



Massachusetts Disability Quarterly

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Massachusetts Office On Disability

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Full & Equal Participation in All Aspects of Life by All Persons With Disabilities

Fall 2018

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Save the Date: Summit 2018

The Massachusetts Office on Disability annual Summit began in 2015. This event was designed to inspire leaders, advocates, and persons with disabilities to come together to focus on issues that impact the disability community.

Join us on October 5, 2018 for a robust program that will address various topics including employment, aging, and more.

Register with the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/massachusetts-office-on-disability-2018-summit-tickets-45778258002>



Q&A with the Client Services Unit

What is the Client Services Unit?

Client Services is the part of MOD that responds to individual issues by providing information and/or technical guidance and advocacy. We are the first point of contact at the agency answering individual questions about disability rights, resources and government programs, and services. We provide technical guidance and advocacy on specific disability rights and denial of service issues.

What is the Client Assistance Program?

CAP works to ensure that clients seeking vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from Mass Rehabilitation Commission and Mass Commission for the Blind or consumers seeking independent living (IL) services from the independent living centers are receiving those services according to regulation and policy. Any applicant to or client of these programs may contact CAP confidentially to discuss an issue or concern. At a minimum, CAP can discuss the issue, explain how things should work, and provide guidance in navigating the issue moving forward. If a client/consumer would like CAP's intervention, CAP will contact the VR or CIL and begin evaluating the case to determine the best approach for trying to resolve the matter. CAP may potentially contact third parties, attend meetings, and/or represent an individual at a hearing. What CAP will do in any individual case will be determined on a case by case basis after review of the file.

What is the difference between the Client Services Unit and the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?

CAP is a program within the Client Services Unit. CAP's specific role is to provide information about vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs and to assist individuals who have concerns about the way in which they are receiving those services. The Client Service Unit provides information on a range of topics and technical guidance and advocacy on disability related denial of services issues.

What kind of information does the Client Services Unit provide to the public?

MOD has a broad mission and a general name. Many people contact MOD because they have a disability and have a question about resources or rights. We provide basic information about government programs, benefits, and services, and where to find them. With regard to rights, we similarly provide information about how various disability laws apply to specific situations.

I believe I have been discriminated against because of my disability. What type of assistance can you provide?

At a minimum you will have the opportunity to speak to a staff member who can tell you if there are disability laws that apply to the situation you present, who enforces those laws, and discuss your potential recourse. MOD is not an enforcement agency but depending on the particulars of the situation, staff may be able to assist you informally in resolving your issue.

What does direct assistance look like from Client Services and will I be given an advocate?

The Client Services Unit does not provide "advocates" for general purposes or case management. Client Services provides technical guidance and advocacy to resolve a specific disability related denial of service or denial of reasonable accommodation matters in the areas of employment, state and local government, housing, education, and places of public accommodation. CAP provides technical guidance and advocacy to resolve a specific VR or IL matter.

How can I reach the Client Service Unit?

You may reach us by phone (617) 727-7440 x27309 or via email <https://www.mass.gov/forms/contact-us> . Please leave a message on the voicemail box and we will return your call.

New MOD Service Animals Video

By Moss Lynch

As regular readers of our blog may be aware, MOD receives many inquiries about service animals. We strive to provide quality technical assistance and be a resource for people with disabilities on this topic, which is why we have published a video on Service Animals on YouTube, accessible through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZqZaUfS1zc>.



As we have blogged about previously, dogs and miniature horses are defined as service animals and are allowed to travel and accompany persons with disabilities in all public areas. See our Frequently Asked Questions blog on service animals for additional information at <http://blog.mass.gov/mod/service-animals/service-animals-frequently-asked-questions/>.

Examples of tasks that service animals may perform include guidance for people that are visually impaired, alerting persons who are hard of hearing, and retrieving objects for those people with mobility challenges, just to name a few; it is important to remember that there is no exhaustive list of activities. Emotional support and companionship are not considered services under the Americans with Disabilities Act. More information on Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals can be found in our blog: <https://blog.mass.gov/mod/service-animals/the-facts-on-service-and-emotional-support-animals/>.

We hope you enjoy our service animal video; We did our best to address many frequently asked questions, as well as serve as a resource for those looking for additional information. Of course, please be sure to contact the Massachusetts Office on Disability at mod-info@mass.gov with any specific questions or comments about this or any other disability related matter.

Commonwealth Disability Mentoring Week 2018

The [Massachusetts Office on Disability](#) (MOD) and the [Human Resources Division](#) (HRD) are partnering to host a second annual “Disability Mentoring Week (DMW),” a chance for people with disabilities to access and explore career development opportunities within state government. During October 22-24, mentees with disabilities are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. Mentees participate in a career exploration experience and make connections with mentors and other personnel. Employers gain increased awareness and understanding of how people with disabilities can be involved in their candidate recruitment processes. In 2017, MOD and HRD hosted the first Commonwealth DMW during October to celebrate [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). In all, 28 mentor pairs were matched across 21 state agencies.

These goals continue to be especially important as persons with disabilities (PWD) continue to encounter challenges compared with persons without disabilities in both employment and labor participation rates. Of the approximated 392,000 working age people with disabilities in Massachusetts, about 34.9% were employed compared to 78.9% of people with no disability in 2014.

According to the 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates about 58% of the 393,251 people were not in the labor force. Further, research shows that people with disabilities who were employed earned substantially less than their counterparts without disabilities, about \$43,004 vs. \$59,970 per year. State government employment can offer career growth, comprehensive benefits, and competitive wages, and DMW 2018 will take place this October. Visit www.Mass.gov/mod/dmw18 for more information.

Personal Emergency Preparedness Program Update

By DaLonn Pearson & Jeff Dougan

Since 2007, MOD has been hosting Personal Emergency Preparedness meetings throughout the Commonwealth (visit our webpage at www.mass.gov/mod/prepare). This program is funded through a grant that MOD receives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Grants and Training, through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Homeland Security Division. September is recognized as “National Preparedness Month,” so we wanted to share some insights and successes of our program.

The purpose of our Personal Emergency Preparedness meetings and presentations is to inform people on how best to organize before an emergency. Participants receive a resource informational packet, a personal emergency planning workbook, and an emergency go-kit. We partner with local emergency management teams and first responders to provide information about local emergency planning efforts as well as answer any questions that residents may have. Having emergency personnel present adds value and also helps build a face to face relationship between officials and community members.



DaLonn Pearson conducting an Emergency Preparedness training at Melrose City Hall for Senior Citizens, requested by the Melrose Police Department.

During the meetings we share informational materials with the participants. One item is our emergency go-pack, which is full of essential items that might be needed during an emergency, such as a flashlight, radio, water, first aid kit, and many more items. To date, we have distributed over 10,600 go-packs to persons with disabilities.

We distribute our Personal Emergency Preparedness Workbook that helps people plan for all types of emergencies as well as documenting important information that may be needed. To date we have distributed over 12,300 guides. The Supplemental Information Packet that discusses resources and information about State related services is also distributed at these meetings to complement the workbooks.

For first responders, we provide an informational tool that discusses appropriate measures to allow successful interaction between, and communication tips for, the interaction of first responders and persons with disabilities during an emergency. Multiple “Tips for First Responders on How to Interact with People with Disabilities,” produced by the University of New Mexico, has been given to each first responder present to be used locally. To date, over 4,500 of the booklets have been distributed.

For more information on how your community can host an Emergency Preparedness meeting, please contact Jeff Dougan by phone at (617)-727-7440 x27316 or by email at Jeff.Dougan@mass.gov.

Introducing Moss Lynch

By Moss Lynch

I am very excited to start my position as the Training and Communications Specialist at the MOD. My responsibilities focus on Statewide training and outreach to help strengthen the mission of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I am a Boston native and spent numerous summers of my life working at Agassiz Village in Poland, ME where we hosted Easter Seals Explorers Week. I was responsible for running a cabin of campers with disabilities, and ensuring that everyone had an equal opportunity to live, work, play, and participate in all of our camp's activities, while providing accommodations and assistance where needed.



Prior to working at MOD, I was Senior Outreach Coordinator for MassDOT's Safe Routes to School program for 3 years. In this role I was responsible for overseeing all transportation safety programs and events throughout the Southeastern region of Massachusetts. I was also in charge of leading meetings and task force discussions with various civic and town offices regarding safe infrastructure, traffic decongestion, and aerial mapping initiatives.

I received my Bachelor in Science and Journalism from Suffolk University where I served as a Broadcast Journalism major, and my Master's Degree in Communication Studies with a strong focus in public speaking, also at Suffolk.

I look very forward to working with the Commonwealth's employees and residents. Please contact me to schedule a training or for updates about any of our upcoming events. I can be reached via email at Moss.R.Lynch@mass.gov, or by phone at (617)-727-7440 x27319. Thank you!

Introducing Jakira Rogers

By Jakira Rogers

My name is Jakira Rogers, and I am very excited to be taking on the role of Access Specialist within the Community Services Unit of MOD. I was born and raised in Massachusetts and I am glad to be continuing my journey in the heart of Boston. I have always had an interest in doing advocacy work and I am excited to be joining the efforts of MOD. As the Access Specialist, I will be working to promote architectural accessibility through technical assistance and training in all buildings constructed and renovated in Massachusetts, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access and use those facilities.

Prior to working at MOD, I was a Personal Care Attendant through Tempus Unlimited. As a PCA, I provided one on one home care services for children with disabilities, promoting abilities and independence in the comfort of their home.



I received my Bachelors of Science degree from Suffolk University, where I majored in Sociology, with a concentration in Crime and Justice; I also minored in Government and Philosophy. During my time at Suffolk University I was actively involved on campus, and served as the Vice President for the Black Student Union, while also serving as an Event Coordinator for the Best Buddies organization, Suffolk University chapter.

I look forward to assisting anyone with questions related to architectural access and can be reached at Jakira.Rogers@mass.gov or at (617)-727-7440 x27312. Thank you for such a warm welcome!

Changes to the Attainable Program

By, Moss Lynch

Our office is pleased to provide technical assistance to our colleagues at the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) regarding disability related matters and to help spread the word about the attainable Savings Plan. Recently the ABLE Act and Attainable Program have seen modifications to the program which people should be aware of.

The attainable program is made possible by the Able Act, which establishes a tax-advantaged savings account program for individuals with disabilities and their families. An attainable account can provide the owner with federal tax benefits and may be used without affecting other disability-related benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (up to accounts of \$100,000).

When the program began in 2016 individuals could annually contribute up to \$14,000. However, recent changes to the program now allow for annual contributions of up to \$15,000. The funds in these ABLE accounts allow people with disabilities to use their savings for disability-related expenses to maintain and increase independence and quality of life.

Also as of 2018, the attainable program now allows for the transfer of funds from a 529 college plan to a 529A (attainable) account without incurring any tax or penalties. Attainable account owners who meet certain criteria can also receive a non-refundable Saver's Credit on their 2018 federal taxes.

MEFA is actively engaged with providing people with disabilities and their families information about the attainable program, please visit <https://www.mefa.org/products/attainable/>. Contact MEFA and they can come out and provide a seminar on how the program works; click this link to schedule your seminar today, <https://www.mefa.org/attainable-seminar-request-form/>.

Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Grant Program Offers Funding for FY19

By, Moss Lynch

The Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Grant program supports capital improvements that are dedicated to improving access for persons with disabilities. The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is pleased to announce the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant Program application and selection process for FY19. Eligible applicants include any Massachusetts city or town, and project grants of up to \$250,000 will be awarded to successful applicants to remove barriers and to create and improve accessible features for persons with disabilities.

Planning grants will also be awarded to assist applicants creating, or updating, a Self-Evaluation or Transition Plan required under Title II of the ADA. For more information, or to apply for a planning or project grant, visit <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-americans-with-disabilities-act-grant>. Please note that the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) closes on October 1, 2018.

Please contact the Massachusetts Office on Disability at mod-info@mass.gov with any specific questions or comments about the grant program.

Jeffrey's Access Corner: Alternate Toilet Accessible Stall aka Ambulatory Accessible Compartments

By Jeffrey Dougan

In this edition of Jeffrey's Access Corner I want to discuss with you a topic that has been brought to my attention a couple of times recently regarding the provision of alternate accessible toilet stalls, specifically when accessible toilets need to be provided and the dimensions and features that are required be provided. I will be looking at the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act Design Standards (1991 ADADS), the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Design Standards (2010 ADADS), and the 2006 revision of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Boards rules and regulations (2006 MAAB).

Alternate Accessible Toilet Stalls, also known as Ambulatory Accessible Compartments (under the 2010 ADA Design Standards) are required to be provided under different scenarios depending on the regulations that pertain to your situation.

Under the 2006 MAAB and the 1991 ADADS, an alternate stall is required when there are 6 or more stalls within a toilet room. The 2010 ADADS, while maintaining the requirement for an alternate stall when there are 6 or more stalls within a toilet room, also requires an alternate stall when the combination of the fixtures (urinals and toilets) totals 6 or more.

Here is a narrowly scoped example of what would need to be considered when renovating a restroom and the provision of an alternate stall. As an example, a men's restrooms is being considered for renovation today. Within the existing restroom there is 1 urinal and 2 toilet compartments. The renovation that is proposed will change this to the provision of 3 urinals and 5 toilet compartments. In this scenario, we would be looking to the 2006 MAAB and the 2010 ADADS as these are the current regulations in effect. While under the 2006 MAAB an alternate stall would not be required as there are only 5 toilet compartments, the 2010 ADADS would require an alternate stall as the number of fixtures (urinals and toilets) equals 8. So, at the end of the renovation project, there would need to be 1 accessible urinal, 1 fully accessible toilet stall, and 1 accessible alternate stall provided, as well as all of the other access requirements not discussed here such as mirror height, sink elements, and dispenser controls, location and heights.

The dimensions and elements for an alternate stall also differ between the codes. To assist with highlighting the differences between the codes, the following can be used for reference. **Bold is required under 2006 MAAB and considered the most stringent**, non-bold underlined is required under the 2010 ADADS and considered the most stringent, and *Italic indicates the two standards are equivalent*. The toilet compartment of an accessible stall requires the **depth of the toilet stall shall be 66 inches**, the width needs to be **36 inches**, and the toilet shall be located at **18 inches to the centerline on one side**. The door of the alternate stall shall provide a *32 inch clear opening*, provide an **outward swing**, provide an *accessible lock*, provide *door pulls on both sides* of the door and provide a *coat hook no higher than 48 inches off the floor*. Grab bars, like the ones in the standard accessible toilet stalls, need to be provided on *both sides of the stall*, provide **42 inches in length**, be provided at a height of *33–36 inches off the floor*, and be located **6 inches out from the back wall**. The toilet paper dispenser shall also be located **below the grab bar**, be located between 7-9 inches in front of the toilet, provide a *continuous paper flow*, and be *no lower than 15 inches to the dispenser outlet* off the floor.

I hope you enjoyed this deep dive into the requirements for an accessible alternate stall. Please remember that each situation should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As always, if there are any questions related to this topic, please let me know. If you have topics you would like me to write about you can reach me by email at jeff.dougan@mass.gov or by phone at (617-727-7440) x27316.

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September

National Preparedness Month

<https://www.ready.gov/september>

11 & 12-CAM Training in
Wesport, MA

18-MCAA Senior Staff
Training in Boston, MA

October

National Disability Em-
ployment Month

Oct 5 2018 Disability
Summit

[mass.gov/mod/
summit2018](http://mass.gov/mod/summit2018)

10 & 18-Division of
Banks Training in Bos-
ton, MA

17 & 18-CAM Training in
Natick, MA

22-24-Disability Mentor-
ing Week

[www.Mass.gov/mod/
dmw18](http://www.Mass.gov/mod/dmw18)



Would you like to see **your pet** in a
future issue? Email photo to:
MOD-Info@MassMail.State.MA.US

