANE\)](#) formerly "Asperger's Association of New England" works with individuals, families, and professionals to help people with Asperger syndrome and similar autism spectrum profiles build meaningful, connected lives. AANE provides individualized coaching, career awareness, career exploration, and an employer outreach group to match and support employers and clients who become employees. "**Transition GPS**" (**Goals & Planning & Services**) is an initiative to help families of Teens/Young Adults (ages 14-25) navigate the transition years through a coordinated set of workshops and services especially designed to address family needs during this developmental stage. **AANE Transition GPS** includes three components:

1. A sequence of **Transition Workshops, Webinars, Conferences, and Panel Presentations**. Some events are for parents/guardians. Some are for teens accompanied by their parents, or for young adults.
2. [Transition Consultations for Parents/Guardians](#).
3. [Life Management Assistance Program \(LifeMAP\)](#) offers individualized life coaching for teens/adults.

C. [APSE \(Association for People Supporting EmploymentFirst\)](#) has resources and offers training and webinars supporting the advancement of employment and self-sufficiency for all people with disabilities. They promote employment first principle that employment and careers be the expected and preferred outcomes of all publicly funded services for those with disabilities and advocate to change philosophies, policies, practices and funding to advance employment, career development and economic advancement for people with disabilities and raise awareness within the business community as to the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The [Massachusetts chapter](#) was started in 1991 by a small group of citizens with disabilities, service providers and state agency staff who wanted to make a difference in the employment of individuals with disabilities. Massachusetts was one of the first official state chapters in the country. A year later the organization held its first conference which has continued with the annual Employment Matters Conference held each spring. The organization helped to develop and Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) designation overseen by the Employment Support Professional Certification Council (ESPCC). This is the first national certification program for employment support professionals. The Massachusetts chapter regularly offers the CESP examination.

D. [Autism Speaks](#) was founded in 2005 and has grown into the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. The organization provides [comprehensive directories of](#)

[resources by state](#) by topic, age of consumer and type of service. The [Massachusetts resource guide](#) lists local resources including advocacy, financial and legal resources, biomedical interventions, community and support networks and health services, among others. Tools such as [“My Job Chart”](#) an online chore chart and reward system helps families create expectations about the value and importance of work at an early age in an enjoyable way. In April 2015 Autism speaks launched a new job portal, [The Spectrum Careers](#), to address the challenges facing young adults and adults with autism in the job market. The mission of The Spectrum Careers to connect employers with qualified individuals with autism and other disabilities. The [Boston website](#) features information about autism-sensory friendly entertainment, stories about the challenges and accomplishments and struggles of people with autism and links to other resources.

E. [Best Buddies-Massachusetts](#) is dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Founded in 1989 by Anthony K. Shriver, Best Buddies’ eight formal programs — Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, e-Buddies®, Jobs, Ambassadors, and Promoters — positively impact nearly 900,000 individuals with and without disabilities worldwide. People with IDD secure rewarding jobs, live on their own, become inspirational leaders, and make lifelong friendships. In Boston, Best Buddies has chapters at the Henderson middle and high school and the Haley School. The Dorchester Academy chapter will move to CASH (Community Academy of Science and Health). Best Buddies is an intermediary working with many [businesses](#).

F. [Boston Center for Independent Living \(BCIL\)](#) was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. BCIL accomplishes this by empowering people with disabilities with the practical skills and self-confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. BCIL provides peer mentoring and skills training, as well as a [Transition to Adulthood \(TAP\)](#) program for young people to help them find housing, search for jobs, solve transportation issues, and obtain appropriate equipment. Staff work with them to develop skills such as resume and cover letter writing, budgeting, and checkbook balancing. BCIL provides guidance with the Individual Education Program (IEP) and Individual Transition Plan (ITP) processes, and its peer mentoring helps young people sort through questions such as when to disclose a disability in an employment context. BCIL also offers a [Transition Internship Program \(TIP\)](#). TIP is a summer program that offers real-world work experience to youth with disabilities who are between the ages of 16 and 22 and have no (or very limited) prior work experience.

G. [Community Work Services \(CWS\)](#) assists individuals to enter the workforce, seek advancement and pursue higher education to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency. Through classroom learning and hands-on training, CWS helps 800 people annually to overcome barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, people on public assistance, the homeless, veterans, mature workers, and individuals in poverty. Nearly 90% of participants have some kind of disabling condition. While programs primarily serve adults with disabilities, older youth participate in CWS programs. CWS operates businesses in

commercial cleaning, property maintenance, assembly and packaging, and is expanding in to services and hospitality.

H. Disability Task Force is made up of approximately 20 disability services and advocacy organizations for networking and awareness raising. Transition is one of the focus areas.

I. Easter Seals Massachusetts provides services to ensure that children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play. Services related to the B-SET project are: [Youth Transition Services](#) - Easter Seals works with high school students with disabilities as they prepare to make the transition to adulthood and gives their families and educators the tools they need to assist the student to achieve their vision. [Youth Leadership](#) - The Easter Seals Youth Leadership Program provides opportunities for young people with disabilities, ages 13 to 25, to develop their abilities and expand the possibilities they see for themselves. [Employment and Training Services](#) - Evaluation, skill building and support that help people with disabilities join today's computer-centered workforce.

J. Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. Transition is one of its priorities. It provides a two day parent training called *Planning a Life: Making the Most out of High School*, with transition planning information and resources for and about students in special education ages 14-22. It also has a grant establishing [LINK Center: Connecting to Your Future](#), one of only six national grants awarded under the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services/ US Department of Education (OSERS). This project established a [Parent Training and Information Center on Transition \(PTIC\)](#) to assist individuals with disabilities and their families to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. The LINK Center provides technical assistance and training to help individuals achieve their employment and independent living goals.

About transition: <http://fcsn.org/pti/topics/transition/index.html>,

In collaboration with MRC, the Federation produced a Family Guide to Transition Services in Massachusetts http://fcsn.org/transition_guide/english.pdf

K. Goodwill Industries provides job-training programs and partners with the business community for meaningful work opportunities for individuals with disabilities and other barriers to self-sufficiency. The Youth Initiative provides year-round comprehensive programming that helps youth from underserved communities connect with positive role models, achieve in school, develop leadership skills and bridge successfully to adulthood and self-sufficiency. Goodwill offers three transition programs for youth with disabilities: [Transition to Work](#) is a collaboration between Goodwill and the Boston Public Schools to help young people with disabilities, ages 18-22, transition from high school into internships in the world of work. [Will to Work](#) is a program designed to help young people with disabilities, ages 22 – 25, providing guidance in transition from school to adult life and work. Goodwill collaborates with Spaulding Rehabilitation Network in [Project SEARCH](#), a work based national model for transition for students with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, in their last year of high school with a desire for competitive employment. Up to 12 students attend the program for a full school year at Spaulding

which provides an on-site classroom. The site is staffed by a special education teacher and up to three job coaches. Students rotate through three internships during the course of the year.

L. [Justice Resource Institute \(JRI\)](#) operates programs for: those with severe developmental delays who require significant medical involvement; developmentally delayed individuals living with mental illness and behavioral challenges; mentally ill/behaviorally challenged adolescents; court-involved children and adolescents; people living with HIV/AIDS; gay, lesbian bisexual, and transgendered youth; and children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. JRI also provides home-based counseling and trauma-informed care for the populations its programs serve. JRI operates mental health clinics in several community sites, street youth outreach, court and probation consultative services, comprehensive services for adult developmentally disabled, and residential schools for mentally ill, cognitively limited, developmentally disabled, and/or behaviorally challenging youngsters. Services include [behavioral health and trauma](#), [developing abilities](#), [foster care services](#), [health](#), [residential and educational](#).

M. [MGH Aspire](#) is dedicated to providing children, teens, and young adults with Asperger's syndrome and related Autism Spectrum Disorders with the knowledge and skills necessary to make social connections and develop independence leading to successful and fulfilling lives. Aspire's approach is to teach social skills, life skills and other behavioral strategies within a small-group setting. The agency also provides transition and mentoring programs for college students, workplace and internships for adults, life skills and social skills training.

N. [Multi-cultural Center for Independent Living \(MCIL\)](#) works with people with disabilities of all ages from inner-city Boston neighborhoods and the Greater Boston region, empowering them by providing information that enhances their ability to live independently and to function productively within their households and within their communities. They offer training on job readiness, preparing a resume, and developing interviewing skills, as well as assisting parents to understand and navigate special education programs.

O. [Neuropsychology & Educational Services for Children & Adolescents \(NESCA\)](#) is a pediatric neuropsychology practice that serves clients from preschool through young adulthood. NESCA offers vision driven and person centered transition services that redefine transition as a process that both anticipates high school graduation and extends beyond it. NESCA offers a wide variety of transition assessment, planning, and consultation services designed to support the needs of students, families, schools, and professionals.

P. [More than Words](#) is a nonprofit social enterprise in the form of a bookstore/café that empowers youth who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. Stores are located in Waltham and Boston. Youth participate for one year, then get follow-up support for two additional years. They receive transition planning and case management to help them move on to meaningful jobs and college. They achieve basic personal milestones such as obtaining an ID, opening a bank account, and finding housing. Youth also get exposure to potential jobs and college through regular site visits with community partners including hotels, banks, retail businesses, trade schools and universities. Youth participate in hands-on

workshops, mock interviews, education coaching and regular meetings with Transitions Managers. By tackling personal barriers in their lives and gaining exposure to new opportunities, these young people are able to craft their own action plans with concrete steps for pursuing education and future employment.

Q. [Partners for Youth with Disabilities](#) (PYD) empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential by providing transformative mentoring programs, youth development opportunities, and inclusion expertise. They motivate youth to reach their personal, educational, and career goals, and guide organizations in becoming more inclusive through their National Center for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities. The Young Entrepreneurs Project (YEP) is an inclusive career-readiness program that addresses barriers to employment in meaningful and measurable ways. YEP remains the only school-based career-readiness program in Boston targeting youth with disabilities. Annually, YEP serves over 85 in-school and after-school settings. The program is delivered weekly and addresses barriers to employment via a three-tiered curriculum: a) academic learning on financial literacy, career-readiness, and entrepreneurship; b) real world experiences through guest speakers, job shadow days, field trips, trade shows and starting real businesses; and c) mentors from the business community assist youth in the classroom via guest lectures, job shadow days, and mock interviews.

R. [Triangle Inc.](#) operates a range of programs for individuals with disabilities. While focused in the Malden area, it is providing an increasing amount of services to Boston youth and young adults with disabilities, particularly through its Connections with Community Resources initiative which reaches students through the [IMPACT](#): hands-on personal safety training; the peer leadership Empowering People for Inclusive Communities Service Warriors Program ([EPIC](#)) which prepares young people with disabilities to be actively engaged community leaders through education, leadership development and community service; and [Ablevision](#), Triangle's national award-winning television and media program created and produced entirely by people with disabilities.

S. [Vinfen](#) delivers a broad range of services to people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and behavioral health disabilities, as well as to their families, neighbors, and communities. Programs include: services to transition age youth, residential, respite, day rehabilitation, outpatient, crisis intervention, family support, clubhouse, recovery learning community, vocational training, supported employment, CBFS (Community Based Flexible Supports), and programs for assertive community treatment.

T. [WORK, Inc.](#)'s Employment Services Division provides personalized employment services to individuals who need assistance finding their place in the workforce including assisting individuals with disabilities, youth transitioning from school to work, and others in the margins of the workforce. Career development specialists provide one-on-one skills and interest assessments, comprehensive career counseling and planning, job search assistance, and post placement support.

U. [Work Opportunities Unlimited](#) (WOU) is a community based program with offices throughout New England. They are contracted through various state agencies including Mass Rehab (MRC), Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and Department of

Children and Family Services (DCF). Their mission is to create new opportunities for success in the workplace. They are outcome based and tailor their program to a person's individual needs and goals.

3. Youth development agencies with programs for youth with disabilities

A. Boston Private Industry Council: As a component of the School-to-Career initiative, the PIC partnered with the Liberty Mutual Foundation during summer 2013 to place 27 students with cognitive and/or behavioral disabilities in summer employment at local community-based organizations. As part of the grant, Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) staff trained PIC career specialists on issues related to counseling and transitioning students with cognitive disabilities. Wages and programming costs were funded by the Liberty Mutual Foundation. The PIC is in discussion with the Liberty Mutual Foundation around the submission of another Accessibility and Inclusion grant for programming most likely in summer 2015.

B. Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester's Project B.I.N.D. (Boston Inclusion Network for Disabilities) is an initiative designed to encourage the educational and social enrichment and advancement of children with special needs throughout Dorchester and the surrounding neighborhoods. Together with a network of partners, the project serves 100 families of children with disabilities and provides access to after school programs and activities while nurturing the full inclusion of children of all abilities in such activities. Project B.I.N.D. also provides a support network for families and engages in advocacy work around inclusion. This model of inclusion works by designing supports, accommodations and modifications to be virtually undetectable. Children with special needs participate right alongside their peers at the Club. This offers them what every child wants; the opportunity to be just a kid, without being singled out or segregated in any way.

C. Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston mission is to help young people, especially those most in need, to build strong character and realize their full potential as responsible citizens and leaders. This is accomplished by providing a safe haven filled with hope and opportunity, ongoing relationships with caring adults and life-enhancing programs. BGCB serves approximately 15,000 children and teens ages 6-18 in Clubs and through partnerships and programs. BGCB started an Inclusion Initiative called "I AM IN" which stands for "Inclusion: All Members Included Now". The goal of I AM IN is to support the full inclusion of children and teens with disabilities in the Club by training staff in inclusive best practices, hiring specialized support staff and offering accommodations to help kids to be successful. Club members with disabilities have an opportunity to participate in after school and summer camp programming alongside their nondisabled peers. The South Boston Club also offers Wheelchair Basketball for teens and a Music Therapy program for youth on the Autism Spectrum.

D. Home for Little Wanderers helps youth ages 18-22 with independent living, accessing community resources, and support for vocational training and higher education through its Youth Aging Out of foster care initiative for young people who have typically spent most of their lives in the care of the state and, in their late teens or early 20s, are suddenly on their own with few resources. One of its programs

is the Young Adult Resource Network ([YARN](#)) where life coaches provide wraparound supports to young adults ages 17-22 who are involved with the Department of Children and Families. Assistance is available to obtain stable housing, employment, physical and psychological wellness, and access to educational and community resources, while helping to develop supportive relationships.

E. [Jewish Family and Children's Services](#) provides services and support for people with special needs and their families, including those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, autism, and other disabilities. Services include information and referral, care coordination and coaching, behavior therapy for children, mental health counseling, day and employment services, supported housing, social and recreational groups, and Jewish programming.

F. [Jewish Vocational Services \(JVS\) Transitions to Work](#) is an employer based program that focuses on creating new employment opportunities for young adults with a disability. The program provides classroom instruction and skills training through internships to prepare students for work and assists them in obtaining employment upon completion of the program. Transitions to Work serves individuals with a disability between the ages of 18 to 35 who have completed high school, can travel independently and can work up to 20 hours per week. All trainings take place at the employer site and are run by JVS instructors. Employer partners include Hebrew Senior Life, Brigham and Women's Hospital and CVS Caremark. [Connections](#) offers one to one services to adults with disabilities to reach vocational or educational goals. [Job Search Services](#) include vocational evaluation, resume and interview preparation, career exploration, job search assistance, job development, job placement, assistance requesting accommodations, and job coaching. CVS has partnered with JVS, providing the use of the CVS Regional Learning Center and equipment to JVS staff to "pre-train" eligible participants with significant disabilities in order to help them become better qualified to be hired by CVS for the targeted jobs in their stores.

4. Youth development agencies that may include youth with disabilities

A. [Commonwealth Corporation](#) is responsible for a variety of youth initiatives that focus on employment and education. CommCorp programs do not specifically target funds/programming to youth with disabilities. Nonetheless, staff believes that a significant proportion of the youth served through their programs have cognitive and/or behavioral disabilities. Roughly 15% of participants disclose a disability. Major programs are:

[YouthWorks](#) is a state-funded youth employment program for teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 living in targeted cities across Massachusetts. Participants are temporarily employed for up to 25 hours per week during the summer and/or year round at public, private, and non-profit worksites. 1,753 youth from Boston participated in FY2013. Data on disabilities is collected for the YouthWorks program. There is wide variation in the proportion identified as having a disability, from 4% to 38%, with the Boston area being among the lowest.

The extent to which youth with disabilities are identified depends to a great extent on the nature of local partnerships and collaborations as well as the size of the population. In some regions with smaller populations there are systematic efforts to reach out directly to school systems to identify students with IEPs who then are targeted for recruitment to YouthWorks.

[Safe and Successful Youth Initiative](#) is specifically tailored to address gaps in services for young men aged 14 to 24 that are identified as being a "proven risk" or at the highest risk for being perpetrators of violence. The initiative provides funding for a coordinated intervention strategy in partnership with community-based organizations, education, training, and workforce development programs that includes street outreach, trauma counseling, and case management support. The majority of participants are 17-23. In FY2013, the program served 1,300 youth in 11 cities, with 230 (18%) served in Boston. Formal disability data is not collected and disclosure is not part of the culture for these young men, but staff believes that upwards of 50% have some kind of cognitive or behavioral challenge.

B. [Connection Center](#) is a project of the [Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative](#) (YOC), a consortium of 80 different community-based organizations, the Boston Public Schools, philanthropy, city and state agencies, and postsecondary institutions. Opportunity youth are 16-24 year olds who are not in school or working. The Connection Center, operated by [X-Cel Education](#), is a one-stop resource center for Greater Boston's opportunity youth (OY). Located inside the Ruggles T Station, the Connection Center matches each youth with his or her own Success Coach. In many cases, Success Coaches who have connections to college and career readiness programs, vocational programs, and many other local innovators who promote alternative pathways for youth looking to make a positive change in their lives.

The Connection Center focuses on assisting OY ages 20-24 who have a high school degree or GED. OY may be unemployed, not in school, or simply unhappy with their current situation. The Connection Center's objective is to reconnect them with their goals and remind them of their options through one-on-one support.

C. Crittenton Women’s Union’s Mobility Mentoring® Services staff and programs promote economic independence among low-income women, including young women, and their children by offering highly individualized basic skills training, education, and career guidance to homeless and stably housed low-income women and their families. Specially trained staff uses CWU’s Bridge to Self-Sufficiency® and related tools to guide program participants through goal setting and self-assessment activities that determine clients’ optimal route to economic independence based on their unique circumstances. Program participants then set and attain personalized educational, financial and career-related goals that will lead them out of poverty. In recognition of the toxic impacts on executive function of stress and poverty, Mobility Mentoring is designed to strengthen executive functioning through a long-term partnership between staff and participants by which participants acquire the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to attain and preserve their economic independence. Mobility Mentors coach participants in setting priorities, developing action plans, honoring commitments, connecting to resources, and achieving goals.

D. Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (OWD): The Youth Division funds community organizations that work with Boston youth 14-21 years old connecting them to programs that provide access to educational services, career and employment opportunities. OWD’s major initiatives include:

Alternative Education: Funded by a city Alternative Education Initiative (AEI) grant and federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resources, alternative education provides support to Boston non-profits that offer help to students who have dropped out of high school or who are at risk of dropping out. These programs serve Boston youth ages 16-21. Some programs provide the preparation necessary to achieve a HiSet (GED) while other programs help students achieve a Boston Public Schools diploma. All programs provide counseling, work readiness training, help with support services, and follow-up.

Career Exploration and Summer Jobs: Career exploration is funded by federal workforce investment legislation, and a YouthWorks grant funds a large proportion of summer jobs. Career exploration programs offer an intensive 6-8 week initial program to introduce youth to the various jobs in a given industry. Summer Jobs programs are offered by many non-profits and private businesses, which provide wages, worksite supervision and mentoring. OWD staff and Action for Boston Community Development manage the public sector part of the program; the Boston Private Industry Council’s career specialists secure and manage the majority of private sector positions.

E. One-stop Career Centers: The Department of Career Services is responsible for funding and oversight of career centers statewide. Two one stop career centers, Boston Career Link and Career Solution, operate in Boston. The career centers provide a range of job search and job acquisition services including assistance in how to use labor market data, career assessments, resume writing and interviewing skills as well as career fairs and recruitment events. Services are provided in group and individual formats. Each career center has a state-of-the-art fully staffed career resources library. The career centers also provide access to training programs and information about a variety of benefit programs.

In any given year, approximately 5% to 7% of career center customers disclose that they have a disability. Career center services are universally available to anyone. When more intensive services are required for people with disabilities, these generally are provided through cooperative relationships with MRC and other disability service organizations.

Education

5. Public Schools

Boston Public Schools and Commonwealth Charter Schools

[Boston Public Schools](#) and charter schools in Boston have the statutory responsibility to provide transition assessments, plans and services for all students with disabilities starting at age 14. The public schools must identify those students who will need adult services when they turn 22 and start the “688”² transition process to the appropriate adult agency at least two years before the student will exit high school.

A. Boston Public Schools. The Special Education Department is responsible for implementing transition services as described above. The department has prioritized transition and has developed a strategic plan. It hired a transition coordinator to oversee transition activities and is participating in the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (ICEI) program in collaboration with the Institute for Community Inclusion and area public colleges. The Special Education Department collaborates closely with the Career Vocational and Technical Education (CVTE) department which is responsible for the delivery of vocational technical education and programs through Madison Park High School and other schools. Madison Park High School is widely recognized as an underutilized resource with the potential for providing quality career and vocational services for both high school students and adults in the community. Madison Park has entered into a partnership with neighboring Roxbury Community College called RoxMapp to enable high school students to attend college classes.

The Special Education Department also oversees the STRIVE program, which provides case management and transition support to the 700-800 young adults with severe disabilities, age 18-22, who are not on a diploma track. STRIVE staff have a caseload of approximately 100 students.

BPS also places a small number of transition-age students with more severe disabilities in private “out-of-district” schools (also known as “766 schools”) which are located throughout the state and which also provide transition services for their students.

² See <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/a-guide-to-the-turning-22-law.html> For a comprehensive list and links regarding special education law in Massachusetts see <http://www.mass.gov/courts/case-legal-res/law-lib/laws-by-subj/about/specialed.html>

B. Commonwealth Charter schools in Boston provide transition services to their students, with a focus on teaching about disclosing in college in order to receive accommodations that will enable them to succeed. There are 11 Commonwealth charter schools in Boston that include a high school. The special education directors in the Boston charter schools meet regularly, and transition is one of their areas of discussion. The Boston Charter Compact is a vehicle that brings together administrators from BPS, charter and parochial schools to coordinate and learn from each other. Special education is one of the focus areas of the Compact. The charter schools are starting to see more students with more severe disabilities which will impact the type of transition services they provide.

6. Alternative Education

A. [The Boston Youth Services Network \(BYSN\)](#) is a group of 14 community-based organizations working collaboratively to provide alternative education and employment pathways for 800 youth at risk.

Approximately 30% are estimated to have a disability. Organizations engage youth through a continuum of programs including nontraditional learning environments in alternative schools, career exploration programs to build job and life skills, integrated support services and postsecondary connections.

Members are [Action for Boston Community Development \(William J. Ostiguy High School, University High School\)](#), [Boston Asian: Youth Essential Service](#), [Bridge Over Troubled Waters](#), [City Roots](#), [College Bound Dorchester](#), [EDCO Youth Alternative](#), [El Centro del Cardenal](#), [ESAC](#), [Hull Lifesaving Museum](#), [Hyde Square Task Force](#), [More Than Words](#), [Notre Dame Education Center](#), [Sociedad Latina](#), and [Youth Build Boston](#).

BYSN's external partners include the Boston Private Industry Council, Boston Public Schools, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Mayor's Office of Jobs & Community Services, and PressPass TV.

7. Higher Education

A. College based disability and career offices: Nearly all public and private colleges in the area have a disability office which will provide support and coordinate accommodations for those students who disclose and document their disability. Career offices provide all students with skills training (resume writing and interview techniques) and access to employers, to a greater or lesser degree.

B. [Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative \(ICEI\)](#): BPS students with severe disabilities can participate in the statewide Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) program currently serving Boston students at UMass Boston, Roxbury Community College, Bunker Hill Community College and Mass Bay Community College. Through this partnership between the colleges and BPS, students can take inclusive college classes, participate in the life of the college, and receive employment, career coaching and work based

learning opportunities (e.g., apprenticeships, internships) and jobs. There are currently 25-30 BPS students who participate in ICE each semester at these colleges.

C. College specific disability programs: A few local public or private colleges have programs that are solely for students with disabilities, for example [Threshold at Lesley University](#), [EMBARK](#), [SOAR](#) and [STEP](#) of the [Northshore Education Consortium](#) at Salem State University, and [PAL at Curry College](#).

D. [Success Boston College Completion Initiative](#) was launched in response to a 2008 report commissioned by the Boston Private Industry Council and conducted by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies documenting the low percentage (35%) of Boston students who enrolled in college and earned an Associate's or Bachelor's degree within seven years. Success Boston was launched by Mayor Thomas Menino and implemented through The Boston Foundation in collaboration with the Boston Private Industry Council, Boston Public Schools and University of Massachusetts Boston. By 2010, 38 Massachusetts colleges and universities had joined the initiative, which aims to double the number of Boston Public Schools graduates earning college degrees, beginning with the class of 2011. Success Boston supports academic programming and college advising activities at the high school level, so that students and their families are better positioned to make informed choices. The initiative provides direct transition coaching to a cohort of students from each high school graduating class who are headed to a subset of the most commonly attended post-secondary destinations. Transition coaching pairs non-profit organizations with first generation and low-income students of color who show the poorest results along the entire education pipeline. Transition coaches have informally noted various challenges among some of these students that may be attributable to undiagnosed learning and cognitive disabilities.

Business and Labor

8. Leading businesses

The following participate in disability-specific collaboratives, committees or programs, and are known for their inclusive policies and practices. Some of these businesses have programs specifically designed to engage with, provide work based learning experiences for and hire youth with disabilities or are considering doing so. This list is not meant to be inclusive of all businesses that actively recruit, train and hire people with disabilities. Those in **bold** are members of the task force.³

99 Restaurant
Allied Barton
Bank of Canton
Blu2Green

HomeGoods
Hospitality Training Center (Local 26)
IBM
John Hancock

³ Source: Work Without Limits

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts	King & Bishop
Boston Children’s Hospital	Kohls
Boston College	Lowes
Boston Medical Center	Manpower Staffing
Boston Metropolitan District Building Trades Council	MAPFRE Insurance
Boston University	Mass Mutual
Brigham and Women’s Hospital	MIT
Clarks Companies, N.A.	National Grid
CVS Health	Professional Staffing Group
Disability Images	Prudential Financial
Eastern Bank	PwC (formerly PriceWaterhouseCooper)
EMC Corporation	Roche Bros.
Enterprise Rent A Car	Securitas
EY (formerly Ernst & Young)	Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (Partners HealthCare)
Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston	State Street Corporation
FedEx	Suffolk University
Fidelity Investments	Target
G4S	TD Bank
Harvard Medical School	TJX Companies, Inc.
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care	UMass Medical School
Harvard University	United Parcel Service
Hebrew Senior Life	Walgreens
Home Depot	Wegmans

9. Collaborations/associations/networks

A. [Work Without Limits \(WWL\)](#) is a statewide network of engaged employers and innovative, collaborative partners that aims to increase employment among individuals with disabilities. Its goal is to position Massachusetts as the first state in the nation where the employment rate of people with disabilities is equal to that of the general population. Its website is a resource for individuals/families, providers, and employers with information on the full range of disability employment related guides and information for employers, individuals and families and providers. Topics for individuals and families include career planning, job search, education and training and person centered planning, transportation benefits and work incentives. Businesses can find resources in the B2B Network, information on reasonable accommodations as well as hiring incentive programs and guidance. Work Without Limits organizes an annual conference, “Raising the Bar” for recruitment, skill-building and information sharing among businesses and disability organizations and sponsors job fairs on a regular basis.

B. Greater Boston Employment Collaborative (GBEC)'s mission is to continually expand the number and diversity of employers and employment opportunities available to job candidates with disabilities in the greater Boston area. Operated by Riverside Community Services, GBEC develops hiring opportunities for employers and work opportunities for candidates. Its membership includes area businesses, the Institute for Community Inclusion, DDS, and others.

Intermediaries

Intermediaries work to bridge gaps and broker relationships that serve the stakeholders and consumers across various domains. Workforce intermediaries address workforce needs using a dual customer approach — one which considers the needs of both employees and businesses. Intermediaries also include organizations that proactively fund, train, develop policies or provide other supports for direct service programs. For the purposes of this Resource Map, included below are organizations whose missions position them in the nexus of education, workforce development and disability services.

A. Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at UMass Boston is a University Center of Excellence in Disabilities. As a leader not only in Massachusetts, but also nationally and internationally, ICI strives to create a world where all people with disabilities are welcome and fully included in valued roles wherever they go, whether a school, workplace, volunteer group, home, or any other part of the community. All of ICI's efforts stem from one core value: people with disabilities must have the same rights and controls and maintain lives based on their individual preferences, choices, and dreams.

ICI projects and programs involve local, state, and national agencies, schools, institutes of higher education, national service programs, rehabilitation providers, multicultural organizations, employers, and many others. All of these partnerships work to further goals of independence, productivity and inclusion. Staff on ICI's Education and Transition team has specifically focused on fully including students with disabilities in inclusive school, community, employment, and college settings. Their work consistently includes partnering with students with disabilities to collaborate on advocacy efforts.

Contractual training and technical assistance services around accommodations and other capacity building skills for businesses and other organizations are available. ICI's job placement strategy is to support employers in customizing jobs to address their business needs while creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Regarding other initiatives in this resource map, ICI, in the Commonwealth, is a leader in the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment grant program, along with MAC, which provides higher education opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities and autism. <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>

As an employment service provider, ICI contracts with state agencies, such as DDS, MRC, MCB and local school districts providing employment training and placement services. The service model is not center-based but individualized and community-based. Students meet with case managers at the ICI office, in

the community or in the workplace refining interests and preferences and developing on the job skills in job settings that meet the individual's skills and the employer's needs. Current capacity is 10 young adults at any point in time with the program annually serving on average 40 individual in job development, on-site job training and supports and job maintenance but capacity can be expanded.

ICI also provides training for other service providers around organizational change necessary to participate in the Employment First model and has developed and offers through Elsevier publishing an on-line self-instructional training for job coaches. ICI provides technical assistance to DDS, DOL, MRC and the Mass. Commission for the Blind. ICI has been a partner in the Work without Limits network.

Additional resource: An Employment Planning Guide for Families of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, <http://www.communityinclusion.org/schooldays>

B. SkillWorks was launched in 2003 and is an initiative to improve workforce development in Boston and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SkillWorks brings together philanthropy, government, community organizations and employers to address the twin goals of helping low income individuals attain family supporting jobs and businesses find skilled workers. The partnership accomplishes this through public policy advocacy, workforce partnerships among industry-sector or occupationally based workforce intermediaries and strengthening capacity in workforce training and education programs. Since 2003 the partnership has invested more than \$24 million to support a range of programs and policy initiatives resulting in training, workforce and career path services to over 5,000 participants. In the public policy arena, SkillWorks' efforts led to the creation of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF). Through the end of 2013, the WCTF made over \$23 million available to support sector partnerships across the entire state of Massachusetts.

Capacity Building is the third major component of the SkillWorks initiative. Through technical assistance, workshops, reports, peer-learning networks and other resources, SkillWorks has helped workforce development providers build their capacity to assist workers toward career advancement.

SkillWorks plays an indirect role in support for youth with disabilities. While the funding collaborative has not focused on youth or youth with disabilities, staff are aware that nearly every SkillWorks grantee serves some individuals with disabilities and several grantees target older youth in transition.

For example, grantees have included YouthBuild's Green Construction Program and Year Up. Other grantees include the Hospitality Training Center, Asian American Civic Association's Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE), Northeastern University's Emergency Medical Careers Partnership (EMCP), and the JVS Health Care Training Institute, among others.

SkillWorks and the Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center recently launched an online budget browser that catalogs the state's investments in workforce training for youth and adults. Organized by major categories including disability funding, the tool allows users to see historical and proposed

funding as well as program descriptions for all state workforce line items. [Explore the Workforce Budget.](#)

C. [Boston Private Industry Council \(PIC\)](#): The PIC Serves as Boston’s Workforce Investment Board and the school-to-career intermediary for the Boston Public Schools (BPS). Every year, the PIC connects over 3,000 BPS students with school-year internships and summer jobs through a team of high school-based career specialists. The PIC also employs a team of postsecondary coaches who work with BPS graduates attending Bunker Hill Community College, Roxbury Community College, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, and UMass Boston. Postsecondary coaches help students access college resources, navigate the transition from high school to college, and advance toward a degree and a career.

D. [Health Resources in Action \(HRIA\)](#) Through their youth development focus and training and technical assistance, HRIA reaches nearly 500 youth and young adults each year, many of whom are at risk for poor educational and employment outcomes. The BEST Initiative (Building Exemplary Systems of Training) trains youth work professionals to develop skills and knowledge in the field. Youth workers are professionals who are often the closest adults to these high risk youth, many of whom have disabilities, often hidden, that can prevent them from succeeding in education and employment.

E. [Youth Violence Prevention Funders Learning Collaborative \(YVPFLC\)](#) brings together private and public sector funders, experts, and stakeholders to learn, share, and act in order to align funding to address gaps & barriers that prevent youth violence in South End/Lower Roxbury, Dudley Square, Grove Hall, Bowdoin/Geneva, and Morton & Norfolk Streets. It has an emerging focus on supporting career pathways for young people. When connected to opportunities, strong relationships, and wrap-around supports and services, young people would be prepared to enter a positive career trajectory. Through research and in partnership with content experts, the Collaborative has developed a career pathways framework, a holistic violence prevention approach that includes six key levers:

- 1) Positive Youth Development Approach
- 2) Career Development Components: Meaningful Employment and Career Preparation
- 3) Trauma Informed Practices
- 4) Long-Lasting Relationships
- 5) Family Supports
- 6) Academic Supports for Persistence

The Collaborative is promoting trauma-informed care, including for workplaces, and is providing training for non-profit employers so they can be more welcoming and supportive of employees, some of whom have hidden disabilities and are particularly impacted by the effects of trauma in their lives.

Advocates

Advocacy organizations represent the interests of consumers through a variety of means including filing legislation and working to have laws passed that protect the rights of people with disabilities, developing policies specific to certain settings (such as the workplace) and working directly and/or indirectly to implement them, taking legal action when laws are not being enforced, media campaigns, public speaking, etc. Advocacy can also take the form of including consumer “voice” in the operations of a range of agencies and organizations from having citizen advisory boards as part of the governance of public sector organizations to having employee representatives of specific groups advise the management of a business or agency about policies affecting them.

10. Advocacy organizations

A. Disability Law Center (DLC) is the Protection and Advocacy agency for Massachusetts. DLC is a private, non-profit organization responsible for providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities. DLC receives federal, state and private funding but is not part of the state or federal government. Among its priorities are inclusive employment and special education transition. In 2012, DLC produced a training manual on transition: *Planning for Life After Special Education*, <http://www.dlc-ma.org/manual/index.htm>

B. Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC) is a voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational opportunity, utilizing a multi-strategic approach to advocate for individual children, train and empower parents, and create systemic legislative, administrative and policy change at the state and local level. MAC has had a particular focus on special education and the reform of the public schools in Boston. It has a 10 year history advocating for improvements in transition statewide, including leading (in partnership with ICI, legislative leaders and others) successful efforts to create, sustain and grow the innovative Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) state grant program which funds local partnerships of state colleges and school districts around the state, including in Boston, to offer inclusive college course opportunities and supports to young adults with severe intellectual disabilities, age 18-22. MAC was also instrumental in the enactment of a state law enabling educators to become transition specialists, which will increase the capacity of districts like Boston. MAC began the B-SET project in 2012), and aside from developing this task force, its other two goals are to increase awareness of transition rights among Boston youth, parents and agencies, and to improve transition services in BPS through case and systemic advocacy.

C. Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS) is a statewide self-advocacy organization founded by individuals with cognitive and developmental challenges. Its mission is to empower self-advocates through education to make choices that improve and enrich their lives. It engages in legislative advocacy and has been involved in the development of DDS’s Employment First initiative.

D. [Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change \(MFOC\)](#) is a statewide, grassroots coalition of individuals with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses and their families. Its legislative priorities include improving transition to adult services.

E. [Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition \(MIRA\)](#) is the largest organization in New England promoting the rights and integration of immigrants and refugees. MIRA serves the Commonwealth's one million foreign-born residents with policy analysis and advocacy, institutional organizing, training and leadership development, and strategic communications. The Coalition involves an active membership of over 130 organizations, including community-based groups, social service organizations, ethnic associations, schools, refugee resettlement agencies, health centers, hospitals, religious institutions, unions and law firms, as well as thousands of individual members, contributors, and allies. Among other issues related to special education, MIRA is interested in the issue of correct assessment and treatment of language based learning disabilities in English Language Learners (ELL).

F. [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. [NAMI Massachusetts](#) is the local affiliate providing education programs to families, individuals and educators, supporting grassroots volunteer leaders with advocacy tools, resources and skills, and organizing public awareness events and activities, including Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW), NAMIWalks and other efforts to combat stigma and encourage understanding. The website provides information in the following areas (use these links to connect directly):

- [Children & Families](#)
- [Education, Employment & Training](#)
- [Food, Fuel, Utilities, Transportation and Financial Assistance](#)
- [Guardianship & Special Needs Trusts](#)
- [Housing & Shelter](#)
- [Publications & Information](#)
- [Legal Resources](#)
- [Medications, Health Insurance & Insurance](#)
- [Mental and Medical Health Services](#)
- [Research Studies and Clinical Trials](#)
- [Substance Use and Treatment](#)
- [Teens and the Transition Years](#)
- [Veterans and Active Duty Service Members](#)
- [Wellness](#)

[NAMI-Boston](#) provides locally based information and resources.

In 2015 NAMI Massachusetts launched the [CEO's Against Stigma](#) campaign to change attitudes within Massachusetts workplaces by securing the commitment of business leaders to work with NAMI Mass. to increase knowledge relating to employee mental health. Companies that take part in the campaign utilize the information and resources of NAMI Mass – including NAMI's "In Our Own Voice" program, widely recognized as one of the most effective anti-stigma programs in America. The Boston chapter

G. [Parent/Professional Advocacy League \(PPAL\)](#) is a statewide, grassroots family organization that advocates for improved access to mental health services for children, youth and their families. PPAL's goals are to support families, nurture parent leaders and work for systems change.

H. [Special Education Parent Advisory Council \(SPEDPAC\)](#) of Boston is the citywide parent council established under the special education law. It provides a voice and gives support for parents of children as it works with the Boston Public Schools system to ensure that children get the services and support they need to develop to their full potential. Transition is one of its priority areas.

I. [Urban PRIDE](#) provides direct support to help Boston families special education and transition planning services through trainings and leadership activities for families and transition-aged youth (youth ages 14–22) to help them understand their rights under the special education laws, to navigate the special education process, to resolve disagreements with their child's school, and to prepare for and participate in IFSP, IEP, and Transition Planning meetings. Urban PRIDE is a federally designated Community Parent Resource Center for the city of Boston.

11. State agency internal and public boards

A. [Department of Developmental Services \(DDS\)](#) has a citizen advisory board system comprising a network of twenty-three areas, four facility, and four regional boards coordinated by the Statewide Advisory Council (SAC). Members of the area, facility, and regional Citizen Advisory Boards (CAB) are appointed by the Commissioner. The Statewide Advisory Council is appointed by the Secretary of EOHHS and approved by the Governor. Member composition of the citizen advisory boards (CAB) includes self-advocates, family members, guardians, community leaders, professionals, business people, and other citizens from every corner of the community. Membership is based on a commitment to supporting people with intellectual disabilities.

B. [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) has an advisory structure for each Chapter 74 state approved program. The Program and General Advisory Committees (PAC/GAC) provide advice on planning, operation and evaluation in its program areas and are comprised by representatives of local business and industry related to the program, organized labor, postsecondary institutions, parents/guardians, students, and representatives from registered apprenticeship programs as appropriate. General Advisory Committees (GAC) are comprised by the chairs of the PACs and advise the school committee/board of trustees in the same general areas for programs under their control. Every effort is made to ensure that membership on the Advisory Committees includes females, racial and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities and individuals in occupations nontraditional for their gender who are representative of the particular district or community served by the school.

C. [Department of Mental Health \(DMH\)](#) has significant involvement from youth and young adults with lived experience directly in its operations, governance and policy structures.

Youth Development Committee (YDC): The Youth Development Committee (YDC) was formally established as a sub-committee of the Massachusetts State Mental Health Planning Council in 2002 to focus on transition age programming (defined as those individuals between the ages of 16 and 25) and to create a voice for youth. It continues to serve as an advisory board to the Mental Health Planning Council, and has been key in the development of the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Transition Age Youth (TAY) Initiative.

Statewide Young Adult Council (SYAC): Augments the YDC. Co-chaired by two young adults with lived experience and comprised by about 20 youth who meet monthly. In collaboration with Work Without Limits SYAC established www.reachhirema.org young adult "friendly" website that provides information and guidance on 1) post-secondary education, 2) employment and 3) financial stability. SYAC informs DMH/STAY staff about making sure that concerns of youth are addressed by governance. SYAC is the only group of its type in any state agency that gives direct voice to the concerns of youth.

Web Based Resources

Organizations

A. [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#) serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities. Funded by the [Office of Special Education Programs \(OSEP\)](#) at the U.S. Department of Education, CPIR assists nearly 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) "Parent Centers" throughout the country. These centers work with families that have a child with a disability, helping parents to participate effectively in the education of their children at school and at home. The Massachusetts Parent Training Information Center (PTI) is at the [Federation of Children with Special Needs \(FCSN\)](#). The Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC) serves the City of Boston at [Urban Pride](#). For a summary of what CPRCs and PTIs do see http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/bp3.pdf

B. [Campaign for Disability Employment](#) is a collaborative effort among several disability and business organizations that seeks to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities by encouraging employers and others to recognize the value and talent they bring to the workplace as well as the dividend to be realized by fully including people with disabilities at work. People with disabilities can and do make important contributions to America's businesses every day. By implementing good workplace practices, like maintaining a flexible and inclusive work environment, businesses can capitalize on the talents of qualified people with disabilities, benefiting everyone. The [What You Can Do](#) campaign showcases individuals who are not defined by their disabilities through various media including three [public service announcements](#) ("Who I Am", "Because", and "I Can").

C. [Career Opportunities to Students with Disabilities \(COSD\)](#) serves the community of college students with disabilities. The organization holds conferences each year for employers and students as networking and educational opportunity. The website contains webinars for both businesses and students with disabilities looking for future employment. COSD provides a Career Gateway system for students to search for job postings, with both student and employer accounts available. COSD plans to hold its 2016 annual conference in Massachusetts.

D. [Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations \(ILR\)](#), Employment and Disability Institute is a resource for academic and practical research in the field. It features a variety of publications on policy and practice and manages one of the most [comprehensive sources of disability statistics](#) in the US. The Annual Disability Status Reports provide policy makers, disability advocates, reporters, and the public with a summary of the most recent demographic and economic statistics on the non-institutionalized population with disabilities. They contain information on the population size and disability prevalence for various demographic subpopulations, as well as statistics related to employment, earnings, and household income. Comparisons are made to people without disabilities and across disability types. Disability Status Reports and other statistics are available for each state, DC, and Puerto Rico.

E. [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) is a leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. A project of the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the US Department of Labor JAN works toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee. JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace.

F. [Learning Disabilities Association of America \(LDA\)](#) provides information and resources for parents, educators, adults and professionals. In addition to easily understandable information on specific learning challenges such as auditory processing disorder, dyscalculia, non-verbal learning disabilities, memory, ADHD and executive functioning, the site contains guides and links to many other resources.

G. [National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth \(NCWD/Y\)](#) provides resources for youth, educators, families and businesses on a range of topics related to disability and the workplace. An extensive literature review of research, demonstration projects and effective practices -- including lessons from youth development, quality education, and workforce development programs -- led to the development of its the ["Guideposts for Success"](#) which summarizes the key steps all youth in transition need to be successful and highlights the particular needs of youth with disabilities. NCWD/Y is composed of partners with expertise in education, youth development, disability, employment, workforce development and family issues. It offers a range of technical assistance services to state and local workforce investment boards, youth councils and other workforce development system youth programs. It works to ensure that transition age youth are provided full access to high quality services in integrated settings to gain education, employment and independent living.

H. [National Council on Disabilities \(NCD\)](#) is an independent federal agency charged with advising the President, Congress, and other federal agencies regarding policies, programs, practices, and procedures that affect people with disabilities. It issues a variety of publications and policy briefs on disability related matters as well as an annual progress report that assesses the status of the Nation in achieving

the policies, programs, practices and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities; and empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society. It also convenes stakeholders to acquire timely and relevant input for recommendations and action steps, Identifies and formulates solutions to emerging and long-standing challenges; and provides tools to facilitate effective implementation.

I. [National Disability and Employment Community of Practice \(NDECP\)](#) is an online learning destination for public workforce system staff and partners, jobseekers, community-based organizations, grantees, and the business sector, who provide services and programs to people with disabilities and/or other challenges to employment. It is a “one-stop-shop” venue for workforce practitioners to find or share high quality information about how to better provide integrated, seamless, and accessible services and programs to people with disabilities and/or other challenges to employment

J. [National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center \(NSTTAC\)](#) provides technical assistance and disseminates information to state education agencies, local education authorities, schools, and other stakeholders to implement and scale up evidence-based practices leading to improved academic and functional achievement for students with disabilities, preparing them for college or other postsecondary education and training and the workforce. It also assists to implement policies, procedures, and practices to facilitate and increase participation of students with disabilities in programs and initiatives designed to ensure college- and career-readiness. It provides; provides information on evidence-based and promising practices, as well as capacity building. It is the home of the national [Youth to Work Coalition](#) (YTWK), whose purpose is to provide resources that link employers and schools to create work-based learning experiences (WBLE) for students with disabilities.

K. [National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition \(NASET\)](#) - for all youth, including youth with disabilities: NASET's primary task has been to articulate national standards and quality indicators that serve to guide policy development and professional practice at both state and local levels. They are organized in to the following five content areas:

- Schooling
- Career Preparatory Experiences
- Youth Development & Youth Leadership
- Family Involvement
- Connecting Activities

L. [Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor \(ODEP\)](#) provides funding, research, “hand on” tools. Publications include: Advising Youth with Disabilities on Disclosure: Tips for Service Providers, Office of Disability Employment Policy, <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/advising.htm> ; [Workforce Intermediaries: Strategic Connections for Youth with Disabilities.](#)

M. [ReachHire](#) – Young Adults Building Careers in Massachusetts The ReachHire website was developed by the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Disability, Health and Employment Policy Unit and their Work Without Limits program, in partnership with young adults, their advocates, and supporters. All site content was reviewed, edited, and approved by young adults. It provides resources to advise youth with disabilities about building a career, getting an education, and supporting oneself financially.

N. [US Business Leadership Network \(USBLN\)](#) is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. Over 100 of the country's leading businesses are members of the network with chapters throughout the country. A national Student Advisory Council (SAC) informs, educates, advises and assists the USBLN, its corporate members and affiliates on the ways in which to effectively engage youth with disabilities. An annual conference focuses on disability inclusion in the marketplace, workplace, supply chain and professional development. The [Career Link Mentoring Program](#) is a collaborative project between the USBLN® and [Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute](#). The program provides a 6-month career mentoring opportunity to 70-75 college students and recent graduates with disabilities through linkages to business professionals from USBLN® member companies. Other initiatives include the [The Disability Equality Index \(DEI\)](#), a joint initiative of the [American Association of People with Disabilities \(AAPD\)](#) and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN). Developed by the DEI Advisory Committee, a diverse group of business leaders, policy experts, and disability advocates, the DEI is a national, transparent benchmarking tool that offers businesses an opportunity to receive an objective score on their disability inclusion policies and practices pointing the way to opportunities for improvement.

Selected Reports

[A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities: Blueprint for Governors](#), 2012-2013 Chair's Initiative, National Governors' Association. Publication date:

Summarizes a yearlong initiative by National Governors Association Chair Delaware Governor Jack Markell focused on the role that state government and business can play in improving employment outcomes and creating more employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Key recommendations included: Make disability employment part of the state workforce development strategy, supporting businesses in their efforts to employ people with disabilities, Increase the number of people with disabilities working in state government, Prepare youth with disabilities for careers that use their full potential, providing employers with a pipeline of skilled workers and make the best use of limited resources to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

[Employer Engagement Strategy, Office of Disability Employment Policy, FINAL REPORT](#), Publication date: February 2015

In its efforts to improve employment outcomes for workers with disabilities, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) contracted with Diversity Marketing and Communications to develop an Employer Engagement Strategy (EES) that provides an employer-focused marketing framework for addressing the dearth of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the private sector.

[Fulfilling the Promise: Overcoming Persistent Barriers to Economic Self Sufficiency for People with Disabilities](#), US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), Tom Harkin, Chair. Publication date: September 2014

This report shares findings from an investigation with 400 people with disabilities who have experienced poverty. According to the report, approximately 30 percent of working age Americans with disabilities

participate in the workforce, compared with about 77 percent of individuals without disabilities. This is the lowest participation rate of any group of Americans, even though many individuals with disabilities express a desire to work. The report demonstrates that low workforce participation of individuals with disabilities because of public biases remains one of the greatest obstacles to “economic self-sufficiency” and “full participation in society” for Americans with disabilities. It identified six major issues faced by people with disabilities, including workplace biases such as “employment discrimination, persistently low expectations, inaccessible workplaces, and discriminatory pay.”

[Leveling the Playing Field: Attracting, Engaging, and Advancing People with Disabilities](#), The Conference Board. Supported by Cornell University, ILR School, Employment and Disability Institute and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) Publication date: February 2013

This research report, based on the work of The Conference Board Research Working Group on Improving Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities, takes a comprehensive look at the business case for employing people with disabilities and details the steps companies can take to encourage the hiring and engagement of employees with disabilities. The executive summary focuses on efforts to overcome workplace discrimination against people with disabilities and addresses a number of myths and misconceptions that can make it difficult for organizations to hire and support people with disabilities.

[National Disability Policy: A Progress Report](#), National Council on Disability. Publication date: October 2014

Annual report by the National Council on Disability (NCD) to the President. The 2014 Progress Report focuses on seven key areas: the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), employment access and inclusion, subminimum wage, education outcomes, Medicaid managed care, mental health care, and data trends in disability policy. The report identifies opportunities to promote public policies that contribute to a more inclusive environment.

[Research Brief: Disability Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices and Policies: Who Has Them and What Difference Does it Really Make?](#) Publication date: 2014

The employment rate of individuals with disabilities is less than half the rate of individuals without disabilities. Employer policies and practices could have a very real impact on increasing the number of persons with disabilities in the workforce. This study examined the prevalence of inclusive practices and policies that are believed to increase recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities.

[The 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy](#), Publication date: February 2015

The Federal Partners in Transition (FPT) was formed in 2005 to improve interagency policy and service coordination to support all youth, including youth with disabilities, in successfully transitioning from school to adulthood. FPT brings together political, senior executive, and career staff from federal agencies across multiple systems to collaborate on transition issues. In February 2013, FPT formed a Strategic Planning Committee comprising career and senior executive staff from the Education Department (ED), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Labor (DOL), and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to develop *The 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy (2020 Plan)* to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. The 2020 Plan outlines how FPT will enhance interagency

coordination through the identification of compatible outcome goals and policy priorities, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for youth with disabilities by 2020. This report identifies five outcome goals to operate across agency boundaries in an effort to enhance coordination and improve compatible policies among the multiple federal programs that support transitioning youth with disabilities and their families

[Transitioning Youth with Mental Health Needs to Meaningful Employment and Independent Living](#), National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth Institute for Educational Leadership. Publication Date: April 2008

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) and the researchers/authors of this report carried out its study and writing as part of a series of research activities on successful strategies for assisting youth with mental health needs as they transition to postsecondary education, employment, and independent lives.

[Unfinished Business: Making Employment of People with Disabilities a National Priority](#), US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), Tom Harkin, Chair. Publication date: July 2012

The report outlines four policy areas prioritized by Senator Harkin and the HELP Committee: transition of youth to postsecondary education and competitive, integrated employment; helping disability-owned businesses compete effectively; creating incentives for States to develop and test new models to support people with disabilities; and encouraging saving and asset development.

Selected sources of employment data

The internet provides many resources about employment data and services. We recommend the following websites:

[State Data](#) This website provides data on employment services, employment outcomes and population information about people with disabilities. Users can generate customized charts and tables, download raw data, and read publications that discuss and analyze critical issues in the area of employment of people with disabilities. Data are from a number of national datasets.

[Work Support](#) This website at Virginia Commonwealth University is a rich resource for information about how to support people with disabilities and employers and facilitate employment of adults with disabilities. Resources include references to books, briefing papers, case studies, factsheets, and monographs.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) The Bureau of Labor Statistics website focuses on economic and labor market data. It includes a wealth of information on employment, earnings, projections, and other major economic national indicators for individuals with and without disabilities. The monthly Employment Situation Report containing unemployment and labor force participation data is published here.

[Disability.gov](http://disability.gov) This section of, a federal government website focused on disability-related programs, services, laws and benefits, has resources for people who are looking for a job or interested in becoming self-employed.

[Disability Statistics](http://disabilitystatistics.org/) Hosted by Cornell University, this site provides interactive reports from the American Community Survey, Current Population survey and Census data on employment, annual earnings, poverty SSI, Educational attainment, and other topics as they apply to people with disabilities.
<http://disabilitystatistics.org/>