

Massachusetts Department of Education

Special Education

Chapter 688

Chapter 688 Referral - Why do it?

Filing a Chapter 688 referral creates a documented need for services and supports for adults with severe disabilities. The primary goal of filing a Chapter 688 referral is to plan for needed adult services for students. In those cases where a student is determined to be eligible and services are not provided due to a lack of funding or program availability, agency personnel can advocate to increase funds in the budget planning process for the next fiscal year in order to provide the needed services.

688 Referral Process - one referral per student

In Massachusetts, students with severe disabilities access adult service agencies through the Chapter 688 referral process. Chapter 688 provides a 2 year coordinated planning process for students whose entitlements to special education services will end when they graduate from school or turn 22 years of age. Contact each agency to find out the eligibility processes specific to each agency as well as the services that are available to adults with disabilities in order to determine the appropriate agency that should receive the Chapter 688 referral for each student.

Eligibility - students in need of continued services as adults

Students who receive services in accordance with an IEP and receive SSI/SSDI and/or are on the registry at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) are automatically eligible for Chapter 688. Other students who may be eligible are those students with severe disabilities who are in need of continued services and are unable to work 20 or more hours per week in competitive, non-sheltered, non-supported employment at the time they are ready to leave school. Also, students who receive services from the Department of Youth Services (DYS) or the Department of Social Services (DSS) and are on an IEP or a 504 Plan may be eligible.

Refer 2 Years before Student Graduates or Turns 22 - filing late jeopardizes service availability

Only school systems can refer students that they believe may be eligible for adult services through Chapter 688. A referral must be made at least 2 years before the student is expected to graduate from school or turns 22 years of age. This 2 year planning period allows enough time to determine eligibility for adult services and for an agency(ies) to include the anticipated cost of services for the student in the budget request which is submitted to the Massachusetts Legislature each year.

Chapter 688 referrals and supporting documentation are sent directly to the appropriate lead agency and a copy of the 688 referral form is sent to the Bureau of Transitional Planning (BTP). Referrals can be made to the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) or the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

Individual Transition Plan - a planning document outlining needed adult services

Special education services provided while a student is in school are entitlements mandated by federal and state law. Chapter 688 is not a continuation of special education services and is not an entitlement to services. If a student meets the Chapter 688 eligibility requirements, an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) must be written for each student. The ITP is developed in conjunction with school personnel, parents, students and the appropriate agencies. The delivery of services identified on the ITP is linked to program availability that is dependent on funds allocated in the annual state budget.

Send Chapter 688 Referral Form and Documentation to the Appropriate Agency

Send a Copy of the Chapter 688 Referral Form to BTP

DMR	DMH	MRC	MCB	MCDHH	BTP
Area Office	Area Office	Area Office	Regional Office	Central Office	Main Office
<--- Original 688 referral and documentation --->					Copy of 688 referral only
	Adult services not available until the student is 19 years of age				

Appeals: Appeals can be made to the Bureau of Transition Planning (BTP) relative to decisions about eligibility and the ITP. For more information call BTP at Phone: 617-573-1600 TDD: 617-573-1869 Fax: 617-573-1891