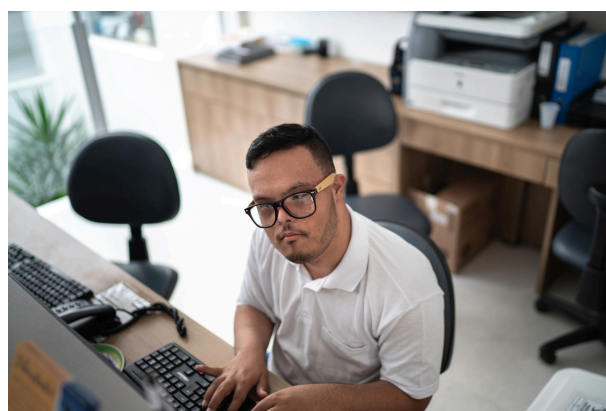




FROM SCHOOL TO WORK: EXPLORING EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR TRANSITION-AGED YOUTH

RESOURCE GUIDE



About NTCN

The Northeast Transition Collaborative Network (NTCN) was created in response to gaps in communication and collaboration between school districts, agencies/providers, young adults, parents/caregivers, and community groups. NTCN hosts monthly virtual sessions about adult services and opportunities in the community as well as quarterly professional development opportunities for educators on topics related to person-centered transition, and workshops for families/caretakers around the person-centered planning process.

About This Guide

This guide was created by the Community Resource Center at Northeast Arc. We recognize that not every program on this topic may have been highlighted here. Services and programs are constantly changing. This is meant as an overview of services available to people in Northeastern Massachusetts. We may update these resource guides periodically; if you know of a resource that can be highlighted here, please reach out to us at CommunityResourceCenter@ne-arc.org.

Inside you'll find:

About MassAbility and DDS.....	2
MassAbility Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).....	3
Pre-ETS Information.....	4
Career/Vocational Readiness and Training Programs.....	5
Tools to Prepare for Employment.....	7
Job Seeker Resources.....	8
Employment Accommodation Rights Information.....	9
Job Boards for People with Disabilities.....	10



About MassAbility and DDS

In Massachusetts, MassAbility focuses on helping people with disabilities achieve independence and employment, while the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in participating in their communities.

MassAbility

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massability>

Focus:

- MassAbility helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. MassAbility is responsible for Career Services, Community Living and eligibility determination for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefits programs.

Services:

- **Home and Community Life Services** such as Independent Living Centers (ILCs), Home Care, Supported Living, Assistive Technology (AT), Brain Injury Services, Home Modification Loans
- **Career Services** such as counseling and guidance, interest and aptitude testing, diagnostic evaluations, college and vocational training, job placement assistance, assistive technology, school to work, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for youth, employer consultation, communication access services (including ASL interpreters and multiple language translation)
- **Disability Benefits and Rights Services** such as Disability Determination Services (DDS), benefits counseling, protective services, service disputes

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departement-of-developmental-services>

Focus:

- DDS provides supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate fully in their communities.

Services:

- Services for **children** include family support and a variety of programs to address specialized support needs that supplement educational services.
- Services for **adults** include an array of employment and day program supports to enable individuals to pursue a career or be engaged in other meaningful activities in the community; family supports and a variety of flexible services such as respite, in-home skills training, and companion services for those individuals who live at home with their families, community living supports for more independent living situations, and other residential supports, such as shared living and group homes.



MassAbility Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

MassAbility's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) offer students with disabilities aged 14-21 a chance to explore the working world. Working with partners statewide, the program assists in career decision-making and future planning, catering to a broad spectrum of interests and goals, from first summer jobs to post-school career paths. Pre-ETS services are available to students in traditional high schools, vocational schools, college courses, or training programs up until their 22nd birthday.

Pre-ETS providers focus on five core services to offer students during the program.

- Job exploration and counseling
- Workplace readiness training
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on post-secondary education or training
- Self-advocacy and peer mentoring

Every school in the Commonwealth is assigned a Pre-ETS provider and a MassAbility counselor as a resource. If you would like to receive more information about finding the provider for your student, contact your school's guidance office or local MassAbility Office. For more information on services and providers, visit <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massability>. Pre-ETS services are available at no cost to students and families.

MassAbility Lawrence Career Services Office

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/massability-lawrence>

280 Merrimack Street, 3rd Floor, Lawrence, MA 01843

Phone: 978-685-1731

Amesbury, Andover, Boxford, Bradford, Byfield, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Lawrence, Merrimac, Methuen, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury

MassAbility Lowell Career Services Office

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/massability-lowell>

55 Technology Drive, 2nd floor, Lowell, MA 01851

Phone: 978-458-4544

Acton, Bedford, Billerica, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Dracut, Dunstable, Lexington, Littleton, Lowell, North Reading, Reading, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford, Wilmington, Woburn

MassAbility Salem Career Services Office

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/massability-salem>

45 Congress Street, Suite 4120, Salem, MA 01970

Phone: 978-745-8085

Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynn, Lynnfield, Magnolia, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marblehead, Middleton, Nahant, Peabody, Rockport, Salem, Saugus, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wenham.

MassAbility Somerville/Malden Career Services Office

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/massability-malden>

245 Commercial Street, Malden, MA 02148

Phone: (617) 776-2662

Arlington, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, Wakefield, Winchester.



Pre-ETS Information

Pre-Employment Transition Services Information from the National Technical Assistance Center for Transition

<https://transitionta.org/topics/pre-ets/>

Information guide on terminology and laws related to Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2020-1 Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/specialeducation/policy/dese/advisories/2020-1ta.html>

The most recent advisory from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with MassAbility to define and describe federal mandates, students that are appropriate, a description of the services, and how to apply.

NOTE: The advisory refers to Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), this is the former name of MassAbility.



Career/Vocational Readiness and Training Programs

Best Buddies Jobs Program - Boston

<https://www.bestbuddies.org/mari/jobs/>

Best Buddies Jobs Program is open to individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities who are exiting the school system or are no longer a part of the school system. Ideal candidates are those who are seeking support to help identify and maintain jobs in their local community. The program supports individuals before they are hired for a job by helping them to find a job, completing job applications, and interview preparation. Once individuals are hired for a job, the Best Buddies Jobs Program supports individuals with job orientation and training, providing travel training, and assisting with development and achievement of goals.

Camp Allen - CamPower Program, Bedford, NH

<https://www.campallennh.org/camppower>

CamPower is a facilitated work training program during the summer at Camp Allen. The Cam Power program is designed for young adults ages 17-25 who have developmental disabilities. Participants receive hands-on experience in a natural employment setting, working side-by-side with mentors who provide on the job training. This program is designed to create future employment opportunities for individuals with developmental challenges by providing experience and references.

EMBARC Program - North Shore Education Consortium/Salem State University

<https://www.nsedu.org/schools/transition-programs/embarc/>

EMBARC serves post-secondary young adults age 18 to 22 with learning delays and/or intellectual disabilities who have a desire to continue their education beyond high school. The goals of EMBARK are to enable young adults to be independent in living and traveling in the community, while assisting them in career development and internships or employment in local businesses and organizations.

Major Choice - Virtual

<https://www.majorchoice.com>

Major Choice is a career exploration and mentorship program designed to help high school students with IEPs, or 504 plans (or diagnosed disabilities) discover their passions, explore potential career paths, and develop essential skills for future success.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities - Career Readiness Program

<https://www.pyd.org/programs/career-readiness/>

Partners for Youth with Disabilities Career Readiness Program is an inclusive job-readiness program that addresses barriers to employment via a three-tiered curriculum involving academic learning, real-world experiences, and mentoring for youth and young adults with disabilities (ages 14-22). Applicants must attend high school or post-secondary programming.

Peer Projects - Beverly, MA

<https://www.peerprojectstherapyfromtheheart.com/services-for-young-adults>

The speech and language practice offers opportunities for clients to develop employment skills and opportunities for clients to work in the office starting at age 15 in the Rehab Aide Program. The practice offers a Friday Morning Pre-Vocational program that supports youth/young adults in supported work engagement to develop skills and engage in social experiences.



Career/Vocational Readiness and Training Programs

Root - Salem, MA

<http://www.rootns.org/>

Root offers a 14-week culinary training program that combines hands-on food service training with workforce readiness skills. Trainees work with a professional chef every day, work on communication skills, learn about the restaurant industry, receive one-on-one job coaching, complete an externship in a local restaurant/food business, work at Root events to gain real-world experience, and learn about personal finance skills.

Your Next Star Employment Academies with the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress

<https://www.yournextstar.com/>

Your Next Star Academy provides experiential training for aspiring employees and entrepreneurs with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Academy helps connect area employers to an underutilized and qualified labor pool that can successfully meet their needs. Your Next Star has offered three academies: Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Career Exploration.



Tools to Prepare for Employment

Assistive Technology & Employment Toolkit

https://aoddisabilityemploymentcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DETAC-2021-GEN-2_Final_508.pdf

The purpose of this AT Toolkit is to provide the employment disability network and others who serve people with disabilities a range of tools to improve awareness about Assistive Technology tools available and how to access them. The Toolkit consists of three sections: Understanding Your Organization's AT Needs, Capacity, and Resources; Understanding AT; and Developing an Effective Collaboration Plan.

Employment First Massachusetts – Quality Employment Practices Resources

<https://www.employmentfirstma.org/pages/quality-employment-practices>

This page offers tools and guidelines that employment professionals and families can use to navigate the process of preparing for fulfilling work.

Environmental Demands Rating Worksheet

<https://arkansastransition.com/images/EnvironmentalDemandsRatingWorksheetFillable.pdf>

The checklist assists youth in rating various environmental demands to help identify tolerance levels and preferences that may impact their preference of work environment and demands.

Massachusetts Developmental Disability Council Employment Training

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mddc-training-employment>

The free course consists of 10 classes taught by a self-advocate peer trainer to help participants learn skills that will assist them in pursuing their individual goals towards competitive/integrated employment and independence.

The calendar of offerings can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/self-advocacy-training/events>

Raising Expectations for Better Futures

<https://employmentfirstma.org/raisingexpectations/>

This curriculum was developed in 2020 by the Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment as a resource help families of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities develop and support a vision of competitive integrated employment for their loved one.

Work-Based Learning for Students with High Support Needs: Themes, Strategies, and Policy Recommendations

https://employmentfirstma.org/files/MPTE_Work-Based_Learning_Brief.pdf

A comprehensive brief discussing a variety of issues and strategies for supporting students in work experiences as part of transition from school to adult life, including a series of practice and policy recommendations.



Job Seeker Resources

Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI): Employment Services

<https://employmentservices.communityinclusion.org/>

Using a person-centered approach, ICI Employment Services provides support to job seekers throughout the discovery, career exploration, and job development processes as they look to find meaningful jobs that match well with their vocational goals, skills, and interests.

Social Security Administration: Ticket to Work Program

<https://www.ssa.gov/work/>

Social Security's Ticket to Work Program is a free, voluntary option that supports career development for people ages 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work. The goal of the program is to help people with disabilities move toward financial independence while connecting them with the services and support they need to succeed in the workforce.

Work Without Limits Resources for Job Seekers

<https://www.workwithoutlimits.org/resources/job-seekers/>

Informational guidance on employment topics including: Disclosing a Disability to an Employer, Employment Services, Resume Support, Internships and Programs, and Job Boards.

Independent Living Centers of Massachusetts

<https://masilc.org/findacenter/>

There are 10 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Massachusetts. CILs are unique in that a majority of board and staff members are individuals with disabilities. CILs are a one-stop resource for people with disabilities, providing a variety of programs and services. CILs provide the following services to individuals: Advocacy, Information and Referral, Peer Support, Skills Training, Nursing home and institution transition to the community, and youth transition. Workshops may be offered at the local CIL to support transition to adulthood, employment, and healthy living.

Below are a list of centers supporting the Northeast Region, only towns in the Northeast Region of Massachusetts are listed, others may be served by the center.

Boston Center for Independent Living-Boston, MA

<https://bostoncil.org/>

Acton, Arlington, Bedford, Burlington, Carlisle, Concord, Everett, Lexington, Lincoln, Malden, Medford, Winchester, Woburn

Disability Resource Center-Salem, MA

<https://www.disabilityrc.org/>

Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynn, Lynnfield, Manchester by the Sea, Marblehead, Melrose, Middleton, Nahant, North Reading, Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Rowley, Salem, Saugus, Stoneham, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wakefield, Wenham

MetroWest Center for Independent Living-Framingham, MA

<https://www.mwcil.org/>

Maynard, Stow

Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP)-Lawrence, MA

<https://www.nilp.org/>

Amesbury, Andover, Billerica, Boxborough, Boxford, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Lawrence, Littleton, Lowell, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Salisbury, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, West Newbury, Westford, Wilmington



Employment Accommodation Rights Information

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN)

<https://askearn.org/>

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN) offers information on resources to help employers recruit, hire, retain, and advance employees with disabilities. The information includes statistics, guidance, webinars, and training recordings to support employers.

Employment First Massachusetts – Quality Employment Practices Resources

<https://www.employmentfirstma.org/pages/quality-employment-practices>

This page offers tools and guidelines that employment professionals and families can use to navigate the process of preparing for fulfilling work.

Office of Disability Employment Policy

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities. They offer information and resources for individuals, employers, as well as information on topics related to employment.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

<https://www.askjan.org/>

JAN is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations.

Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) - Disability Rights in Employment

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/disability-rights-in-employment>

MOD can help employees and employers learn more about disability rights in the workplace, how to navigate reasonable accommodation processes, and understand recourse options. MOD is not an enforcement agency.



Job Boards for People with Disabilities

disABLED Person, Inc.

<https://www.disabledperson.com/>

disABLEDperson, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization whose mission is to reduce the high unemployment rate of individuals and veterans with disabilities. Job postings on the site are direct from employer.

Inclusively

<https://www.inclusively.com/job-seekers/>

The Inclusively platform empowers job seekers to personalize their job search by selecting the Success Enablers (e.g. accommodations, modifications, and opportunities for workplace personalization) that an individual job seeker needs to be successful in both the interview process and on the job. The platform allows users to filter on inclusive employers who are transparent about the accommodations they provide in the workplace.

Our Ability Jobs

<https://ourability.jobs/jobs/>

Our Ability Jobs is a publicly accessible, searchable job board that connects job seekers with disabilities and employers seeking to hire diverse talent. This AI-powered platform matches the skills and interests of individuals with disabilities to relevant job opportunities on Our Ability Jobs. The platform allows for personalized matches for both the candidate and employer.

Work Without Limits also collaborates with employers to increase the employment of people with disabilities and offers benefits counseling for people in Middlesex County.