



Massachusetts Office on Disability

Presentation for Mass Cultural Council
April 10, 2025



Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) provides **information, guidance, and training** on disability-related civil rights and architectural access.

We help people understand their disability rights and obligations, how regulations apply to the specifics of their situation, and practical steps they can take to assert their rights and comply with the law.

What MOD provides to the public*

Information

- Clarification of disability civil rights laws and how they apply to you and your situation, including:
 - The ADA
 - Fair housing
 - State and federal architectural access codes
- Who is responsible for overseeing or enforcing different laws

Guidance

- Help drafting reasonable accommodation (RA) requests for work or housing
- Applying for vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living (IL) services and issues
- Site visits to assess architectural accessibility

Training

- Community Access Monitor (CAM) training
- Disability and Employment workshop series
- Reasonable accommodations and modifications in housing
- Quarterly Tea with MOD: Topics vary

*"Public" = People with disabilities, housing providers, employers, businesses that serve the public, etc.

What MOD provides to municipalities

Professional development for Municipal ADA Coordinators

- Guidance and training for municipal ADA Coordinators on their role, municipal ADA compliance, and more
- Municipal ADA Coordinator Peer Resource Group for training and idea sharing

Municipal ADA Improvement Grant funding

- Reimbursement funding to municipalities for:
 - ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans
 - Accessibility-related projects, including removing architectural barriers and providing effective communication

Guidance for local Commissions on Disability

- Information, guidance, and training on establishing a Commission and being successful
- Statewide networking meetings for local Commissions on Disability

What MOD provides to state agencies

Support for Executive Branch ADA Coordinators

- Oversight of Executive Branch ADA compliance
- Training and approval of agency ADA Coordinators
- Technical assistance to ADA Coordinators

Digital accessibility consulting

- Guidance on complying with the Enterprise Information Technology Accessibility Policy
- Consulting on procurement
- Small-scale accessibility testing on electronic documents, trainings, websites, and software

Reasonable Accommodation Capital Reserve Account (RACRA)

- Funds for reasonable accommodations for Executive Branch employees

How MOD can help cultural organizations

- Online guidance
- One-on-one disability rights/obligations consultation
- Free training
 - Recorded trainings on YouTube
 - Scheduled trainings for the public
 - (Limited) custom trainings for groups
- Municipal ADA Grant funding
- Note: MOD **does not** enforce laws, provide direct services or financial assistance, or keep vendor lists.

Examples of questions MOD can answer

- We're hosting an art fair at a community arts center. What accessibility information should we include in our publicity?
- The elevator at our theatre just broke, and we have a show next week. What do we do for patrons who need the elevator to access their seats?
- We received a reasonable accommodation request for ASL interpretation at an upcoming poetry reading. How do I evaluate the request and respond?
- How many accessible parking spaces does our new art center need to have?
- Someone brought an assistance animal to our Community Dance Night, and it was disrupting other dancers. What can we do?

What to expect from an MOD consultation

1. Submit your message online or leave a voicemail. Someone will email or call you back.
2. During your call, we will:
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Explain how MOD can and can't help you
 - Help you understand your rights and obligations under disability rights laws
 - If needed, help you draft a reasonable accommodation request
 - Discuss informal resolution options
 - If needed, help you identify the oversight or enforcement agency for a formal complaint
3. If needed, you'll get a follow-up email, call, or text with:
 - Links or other helpful resources
 - Summary of call

Municipal ADA Improvement Grant

- FY26 grant application open May 1 – June 13, 2025
 - Eligible:
 - Massachusetts municipalities and municipally-owned properties
 - Planning grants: To create or update ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans
 - Project grants: For improvements or barrier removal related to physical and communication access
 - Not eligible:
 - Private businesses, private property, non-profit organizations, private homes, or other non-municipal properties
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Examples of past grants

- Signage and accessible route to Hoxie House Museum in Sandwich (FY21)
- New bleachers, ramp, and press box at Legion Field in Palmer (FY20)
- Pictured: Hoxie House Museum entrance path, before and after



Resources

- Digital accessibility
 - [Tips for creating digital documents](#)
 - [Creating Accessible Digital Documents video series](#)
 - [Recorded training: Digital accessibility](#)
- ADA obligations for places that serve the public
 - [Disability rights in public accommodations](#)
 - [Assistance animals](#)
 - [Tips for hosting accessible events and meetings](#)
 - [Recorded training: Hosting accessible events and meetings](#)
- [Municipal ADA Improvement Grant](#) (mass.gov/MOD/ADAGrant)
 - FY26 application open May 1 – June 13, 2025
 - [Grant information sessions](#): April 15, April 23, May 19

Connect with MOD

- [Read guidance on disability rights:](https://mass.gov/MOD/DisabilityRights)
mass.gov/MOD/DisabilityRights
- [Sign up for a training:](https://mass.gov/MOD/Events)
mass.gov/MOD/Events
- [Sign up for the email list:](https://mass.gov/MOD)
mass.gov/MOD (bottom of page)
- [Ask a question](https://mass.gov/MOD/Contact) (preferred):
mass.gov/MOD/Contact
- Leave a voicemail:
(617) 727-7440

