

Disability Law Center's Self-Advocacy Materials



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DDS Services

This document is designed for people with disabilities. The information is about your legal rights and how to advocate for yourself as a resident in Massachusetts.

Community Integration

Contact us to request this information in an alternative format.

617-723-8455
800-872-9992
mail@dlc-ma.org

Funding

DLC receives funding from government grants, private foundations, and individual contributions.

For details about our funding and programs, please visit our website:

<https://dlc-ma.org>



You Will Learn About:

- What Is Community Integration?
- Your Rights under Community Integration
- The Complaint Process

This document includes general information about legal issues and is intended to be used for informational purposes only. These informational materials should not be taken as legal advice, and do not create an attorney-client relationship. The outcome of any particular matter will depend on a variety of factors. For specific legal problems you would need to contact an attorney.

Community Integration

What is Community Integration?

Community integration means that people with disabilities can and should live in their community. People with disabilities should not be forced to live or receive services in a segregated, or separate, environment. Individuals should make decisions about how they want to participate in their community, such as through work, relationships, and fun activities.

Community integration should be both integrated and individualized:

- Integrated means that an individual should have opportunities to build connections, meet their own needs, and fit into their community.



Going to a barber for a haircut



Getting a haircut at home



Using a gym membership



Walking around the block or on a treadmill at the house

- Individualized means that community activities are likely to be chosen based on an individual's personal interests and choice.



Going to the movie theater for a good movie and popcorn



Going to a live sports event



Van rides with no destination of interest



Grocery shopping for the house

Your Rights under Community Integration

What Are Rights under Community Integration?

Here are the laws and regulations that protect your rights to live and participate in the community with the support you need:

The **Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** has **regulations**, or rules, that your provider agency staff must follow, including making sure you have opportunities for community integration.

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a law that protects your right to work, live, and receive services in the most integrated setting possible. (DDS and your provider agency must follow this law.)

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) have national rules that protect your right to receive services in community settings, develop relationships, and for you to make choices about your life, activities, and support services. (DDS and your provider agency must follow this rule if they receive HCBS waiver funding.)

The Complaint Process

What Can I Do If I Have A Complaint?

Your right to community integration may be violated if:

- You are rarely able to do activities you enjoy in the community
- You want a job in the community but are only allowed to work in a facility or work crews with other people with disabilities
- You are stuck inside all day at your day program without any community activities

If you are not getting opportunities for community integration, try to write down the days you have been allowed to go into the community and what you are able to do. This can help show that your right is not being respected.

People who may be able to help:

- Your Human Rights Officer or Human Rights Coordinator for the provider agency. They can help you file a complaint with the Human Rights Committee.
- DDS also has a Director for Human Rights and Human Rights Specialists for each DDS Region. To reach the Director for Human Rights, call 617-939-1867 or email officeofhumanrights@mass.gov.
- Your DDS Service Coordinator may be able to help you resolve the problem.
- You can also raise your complaint as part of your Individual Support Plan (ISP) process.
 - For more information about your ISP, see 'Individual Support Planning' under information about the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).
 - If your concerns are not resolved through the ISP process, you can appeal your ISP. For information about appealing your ISP, see 'DDS Appeals' under information about the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).
- File a complaint about violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and community integration with the Department of Justice. You have to complete a "Title II complaint form," which can be found at www.ADA.com or by calling 800-514-0301.
 - You can also email usma.civilrights@usdoj.gov
 - Or call the U.S. Attorney's Office at 617-748-3100 and ask to speak to a civil rights intake specialist.
- The Disability Law Center (DLC) may be able to give you advice or legal representation. Please leave a voice message at 1-800-872-9992 or fill out a request for help at <https://www.dlc-ma.org/ask-for-help/>.