

Legislative Advocacy Priorities The Arc of MA

Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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The Arc of MA

April 8, 2024



Our Mission



- Our mission is to enhance the lives of individuals with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- We do this through advocating for community services and supports that foster social inclusion, self determination and equity across all aspects of society.

What will we briefly cover today?



- Legislative Advocacy for greater citizen empowerment
- Historic budget investments!
- Overview of the extreme and unrelenting Workforce Shortage Crisis
- Legislative advocacy process simplified
- Sharing your lived experience
- The Arc's FY'25 "ASK"
- The budget and bill process, key timelines for advocates
- Q & A



What does The Arc of MA do?

We amplify your voice, we build strong relationships and connections with the legislature and leadership

Budget

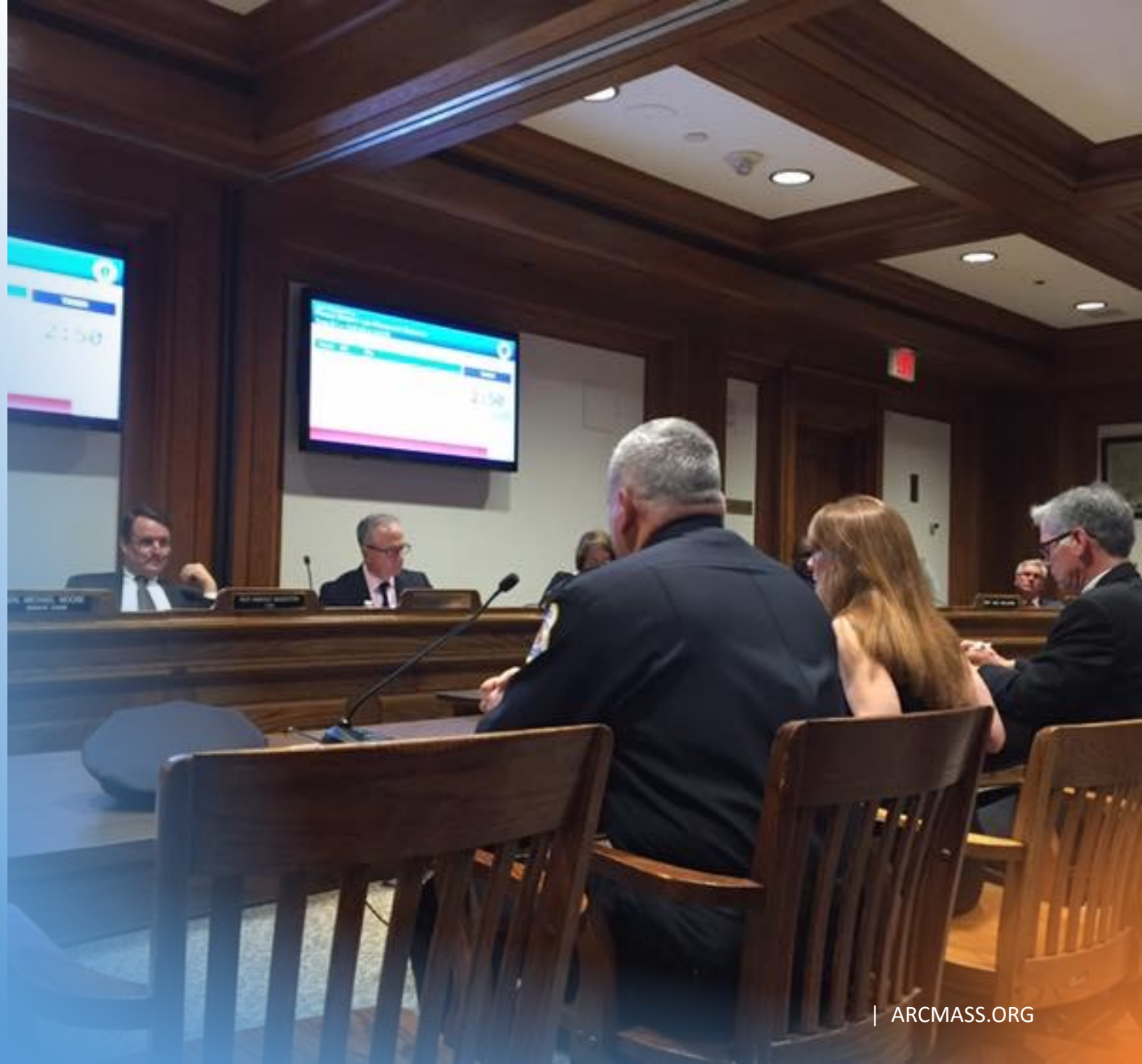
Legislation

Policy

Medicaid

Programs

Empowerment



Affecting change for 70
years.
Some of our recent wins!

- Year after year budget increases!
- Autism Omnibus
- Turning 22-line item
- Real Lives Law
- Nicky's Law/Dana's Law
- Police Training in Autism
- Higher Education (MAICEI)
- Special Commission on Institutions
- ABA for Adults Pilot
- Operation House Call

What is legislative advocacy?

- Clearly communicating an issue, or cause to educate, engage and persuade lawmakers
- Year-round communication, one to one, or mobilizing thousands
- Using your voice to influence decision makers
- Build champions
- BUT IT IS SO MUCH MORE!



Overview current status and our messaging

Unprecedented workforce crisis

- closures, collapse
- those with complex, high needs
- 3 thousand plus unserved
- isolation, regression
- lack of supports 4 years
- home supports unavailable
- caregiver stress, illness
- economic impact



Use The Arc's tools!

- www.thearcofmass.org/advocacy
- Find your legislator
- Sign up for Notes from The Arc
- Action Alerts are a spring board, the f/up is key



Check in with your legislator often!

- District hours, Zoom options, make a trip!
- Get familiar with Malegislature.gov
- Connect with your legislator on social media
- Get to know the staff
- Action Alerts, and follow up
- BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP – some give and take



Welcome to The Arc of Massachusetts Action Center

The mission of The Arc of Massachusetts is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, and their families. We fulfill this through advocacy for community supports and services that foster social inclusion, self-determination, and equity across all aspects of society. Join us in our fight today by taking action on the alerts below.

REFILES – FOUR RETURNING PRIORITY BILLS

336
SUPPORTERS



TAKE ACTION NOW

COMMUNITY TRAINING – FOUR NEW PRIORITY BILLS


217
SUPPORTERS



TAKE ACTION NOW

WORKFORCE – THREE NEW PRIORITY BILLS

473
SUPPORTERS



TAKE ACTION NOW

Join Our Advocacy List

 * * city and state not required * ***Submit →**

☒ YES! I agree to receive advocacy emails from The Arc of Massachusetts and The Arc of the United States.

☒ YES! I agree to receive calls or text messages from The Arc of Massachusetts and The Arc of the United States. You may reply STOP to quit at any time.

Find Your Elected Officials

Q. FIND LEGISLATORS

Impacting leadership



Telling your story to your Rep or Senator

- Concise, don't need all the history
- Connect to issue
- Make your “ask”
- Hold them accountable



Neuroscience Behind Storytelling



- Princeton study – Uri Hasson
- Brain to Brain Coupling, through functional MRI
 - Brain light up when storytelling begins vs. typical conversation
- Evolutionarily programmed to learn from each other
- Storytelling causes better concentration and memory
- 1 (story) is greater than 10 million (pieces of data)

Let's review the FY'2025 Budget from Gov Healey

Chapter 257 investment: DDS increases

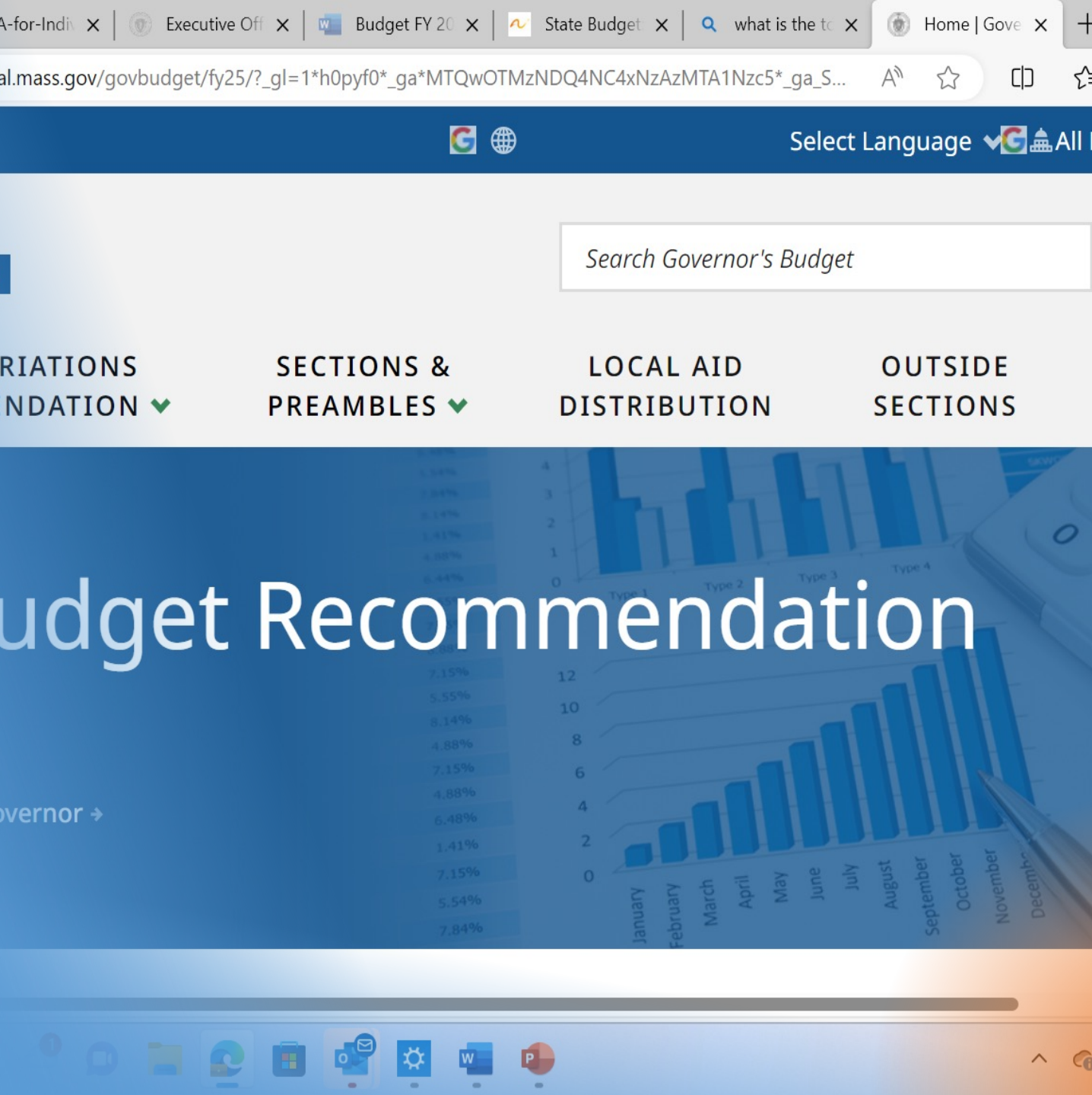


The Budget Timeline

- **Governor releases in January**
 - **Previous fall is spent determining \$**
- **House Ways and Means, then the House**
- **Senate Ways and Means, then the Senate**
- **Conference Committee**
- **Veto (Governor)**
- **Overrides (Legislature)**
- **9C cuts**

Budget timeline



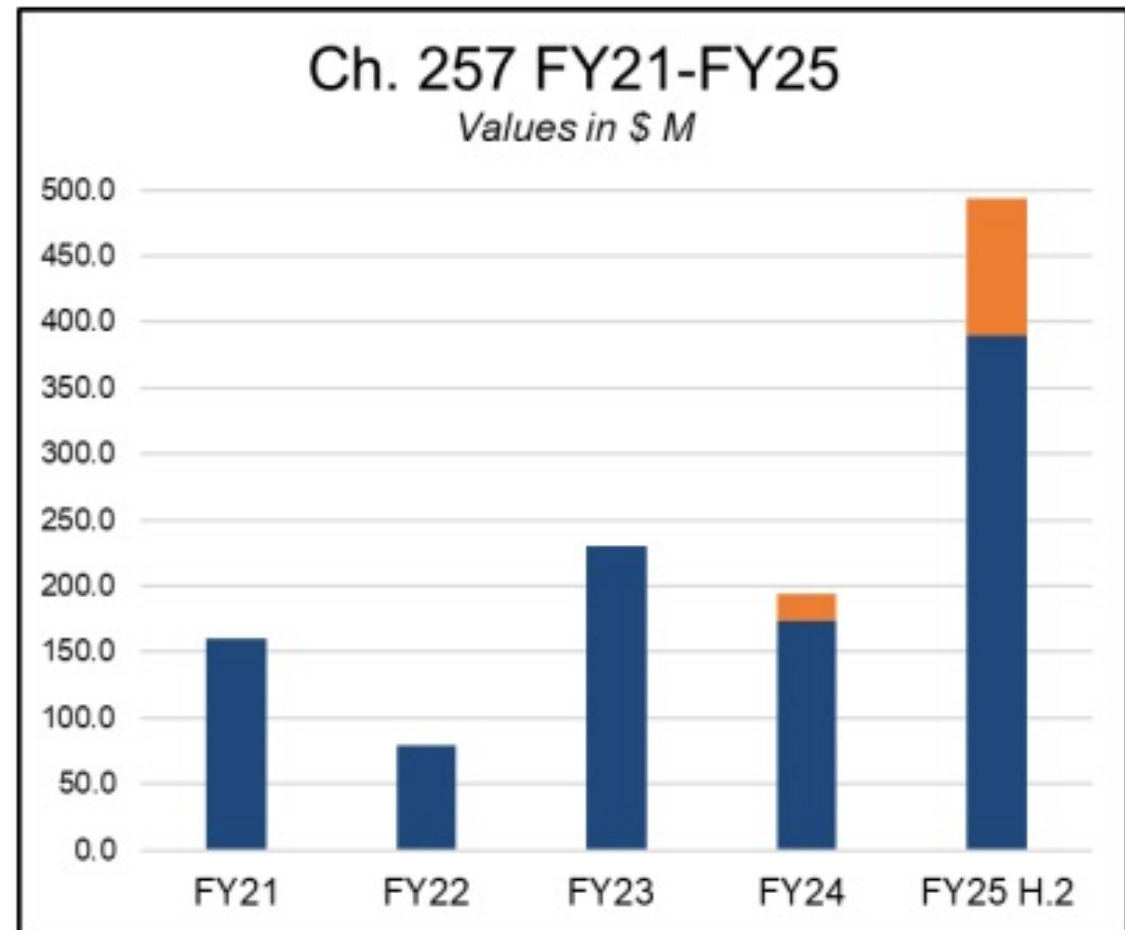


State Budget

- 56.1 billion 2.9% growth overall
- Chapter 257
- MassHealth, Long Term Support Services
- Department of Developmental Services
- DESE, and chapter 70

\$390 mil plus \$95 mil = \$485

- \$95 mil is coming from the Economic Development bill from last session
- Ensures that median direct care salaries will be no less than a median of \$20 per hour.



**Areas in orange denote spending appropriated on the FY22 Economic Development Bond Bill.*

What does Chapter 257 investment mean for rates in 2025?

- The rates will be affected for residential services.
 - Assumes the lowest model rate is no less than a median of \$20 per hour
 - The rate reviews happen on a biennial basis, this year is residential
 - In 2023 the funding was \$230 mil so this is a \$160 mil increase
 - Last year was Community Day Programs and increases have made an impact on vacancy rates
-

DDS Line-Item Funding Increases

\$134 million additional funding

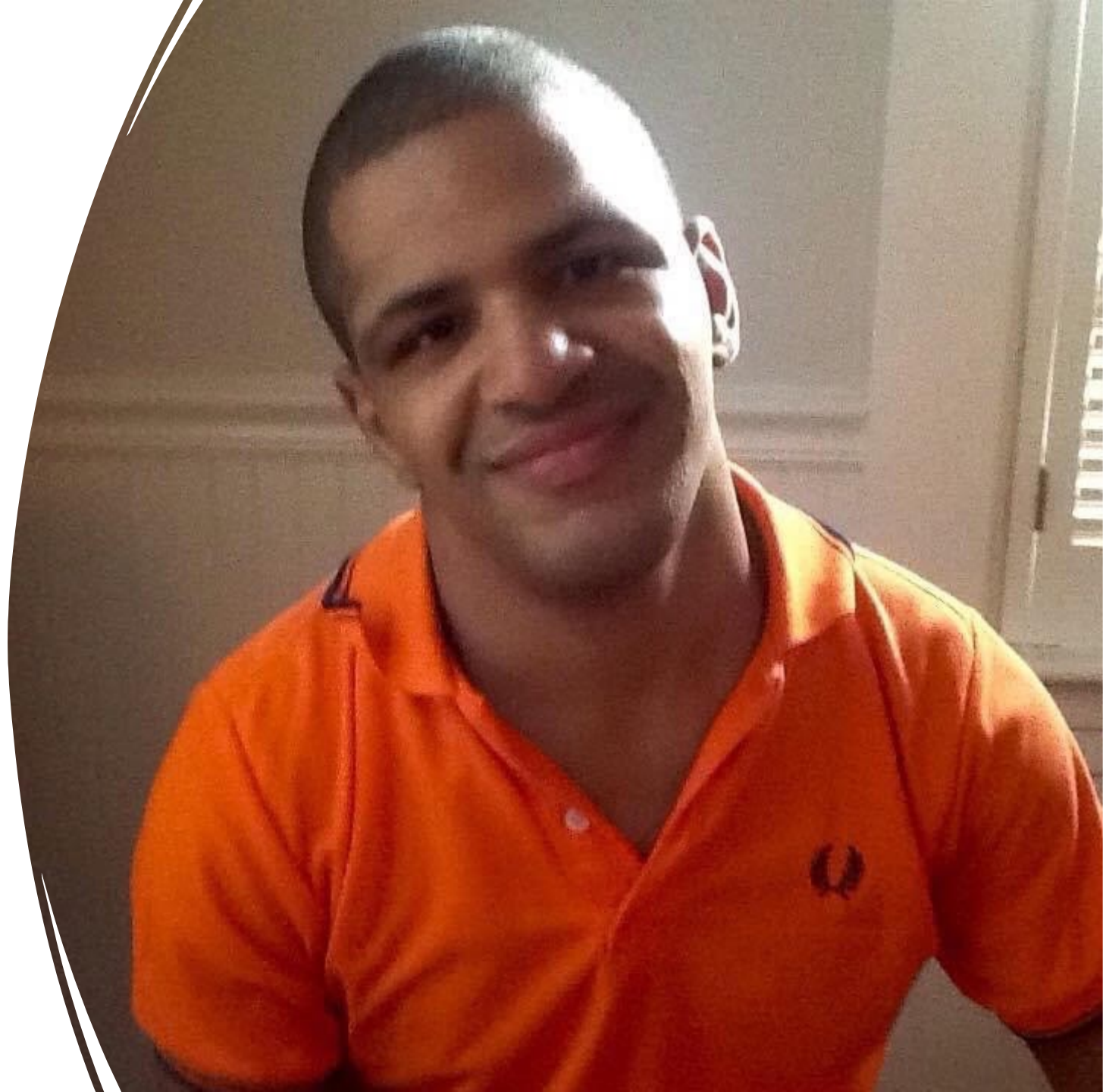
Line Item	Description	FY24	FY25	FY25 vs FY24 post 9C	% change
		Final Budget Post 9C Cuts	Governor's H2 Budget		
DDS 5911-2000	Transportation	33,535,611	40,017,443	6,481,832	19%
DDS 5920-2000	Community Residential	1,680,364,146	1,698,579,657	18,215,511	1%
DDS 5920-2025	Community Day/Work	229,330,258	288,021,407	58,691,149	26%
DDS 5920-3000	Respite/Fam Support	98,053,790	119,420,577	21,366,787	22%
DDS 5920-2003	Technology for Individuals	2,750,000	3,250,000	500,000	18%
DDS 5920-3010	Autism Waiver Children	9,940,691	10,957,296	1,016,605	10%
DDS 5920-3020	Autism Ominbus	52,540,994	61,917,941	9,376,947	18%
DDS 5920-3025	Aging w/DD	100,000	100,000	-	0%
DDS 5920-5000	Turning 22	105,653,241	124,104,015	18,450,774	17%
5948 & 7061-001	DESE/DDS In Home	10,500,000	10,500,000	-	0%

Maintain
these
increases
!

- Family Support - 22% increase
 - CBDS - 26% increase
 - T22 - 17% increase
 - Transportation - 19% increase
 - Autism Adults- 18% increase
 - Autism Children's Waiver a 10% increase (75 new families)
 - Respite and technology investments
 - 10 million for intensive residential for complex behavior/medical needs
 - Nursing development and continuous nursing
-

Important messaging

- Thousands still waiting for services
- Globe reports neglect and abuse as autism grows
- No cuts!
- We must avoid the vicious circle!



100



The Arc opposes the MassHealth cuts in the PCA program

- \$20.3 billion budget
- End of pandemic emergency federal fund ends
 - need to absorb \$1 billion
- Growing healthcare costs
 - PCA programs cuts affect 6,000
 - Meals prep time and those with less than 10 hours



Legislation is 2-year Cycle

- **New session bills are filed in January**
- **House and Senate sponsors & Cosponsors**
- **Committee assignment and hearing**
- **Committee review**
- **Joint Rule – deadline for committees to vote**
- **If favorable moves on to Ways and Means Committee, 3rd Reading, other committee**
- **Engrossed, enacted**
- **Governor signs into law**

Legislative Priorities 4/4/24

- Expanding Nicky's Law – In Ways and Means
- Hospital Training – In Ways and Means
- Blue Envelope – In Ways and Means
- Archaic Language Bill – In Ways and Means
- Historical Records Bill – In Ways and Means
- Medically Fragile Children – In Ways and Means
- Tommy's Bill – In Ways and Means
- Parents/Guardians as paid caregivers – In Extension
- Supported Decision Making – In Extension
- Police Training – In Extension until 4/8

[More bills here](https://thearcofmass.org/advocacy/bills/)

<https://thearcofmass.org/advocacy/bills/>





Other Legislative Priorities

<https://thearcofmass.org/advocacy/bills/>



What Can We Do Together

- We continue to amplify your voice, we build strong relationships and connections with the legislature and leadership
- But most important to our mission is your engagement
- Use our **action alerts, asks and fact sheets**, throughout the budget process but always follow up with a call and a request for confirmation of action taken
- Will it take a meeting? Try virtual or district hours
- Your story, together with The Arc's Ask and messaging

Questions and comments

Join AFAM and The
Arc for Autism
Advocacy Day on
April 9th!

Come to our
Transition Journey's
Statewide
Conference on April
27th!