



Massachusetts Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: November 2024

State Population (2023 Census estimate)

7 – 11 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

10,000 – 13,999

- Adoption assistance caseload — 8,455
- Guardianship assistance caseload — 2,670
- Total — 11,124

State Administration Type

State administered

Pre-Service Training

Prospective foster and adoptive parents must complete the 30-hour Massachusetts Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) training. Training can be in person or virtual. Once licensed, foster and adoptive parents must complete 20 hours of training annually, which is reviewed during their annual assessment. The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) has partnered with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) and Foster Parent College to support this training requirement.

Relative caregivers are not required to complete the Massachusetts Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) curriculum. At this time, there is a written guide provided to relative caregivers for reference in addition to an assigned kinship social worker. A self-paced e-learning has been created for relative caregivers and will be released in 2024.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

The Massachusetts Department of Children & Families (DCF) contracts with Child & Family Services to offer the Adoption Journeys post-permanency program for families after adoption and guardianship finalization. Services include:

- **Assessment** — When families are to receive clinical services, the first step is for the Adoption Journeys staff to get to know the family, their experiences, their current level of stress, and hopes. For those families who will be receiving longer-term services, the family and staff complete the Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST), which clarifies





goals and objectives for the family and drives the treatment plan. Information gathering for the assessment typically takes place over a couple of sessions and is completed within 45 days.

- **Counseling** — Through Regional Response Teams, Adoption Journeys offers families brief, home-based clinical services, as well as advocacy and coordination of services, and referrals for adoption-competent therapeutic supports. The clinical services provided by Adoption Journeys address issues such as birth family connections, identity, parent support, and trauma and loss. The program’s social workers or other mental health professionals, trained in adoption competency, provide clinical support to families and help them connect to ongoing therapy when longer-term services are needed. Staff can participate with families in meetings with schools, courts, and other community partners. Families are typically engaged with the service for four to six months.
- **Case management** — As part of the Regional Response Team services, families are provided with help to identify and connect to other needed services, including support to navigate complex systems. There are no set timelines for visits or contacts with families, although some parents request that staff check in with them every month.
- **24-hour telephone support** — Adoption Journeys offers a toll-free helpline, staffed 24/7 for any parent or professional to call with their adoption- or guardianship-related concern. The phone is answered live by Adoption Journeys professional staff. If staff miss a call, they typically return it within an hour or two.
- **Crisis intervention** — The Regional Response Teams are designed to serve families in stress or crisis. Adoption Journeys responds to an inquiry within 24 hours and schedules a home visit as soon as the family wants it. Staff help connect families to the state’s crisis intervention services when needed.
- **Support groups** — Adoption Journeys offers from 10 to 15 ongoing parent support groups plus some time-limited parent groups each month, most facilitated by Adoption Journeys staff. Some have a parent co-facilitator. The time-limited groups are psychoeducational and usually focus on a specific topic such as adolescence or certain behavioral issues. Most groups are in person, but a few are offered virtually. The program also offers support groups for children and adolescents. Groups for adolescents are typically activity oriented and include a focus on developing social skills and making friends with other adopted teens.
- **Education advocacy** — The Regional Response Teams can help families address more common educational issues, including attending IEP or other meetings at the school. Adoption Journeys staff help families access other educational experts when deeper intervention is needed. Staff also conduct training to enhance adoption competency at





schools and can also consult with individual teachers to help them better understand the impact of adoption on development.

- **Respite care** — Families receive respite care when their children participate in Adoption Journeys' recreational activities described above. In addition, Adoption Journeys offers limited funding to reimburse costs when the family finds their own respite provider. For some parent training events, the program also offers parents a childcare stipend.
- **Information and referral** — Adoption Journeys staff provide telephone and email support for adoption information and resources, connection to other post-permanency services, community referrals, and consultation. They maintain and refer to a list of adoption and guardianship resources that are local, statewide, and national. Professionals and other service providers may call seeking information relating to adoption or guardianship, assistance in locating appropriate support services, or for case consultation on behalf of an adoptive or guardianship family.
- **One-on-one peer support** — Adoption Journeys maintains a list of volunteer parents who are willing to support other parents as they address adoption and guardianship issues. These volunteers may provide very brief support such as answering a few questions or can continue to work with the parents over time. Whenever possible, Adoption Journeys staff match parent liaisons with families by language, culture, and specific family circumstance.
- **Training** — Adoption Journeys provides training and case consultation to professionals in the community to help them become more skilled in helping families formed through adoption. Training is provided to schools, emergency responders, medical teams, the courts, and mental health service providers upon request and through ongoing collaboration and consultation. The program also provides some trainings for parents. Each region holds training events for both parents and professionals and some trainings are offered statewide.
- **Events** — Adoption Journeys offers community events, with some for families and some for children only. Each region offers at least one event per month and other events are for multiple regions or for families from across the state. The family events require participation of at least one parent and include activities such as apple picking or a weekend at a water park. Recreation activities for children, supervised by program staff or other providers, include picnics, trips to shows, learning activities, and overnight adventures.
- **Financial supports** — Adoption Journeys has a fund to help families address financial needs in times of stress. Payments can cover items such as a late mortgage payment or an unexpected repair bill.

In 2022 the post-permanency program served 455 families.





Learn more at <https://cfservices.org/pg-adoption-journeys.php>

Geographic Area Covered

All services are offered statewide through five regional offices.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

- All families who adopted from the state's foster care system
- All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
- All families who adopted through intercountry adoption
- All families who adopted through private adoption
- All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
- All families who have guardianship of child not through foster care

Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

None

Accessibility

Adoption Journeys serves diverse families, including many interracial families and LGBTQ2S+ families. All written materials are translated into Spanish and Portuguese, and staff have access to live interpreter services when needed.

There is a support group for interracial families, as well as workshops and social events for interracial families.

Outreach and Engagement

Most families receive information about Adoption Journeys in their finalization packet. When parents contact Adoption Journeys, they receive a welcome packet that outlines all available services.

Adoption Journeys staff conduct outreach in every region of the state, including meeting with DCF adoption staff and private agency staff, attending adoption and other community events, and sharing information with schools, mental health providers, and other community-based organizations. Each regional office also distributes a quarterly newsletter to parents and professionals, outlining upcoming events and activities and offering resources.





Adoption Journeys asks families how they learned about the services when they call. They track this information and share it in an annual report to the state.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

Through a contract or grant with one private agency

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

All services are provided by Children & Family Services through the Adoption Journeys program.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

Adoption and guardianship subsidy agreements are automatically reviewed for renewal every two years, during the child's birth month. The periodic verification process for guardianship subsidy will include verification that the child is still living with the guardian(s), the guardian(s) continue to be legally responsible for the child, whether the guardian(s) has received third-party payments on behalf of the child, whether the guardian(s) has moved and whether the child remains in school, if of school age. For youth whose subsidy is extended beyond age 18, the verification process will include specific documentation that the youth continue to meet the criteria for an extended subsidy. If the guardian has questions or would like an explanation about their subsidy, they can contact the subsidy unit and speak with a staff person.

Adoptive parents and guardianship resources may request a change in the subsidy agreement at any time. They must make the requests in writing to the Subsidy Manager and must include documentation of a significant change in the child's special need. The significant change must be based on the current needs of the child and documented by a professional qualified to make the diagnosis. The Subsidy Manager will review the request and documentation and provide the family with a written decision within a reasonable period of time.

Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

The Department does not track adoption or guardianship discontinuity.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

\$1 – 1,999,999 million

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2023)

1. State funds

