

OCTOBER 2025



**NORTHEAST
TRANSITION
COLLABORATIVE
NETWORK**

ACCESSING THE COMMUNITY

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

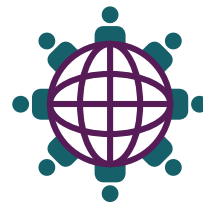
This guide was created by the Community Resource Center at Northeast Arc. We recognize that not every program on this topic may have been highlighted here. Services and programs are constantly changing. This is meant as an overview of services available to people in Northeastern Massachusetts. We may 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.

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Education/Post-Secondary



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Note:

Our Resource Guide from the April 2025 NTCN virtual program about College & Post-Secondary Education contains many resources including some of the ones below as well as local colleges with supportive programs, information on college navigation services, and scholarships for people with disabilities.

You can find the full NTCN College Resource Guide here:
<https://ecommunityconnections.org/resource/college-post-secondary-education-resource-guide/>

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) Navigating College Handbook

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/books/navigating-college/>

Resource written by autistic adults for autistic college students exploring the various aspects of the higher education experience.

OUR PRESENTER

Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)

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

The Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston supports the rights of children and adults with disabilities to participate and be included in all aspects of life. The practitioners, researchers, and teachers form partnerships with individuals, families, and service agencies to advocate for personal choice and self-determination. Their work encompasses research, program evaluation, training, consultation, education, policy analysis, and service delivery across four main areas of emphasis: Employment, Education, Community Life, and Health Care.

Easterseals College Navigator

<https://www.easterseals.com/ma/programs-and-services/college-navigator/>

Provides individualized services to college students with disabilities based on their goals, strengths, and needs. College Navigators assist students in identifying barriers, advocating for the student's needs, and accessing college services and resources to successfully reach graduation. Services are delivered in person, virtually, or blended to meet the student's needs.

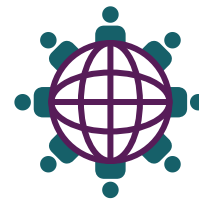
Focus Collegiate

Boston, MA

<https://www.focuscollegiate.com>

Supports college students with unique learning profiles in the areas of academic independence, executive functioning, life balance, motivation & decision-making and social integration while they are on campus or virtually.

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Education/Post-Secondary

OUR PRESENTER

Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education (MAIPSE)

<https://www.mass.edu/maipse/>

MAIPSE provides opportunities for people who are 18 with an intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disability with high support needs to attend public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. MAIPSE is an opportunity for students who have exited school without a diploma or meet the criteria to include college in their transition services, to participate in college as non-matriculated students.

Determining Student Eligibility for MA Inclusive Postsecondary Education

https://massinclusiveeducation.org/files/Resources/fs_%20maipse_student_eligibility_r.pdf

This guide explains the criteria for participating in Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education (MAIPSE), including age, disability, and diploma status. It also outlines student readiness factors such as personal goals, interest in college, and transportation planning to support informed eligibility decisions.

MAIPSE Partnerships

<https://www.mass.edu/maipse/partnerships/programs.asp>

A map and list of college and partnerships with the MAIPSE program. The list includes the contact information for the program coordinator for each college partnership.

MAIPSE Information for School Personnel

<https://www.mass.edu/maipse/schools/forschools.asp>

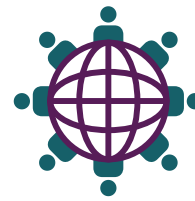
MAIPSE Information for Students & Families

<https://www.mass.edu/maipse/stufam/forstufam.asp>

Northeast Arc Guided Personal Supports

<https://ne-arc.org/services/family-services-and-recreation/guided-personal-supports/>

College Navigation under Northeast Arc's Guided Personal Supports (GPS) program provides 1:1 coaching support for individuals entering college who are supported through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) with Autism.



Employment

Note:

Our Resource Guide from the March 2025 NTCN virtual program about Employment contains many resources including the local programs listed below and others, job boards specific to people with disabilities, information on employment accommodation rights, and a list of local disability owned/operated businesses!

You can find the full NTCN Employment Resource Guide here:
<https://ecommunityconnections.org/resource/employment-resource-guided-ntcn/>

Asperger Works

Haverhill, MA

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

Asperger Works offers a number of employment support services including: career exploration, résumé development, interview skills, and job coaching. Visit the Asperger Works job site for information on services offered.

Association for Autism & Neurodivergence (AANE) LifeMAP/WorkMAP program

<https://www.aane.org/services-programs/one-to-one-services/coaching-for-adults-teens/>

WorkMAP is a targeted LifeMAP program designed to help Autistic and similarly Neurodivergent adults and older teens reach their employment goals. WorkMAP can help individuals at any stage of their employment journey.

Clients are matched with coaches who have expertise in autism and career development. Coaches work with clients to identify strengths, and support needs to develop and pursue realistic, measurable goals.

Cooking Up a Career Program

Marlborough, MA

<https://www.employmentoptions.org/cooking-up-a-career>

The Cooking Up a Career Program is open to individuals 18 to 36 and have barriers with employment or have a disability. Participants undertake an educational curriculum paired with hands on kitchen skills, food safety, food prep, and food presentation.

EMBARC Program - North Shore Education Consortium/Salem State University

Salem, MA

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

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.



Employment

Employment First Massachusetts

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

At Employment First MA, you will find resources about community work, including practical guidelines, an overview of employment history, and stories of people with disabilities who are thriving in community-based careers. Employment First has a variety of trainings, tools, videos, webinars, briefs, and other resources for employment specialists, job coaches, advocates, self-advocates, and others who work to promote inclusive employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Major Choice

<https://www.majorchoice.com>

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

Opportunity Works

Haverhill & Newburyport

<https://www.opportunityworks.org/programs-services/>

Opportunity Works provides employment supports to individuals who express a desire to explore and to obtain jobs within their community. The agency provides vocational assessment, career exploration, on the job training, job placement, follow-up, and supervision. The agency assists individuals in securing full or part-time competitive employment within their community. The overall goal is to develop, maintain, and/or improve job skills, including career planning and advancement.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities Career Readiness Program

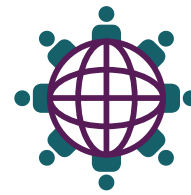
<https://www.pyd.org/programs/career-readiness/>

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.

Raising Expectations Curriculum

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

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



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Employment

Work Opportunities Unlimited

<https://www.workopportunities.net/>

Work Opportunities Unlimited provides job placement, job training, and community participation-related services to students and adults who may experience a disability and others who could benefit from support to reach their employment and/or community access goals.

Your Next Star Employment Academies - Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress

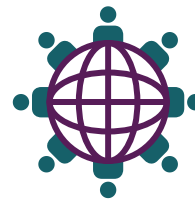
Burlington, MA

<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.

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Leadership & Advocacy



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Note:

Our Resource Guide from the July 2025 NTCN virtual program about Advocacy contains many resources including some of the ones below as well as information about city Disabilities Commissions, legislative advocacy info, and books and films about disability advocacy.

You can find the full NTCN Advocacy Resource Guide here:
<https://ecommunityconnections.org/resource/ntcn-advocacy-resources/>

Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/>

The Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN) believes that the goal of autism advocacy should be a world in which autistic people enjoy equal access, rights, and opportunities. The group empowers autistic individuals worldwide to take a lead role in advocating for their rights. The website is the home of an action center, resources and strategies, and opportunities for advocacy!

Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC) Young Adult Leaders Fellowship Program

<https://www.massadvocates.org/youthfellowship>

MAC's Young Adult Leaders Fellowship Program provides an opportunity for young adults ages 18-26 with an intellectual disability or/and autism to learn the professional skills needed to advocate on behalf of other youth with disabilities through a one-year program. Throughout the program, fellows work with and learn from MAC staff as they participate in MAC's three core advocacy and training activities, including advocacy for individual students, legislative and policy advocacy, and training for parents and professionals.

Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS)

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

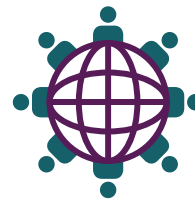
MASS runs various groups, committees, and task forces that focus on specific issues that involve self-advocates from across the state. The group advocates across all areas including legislation, special projects, and self-advocacy. MASS provides opportunities for individuals to get involved in advocacy and leadership. The Self-Advocacy Leadership Series (SALS) is a peer-led, eight-class series that focuses on the fundamentals of leadership.

National Disability Rights Network

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

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) provides training and technical assistance, and advocates for laws protecting the civil and human rights of all people with disabilities. NDRN has information on disability issues, and how to get involved in advocacy. The federally mandated Massachusetts Protection and Advocacy agency is the Disability Law Center.

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Leadership & Advocacy

REVUP MA

<https://www.dlc-ma.org/rev-up-voting-advocacy>

Register, Educate, Vote is the meaning behind REVUP! REVUP MA is a partnership of organizations that advocates for people with disabilities to register to vote, to get educated on the candidates and issues, and to vote. The REVUP initiative is a reminder that residents over 18 who have legal guardians are still able to register to vote under most circumstances and how their vote is a form of self, group/community, and legislative advocacy!

Self-Advocacy Online

<https://selfadvocacy.ici.umn.edu/stories>

Self-Advocacy Online shares valuable information for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in clear, easy to understand language. It uses videos and graphics to make content accessible. You can watch stories from other self-advocates, learn how to speak up for yourself, plan for your future, understand Employment First, and more. The site also shares research findings in easy-to-follow formats and blog posts from self-advocates.

Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC)

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/>

The mission of the national Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) is to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self-advocacy organizations to grow leadership opportunities for all their members. The SARTAC website has resources for individual self-advocates, self-advocacy groups, and opportunities for leadership. They also offer zoom meetings to support self-advocates.

Youth Leadership Forum with Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD)

Boston, MA

<https://pyd.org/programs/youth-leadership-forum/>

The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a FREE multi-day conference, held annually in Massachusetts and other states throughout the country. The forum is open for young adults with disabilities, ages 18-30 with any kind of disability. Each YLF participant will explore themes of leadership and leave better prepared for future employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.

Youth Leadership Network - Easterseals

<https://massachusetts.easterseals.com/get-support/areas-of-support/youth-leadership-mentoring/youth-leadership-network>

The Youth Leadership Network (YLN) promotes self-advocacy and self-awareness for teens and young adults with disabilities ages 14 to 26. The Youth Leadership Network is a free statewide opportunity for disabled youth and young adults to strengthen leadership and advocacy skills, as well as learn about topics such as disability history.



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Travel Training and Related Assistive Technology

Be My Eyes

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

Be My Eyes provides virtual assistance for people who have visual impairments. Through the app, a user points the camera at what they need assistance reading, the device will read it aloud. This can be helpful for users reading signs on public transportation. The app has been a helpful tool for users that may have cognitive difficulties or barriers with reading.

BlindSquare

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

BlindSquare is a smartphone app that makes use of the features available in smartphones to aid the blind and visually impaired with orientation and mobility. The app determines the user's location and looks up information about the environment and speaks directives to the user in a clear, synthetic voice.

Easterseals Project Action and Certified Travel Training Instructor (CTTI) Credential

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

Easterseals Project Action, a division of Easterseals, Inc., provides customized training solutions and technical expertise on the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible transportation for transportation providers, human service agencies, states, regional agencies, tribal nations, and communities with the goal of working together to build accessible communities for all! They also offer a comprehensive certification program for travel training instructors. The program provides the Certified Travel Training Instructor (CTTI) credential. All credits are provided remotely through Easterseals' online learning portal. The program requires 60 credit hours of instruction plus a comprehensive online test and hands-on practicum.

OUR PRESENTER

MBTA Mobility Center

<https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/travel-instruction-services-and-tools>

The MBTA Mobility Center offers free travel instruction services to help older adults and people with disabilities travel independently on the bus, train, and Commuter Rail. They offer transit access 101, small group training, and personalized travel training.

Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIrTjBI7-AC3YA8RWazebuw/playlists>

Videos about how to ride the MVRTA in multiple languages.

Promoting Independence through Travel Training: A Guide to Using Shared Ride Alternatives with Students

by Rachel Connary and Maria Paiewonsky

https://massinclusiveeducation.org/files/Resources/gg_17_promoting_independence_through_travel_training_r.pdf

An article from the Institute for Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts Boston about strategies to introduce Ride Share Alternatives to students.



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Travel Training and Related Assistive Technology

RightHear

<https://www.right-hear.com/>

RightHear is a virtual accessibility assistant that helps users to easily orient themselves in environments (indoors and outdoors).

Transit App

<https://transitapp.com/>

A smartphone app that provides information on available transit in the area and times to access. The app is similar to Google Maps with a simpler view.

Transportation Education Curriculum from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

<https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-education-curriculum/>

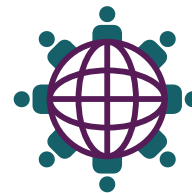
The goal of this transportation education curriculum is to provide educators, transit professionals, families, and others with strategies for integrating transportation content, including travel instruction, into the educational experience for students, including students with disabilities.

Transportation and Mobility Solutions for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in College

by Maria Paiewonsky.

https://massinclusiveeducation.org/files/Resources/gg_16_breaking_barriers_transportation_mobility_solutions_r.pdf

Transportation can be a major barrier for students with intellectual disabilities, often limiting them to special services provided by schools or agencies. Expanding their independence through alternative options like fixed-route buses, trains, paratransit services, and rideshares (e.g., Uber and Lyft) can support students in accessing additional opportunities. The article written by the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston provides information on some transportation alternatives and strategies. While the article was written to address accessing college campuses and programs, strategies and offerings may be generalized.



Social Connections

Note:

Our Resource Guide from the August 2025 NTCN virtual program about Recreation contains many resources including arts and culinary programs, sports and fitness opportunities, local recreation departments with inclusive or therapeutic programs, and more!

You can find the full NTCN Recreation Resource Guide here:
<https://ecomunityconnections.org/resource/4583-2/>

The Friends Club at Hamilton-Wenham Community House

Hamilton, MA

<https://communityhouse.org/friendsclub/>

For nearly 40 years, The Community House has been serving the interests of individuals with disabilities via free social events. The Friends Club allows members an opportunity to socialize, connect with one another, and build community. In a typical year, Club members might be invited to enjoy a spaghetti dinner, a western dance, an art workshop, and a karaoke night—just to name a few options!

Gloucester Special Needs Dances with Leo Francis

Gloucester, MA

<https://gloucesterfraternityclub.com/special-needs/dance-schedule/>

The Gloucester Fraternity Club has been hosting Special Needs Dances for over 40 years. The dances provide people with intellectual, mental, or physical disabilities an enjoyable evening of fun as well as the ability to make new friends. The dances are held once a month from September through June and every month is a different theme.

Pathways to Friendship - Arc of Massachusetts

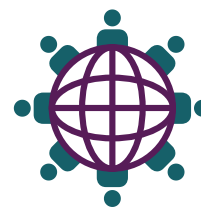
<https://thearcofmass.org/friendship/>

Pathways to Friendship, is a collaborative initiative on social inclusion between the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and The Arc of Massachusetts. This initiative offers virtual regional inclusion network calls to learn about inclusion opportunities in your area, events like movie screenings and friendship matchmaking forums, and they offer free training toolkits and in person trainings about how to facilitate friendships in different settings/stages of life including one titled “Making Friends With and Without Disabilities at School”.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Information

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

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) is a program that promotes social inclusion through sports for ages Pre-K to 22. The program provides materials and activities to support educators in promoting friendships in and out of the classroom.



Volunteering/Community Service

OUR PRESENTER

EPIC Service Warriors – (Empowering People for Inclusive Communities)

<https://www.epicleaders.org/servicewarriors>

EPIC Service Warriors is a community service and leadership development program for youth with disabilities ages 16-23. There are currently programs in the Boston and Worcester areas. EPIC Service Warriors meet for one year to participate in community service projects and leadership development workshops. Through services, Service Warriors learn more about local communities and develop practical skills that will help them develop as leaders and pursue future goals.

SPUR Northshore

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

SPUR mobilizes volunteers in meaningful service and enrichment opportunities that support the tangible needs of our community. In striving to remove barriers to volunteering, SPUR provides a platform to cultivate a community of doers across the North Shore.

Educator Development

UMass Boston Transition Leadership Certificate

<https://www.umb.edu/academics/program-finder/transition-leadership-certificate/>

UMass Boston's Transition Leadership Certificate focuses on the transition from high school to adult life for young people with a wide range of disabilities. It's designed for teachers with at least an initial license in special education as well as those with licenses in Rehabilitation Counseling, School Guidance, School Adjustment Counseling, or School Social Work. The program allows educators to gain the skills necessary to focus on employment, college preparation, and independent living skills for students with disabilities, ages 14-22, as well as the leadership skills needed to help influence state and national policy around transition and disability.