

Massachusetts Alliance for **MA21** 21st Century Disability Policy

What is MA21?

Formed in 2007, the Massachusetts Alliance for 21st Century Disability Policy (MA21) is a partnership of self-advocates, family members, stakeholders, and the Commonwealth's leading disability advocacy organizations, including:

- The Arc of Massachusetts (The Arc)
- Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS)
- MassFamilies
- Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC)
- Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC)
- Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM)
- Massachusetts Sibling Support Network (MSSN)
- Disability Law Center (DLC)

Why MA21?

MA21 is committed to protecting the right of people with disabilities to self-determination. MA21 was instrumental in helping pass the Real Lives Law through years of effective advocacy on Beacon Hill in collaboration with other stakeholders. MA21 continues to empower individuals and to influence leadership through education, advocacy, and the united strength of our members.

What is the Real Lives Law?

The Real Lives Law gives people with disabilities and their families the right to choose and manage the services and supports they need through the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The law requires DDS to promote self-determination through a self-direction model and to provide budgets equal to those of traditional services.

What is at Stake?

The human right of people with disabilities to have freedom, dignity, and control over their lives.

Why So Few?

Over 38,000 adults are supported by DDS but fewer than 2,700 are self-directing their services. People with disabilities and their families report that critical information and resources needed to self-direct are not being provided by DDS.

Take Action:

Enforce the Real Lives Law

- Visit www.ma21alliance.org and explore the MA21 Library to understand the law, its history, and its current implementation.
- Attend MA21 webinars (5 per year)
- Share your story about your experiences with DDS including self-determination/self-direction
- Join the MA21 Action Group - Contact MA21 to set up a virtual conference

Massachusetts
needs to fully
implement the
Real Lives Law.

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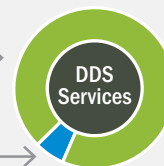
38,000⁺

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Traditional
Services →



Self-directed →

Research shows that people living a self-determined life are happier, better educated, more likely to be employed, and experience a higher quality of life.