



FY 2026 Budget Request

Support Funding for the Workforce Development College Navigator Program

Paving the way for students with disabilities to diminish the employment disparity. Please add \$400,000 for funding for the Easterseals Massachusetts College Navigator Program in line item 4120-4000.

60% of students with disabilities drop out of college. Only 14% of people with disabilities without a college degree are employed. College Navigator keeps students in college. **Of students enrolled in our program, 90% stay in college. A college degree doubles rate of competitive employment, diminishing the 60% disparity between those with and without disabilities.**

Earning a college degree improves both employment prospects and earnings potential over a lifetime. College Navigator is designed to address the significant service gap students with disabilities encounter when transitioning from secondary to post-secondary environments which leads to a very high dropout rate. We assist students with disabilities to complete a postsecondary degree in order to enter competitive employment. There is a strong correlation between higher education and competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Easterseals College Navigator program provides individualized services to college students with disabilities based on their goals, strengths, and needs. Our Navigators assist students in identifying barriers, advocating for the student's needs, and accessing college services and resources to successfully reach graduation. All services are customized based on the individual needs of the student and tailored to their strengths to help them build lifelong skills. The impact of earning a college degree through increased job security, better employment options, and higher earning potential increases quality of life and financial freedom for individuals with disabilities.



“Everything changed when I started the College Navigator Program and worked with Rachael at Easterseals. Suddenly someone really listened to me, wanted to learn about my struggles and help me succeed.”

For more information, contact Joe Bellil at jbellil@eastersealsma.org.

- **Caterina, Holyoke Community College Graduate**





FY 2026 Budget Request

Support Funding for the Workforce Development College Navigator Program

College Navigator improves workforce readiness by:

- Providing information to students and their families about what to expect as college students, including their rights and getting the appropriate accommodations that the student needs.
- Connecting students to on and off-campus resources and helping them develop their communication and self-advocacy skills.
- Helping students to develop time-management and planning skills that they will need to be successful in college and employment.
- Assisting students with email management and accessing online databases (Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, etc.).
- Teaching students new ways to be social and develop interpersonal skills essential for college and workforce success.
- Facilitating students need to be more self-directed.



INVEST IN THE FUTURE:

\$400,000 is needed to hire 4 new College Navigators to serve 120 college students across Massachusetts.

\$3,300 per year per student.

1/10th of average cost of one year of college in Massachusetts.

10% investment for 90% retention rate!

IMPACT:

In 2024: More than 400 students were served at five state community colleges.

In 2025: Reduced to 23 students at two community colleges.

100% students reach their individual goals measured with the Goal Attainment Scale!

22 students graduated in 2024!

Partnering Community Colleges:



18 Chestnut Street, Suite 200, Worcester, MA 01608
508.757.2756 • eastersealsma.org

