



**Massachusetts Office on Disability
Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA) Improvement Grant Program**

FY19 Annual Report





Massachusetts Office on Disability

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MUNICIPAL AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

www.Mass.gov/mod/adagrant

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Executive Summary

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is pleased to present the following annual report regarding the third year of the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant Program. Designed with the goals of creating new or updated Self Evaluation and Transition Plans and increasing access to programs, services, and activities through the removal of barriers for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

Launched in FY17, the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program has provided communities with resources necessary for updating amenities to increase the level of accessibility being provided for all citizens around the Commonwealth. On August 1, 2018, the FY19 application period opened, and the MOD instantly received inquiries and subsequent applications for grant funding for both Planning and Project Grants from municipalities throughout the Commonwealth. There were 33 Planning Grant and 59 Project Grant applications, totaling 92 grant applications submitted for review. Following a competitive selection process based on scoring considerations, tangible impact within the community, and the funding available for FY19, 27 grants were awarded for a total of \$1,394,605; Of the 27 awarded grants there were 14 Planning Grants totaling \$764,184, and 13 Project Grants totaling \$630,421. The awarded applications reflect cities and towns of all sizes, demographics, socio-economic conditions, and locations throughout the Commonwealth.

Of the 14 awarded Planning Grants, 7 towns produced new Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans, and 7 towns updated existing Self Evaluation and Transition Plans. The 13 awarded Project Grants provided positive impact to a wide range of disability prevalence's including hearing, vision, and mobility, through accessible updates to existing infrastructure, and the purchase and installment of assistive technology. The FY19 grant cycle allowed for lasting impacts to current and future residents for increased access to facilities, services, programs, and activities in these communities. It is safe to say that the Grant Program had another successful year!

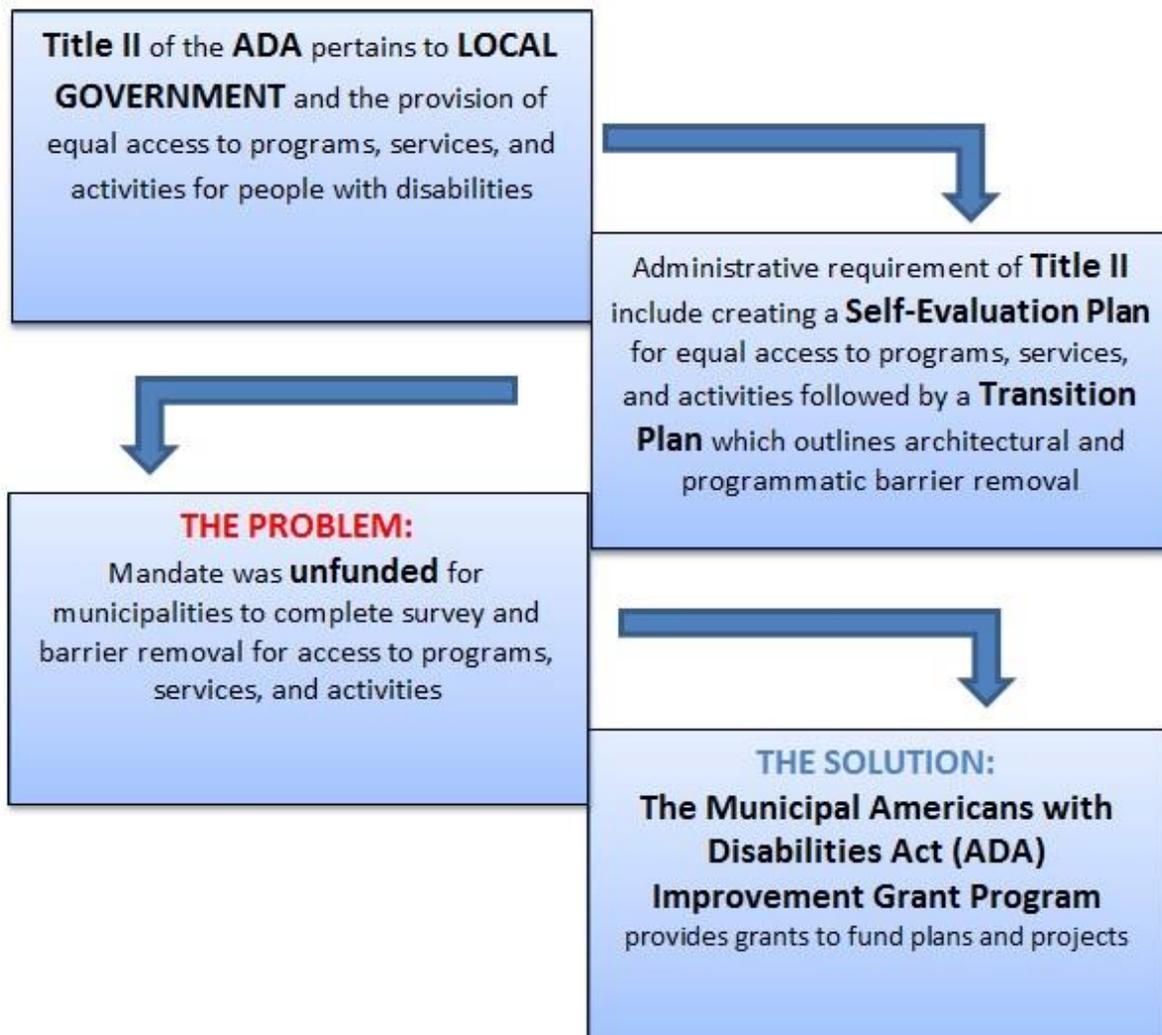
Internal control for the program was accomplished through timely receipt of invoices from grantees. Receipts of the Self Evaluation and Transition Plans via email were required for all Planning Grants. To ensure work was completed as described for the scope of the project, on-site visits were conducted by staff for all awarded Project Grants.

The following report provides an overview of the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, the grant application and selection process, information regarding the Planning Grants, award amounts and impacts of the Project Grants, overview of internal control, and concludes with a look back at the FY19's program's success and continued goals for the years ahead.

Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant Program Overview

The Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program is an innovative competitive Grant Program that provides Planning and Project Grants for the purpose of improving access to public programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. Cities, towns, special purpose districts, and county governments are eligible for allocations up to \$250,000. The program is overseen by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) whose mission is to: ***“Bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life...in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination.”***

Why This Grant Program Is Needed

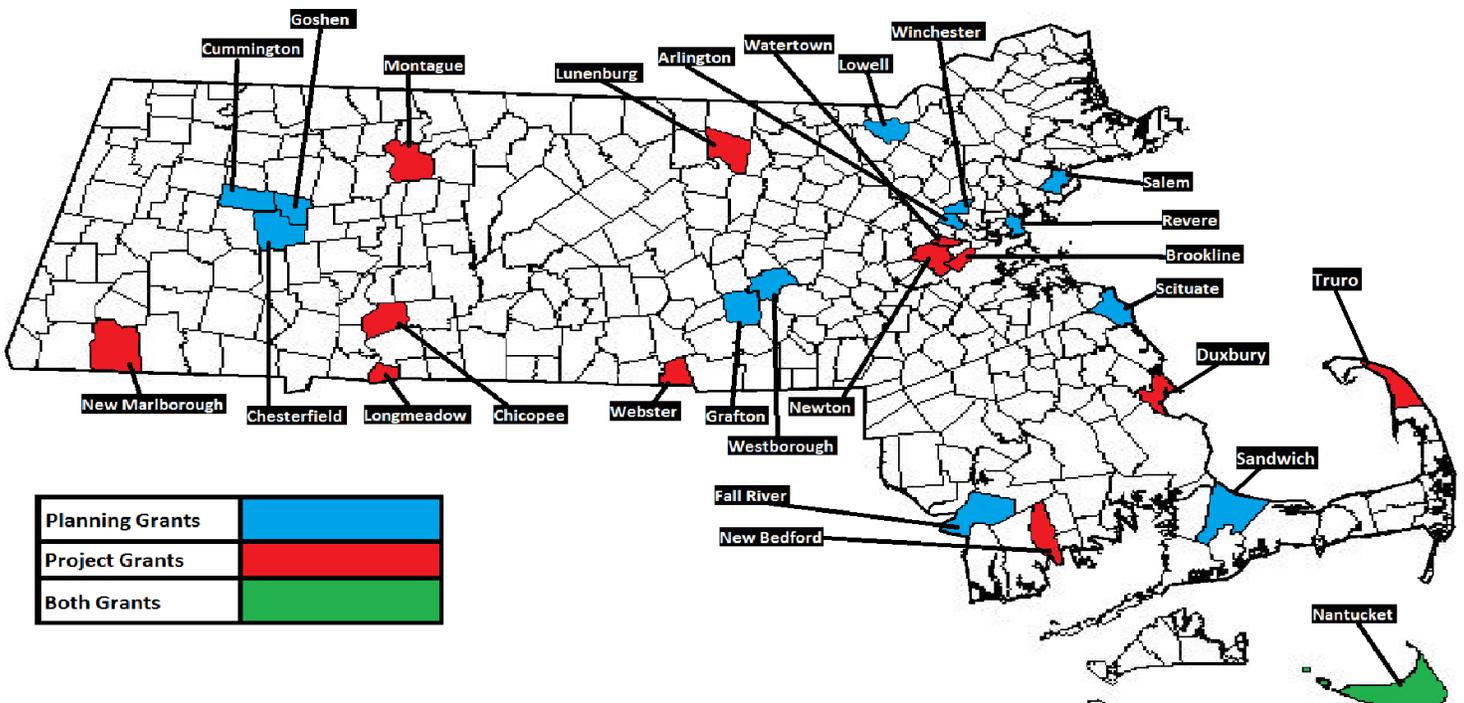


Application and Selection Process

The application process for the FY19 Municipal Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Improvement Grant Program opened on August 1, 2018. Information for the program and the application is located on the Massachusetts Office on Disability's website (www.mass.gov/mod/adagrant). The program offers two types of Grants, Planning Grants and Project Grants. **Planning Grants** are for communities looking to create or update outdated Self-Evaluation and/or Transition Plans. Self-evaluations are a comprehensive review of all programs, services, and activities operated by a public entity. Transition Plans are developed from the Self-Evaluation, providing a list of the physical barriers that limit the access to programs, services, and activities while also providing proposed methods to removing those identified barriers, a schedule of when the work will be completed and the name of the official or department responsible for making those changes. To be eligible to apply for a Planning Grant, a municipality must have completed the first three administrative requirements under Title II of the ADA. **Project Grants** are for architectural and communication barrier removal. To be eligible to apply for a Project Grant, a municipality must have completed all five administrative requirements under Title II of the ADA. Information regarding the scope of project, cost estimate, additional resources, project schedule, staff, maintenance, history of prior planning efforts for accessibility, census data of people with disabilities within the community, names of grant team members, and information regarding if anyone with a disability was involved in the grant application, are also required for Planning and Project Grants.

- Title II Administrative Requirements**

 - a. Designation of Responsible Employee**
 - b. Notice of ADA Requirements**
 - c. Published Grievance Procedure**
 - d. Self-Evaluation Plan**
 - e. Transition Plan**



Selection for approved Grants was completed by a Grant selection committee utilizing a weighted scoring process. Every municipality in the Commonwealth is eligible to apply for a Grant. At a minimum, applicants must be a member of the Community Compact Cabinet (CCC), and for those communities that select “Public Accessibility Best Practice” option; additional consideration was given in the selection process. Additionally, communities with a duly established Commission on Disability (COD) were given an increased score. Following the scoring and selection process, approved Grant award notifications and denial letters were sent to Grant applicant municipalities.

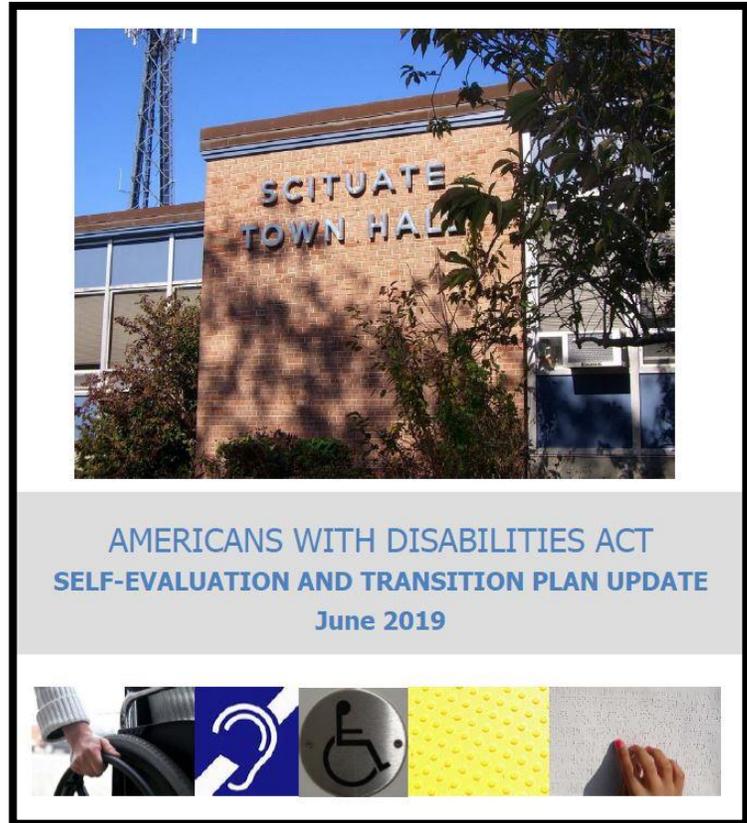
Communities that received approved grant awards were sent contracts to be signed and returned to the MOD. Once the Grant Compliance Coordinator received the signed contracts, he notified the awarded communities that they were cleared to begin work for the scope of project to commence as described in the contract.

Each awarded community, with the exception of one, municipality reported having a Commission on Disability (COD). CODs play a vital role in responding to the needs and concerns of people with disabilities with a community as well as serving as advocates for policies and procedures. One role of the Massachusetts Office on Disability is being the lead technical advisor providing support and guidance to CODs throughout the Commonwealth. These commissions also work to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Currently there are about 200 established COD's.

Additional resources were reported by most communities. These additional resources included actual financial investments from awarded municipalities (\$2,315,151). The sidewalk pictured on the front of this report was constructed the Caracas Construction Corporation for the Town of Montague.

Planning Grants

Enacted in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became effective in 1992. By January 26, 1993, all cities and towns, regardless of size, were mandated to create a Self-Evaluation Plan to identify accessibility to their programs, services, and activities within their communities. For a municipality with fifty or more employees, a Transition Plan needed to be created within eighteen months of the effective date of the ADA. The Transition Plan would serve as an action plan to guide planning and budgeting priorities for making accessible updates, including barrier removal, purchase of assistive technology and additional necessities outlined in the Self Evaluation Plan. The two plans combined, serve to actively assist communities in strategically and fiscally planning for long term impact goals for accessibility to programs, services, and activities. The plans are proactive documents which aim to decrease reactionary work due to unforeseen issues related to accessibility arising within the community.

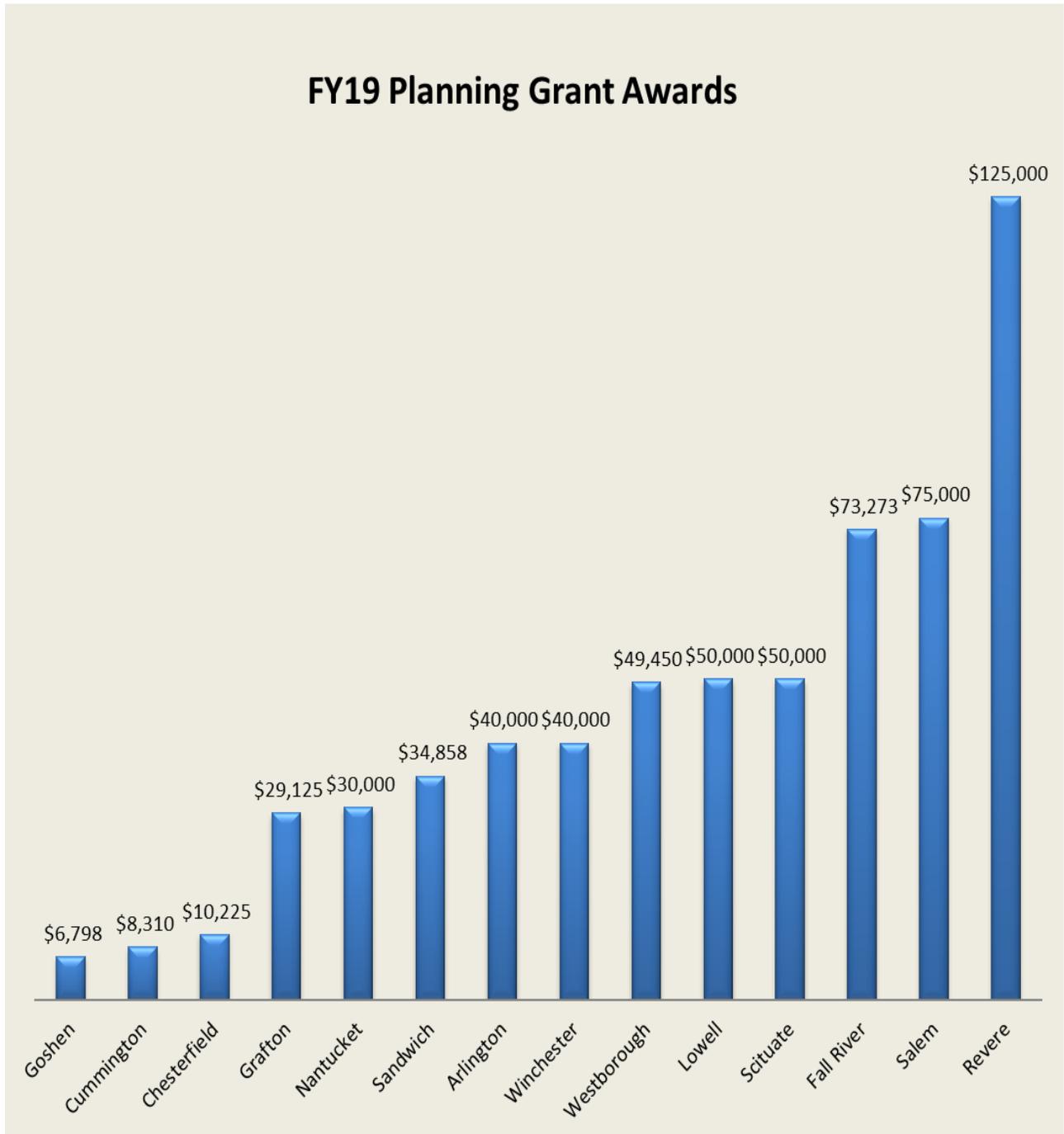


To date of the 351 municipalities in the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) has 181 Self Evaluations and 188 Transition plans on file. Prior to the grant program in 2017, MOD had only 81 Self Evaluations and 103 Transition Plans on file.

The Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program allows for these plans to be created, including the updating of outdated plans. The Planning Grants portion of the Grant Program assists with meeting this goal by awarding funds to communities who create new plans or update outdated ones. This year, the program funded 13 Planning Grants ranging in awards from \$6,700 - \$125,000.

The municipalities of Arlington, Fall River, Grafton, Lowell, Revere, Sandwich, and Westborough created their first ever Self- Evaluation and Transition Plans. The Towns Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Nantucket, Salem, Scituate, and Winchester updated older plans.

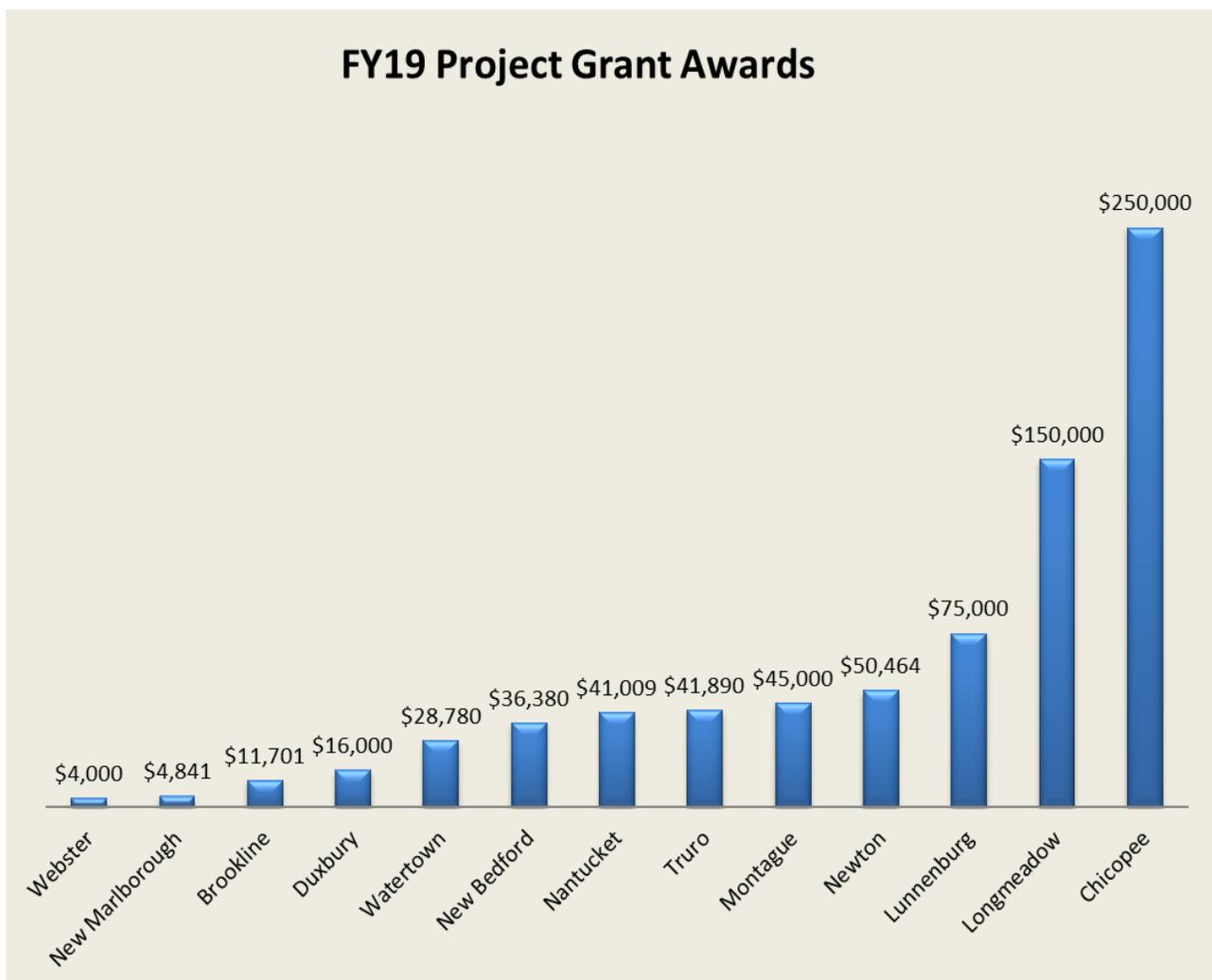
The graph below lists the communities awarded Planning Grants and the amounts awarded in order of value. Goshen received \$6,798, Cummington \$8,310, Chesterfield \$10,225, Grafton \$29,125, Nantucket \$30,000, Sandwich \$34,858, Arlington \$40,000, Winchester \$40,000, Westborough \$49,450, Lowell \$50,000, Scituate \$50,000, Fall River \$73,273, Salem \$75,000 and Revere with \$125,000.



Project Grants

A significant goal of the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program is to increase equal access for residents of the Commonwealth to services, programs, and activities within their communities. In FY19, the program awarded 13 Project Grants to as many communities ranging in location, population, and demographics. The impacts of these projects have benefitted multitudes of residents in these communities through increasing access to programs, services, and activities of local government including: City and Town Halls, Senior and Community Centers, Recreational Spaces, Public Beaches, Restrooms, Libraries, Sidewalks, Curb Cuts, and more.

The graph below lists the communities awarded Project grants and the awarded amount in order of value. Webster received \$4,000, New Marlborough \$4,841.44, Brookline \$11,701.47, Duxbury \$16,000, Watertown \$28,780, New Bedford \$36,379.62, Nantucket \$41,009, Truro \$41,889.52, Montague \$45,000, Newton \$50,464, Lunenburg \$75,000, Longmeadow \$150,000, and Chicopee with \$250,000.



Summaries of Awarded Project Grants

The following Project Grant summaries provide the name of the municipality, the award amount, and the description of work funded during the FY19 grant cycle.

Town of Brookline

“You can already see people that are having a much easier time traversing this space. It is so heavily trafficked that it was super important for us to make this our priority and it is paying off.” Caitlin Starr, Assistant Director Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations

The Town of Brookline was awarded a \$11,701.47 Project Grant and contributed \$100,000 towards the project; to improve accessibility at the intersection of Harvard Street and Beacon Street, on the south side, by removing barriers and creating access for both the sidewalks and Coolidge Corner MBTA stop. This was achieved by installing four new curb cuts that allow for easier movement across Harvard Street and Beacon Street.

The intersection of Harvard Street and Beacon Street is a major thruway for vehicles, pedestrians, and public transportation. The area is host to a weekly farmers market that takes place on Thursdays between June and November as well as a theatre, a bank, and a variety of different restaurants. The Coolidge Corner Green Line MBTA stop is one of the busiest MBTA stops in the Town and is frequently dropping off and picking up passengers from the center-of-the-street platform that is only accessible via the crosswalks that transition to the sidewalk via curb cuts. For all these reasons the Town of Brookline prioritized this location for accessibility updates.

With the improvements to the curb cuts, the ability to traverse this area has increased significantly. The curb cuts feature smooth transitions from sidewalk to street and lack any cracks or bumps that makes movement difficult, especially with a mobility device. The sidewalk paneling surrounding the curb cuts was also updated for the same reasons, to remove any obstacle in the form of cracks or bumps. At some curb cuts, pooling of water and/or ice could form after storms, which could add to the level of difficulty of traversing the area. The newly installed curb cuts at this intersection have been tested to ensure that water/ice will not pool at the base and will run off into nearby storm drains.

The photo below, on the left, shows the new curb cut that allows for an easier transition to the street from the sidewalk for pedestrians moving across Harvard Street. In addition to that, the



photo on the right, shows the new curb cut that serves the same purpose but for pedestrians moving across Beacon Street.

City of Chicopee

“We are so glad to have this elevator modernization done because it is the first step in our goal to make this building the center of activity for the whole City” Lee Pouliot, Director, Department of Planning and Development, Chicopee

The City of Chicopee was awarded a \$250,000 Project Grant and contributed \$1,418,951 towards the project to improve accessibility at the Chicopee City Hall. This was achieved through renovating and modernizing the elevator in the building that serves all 4 floors.

The Chicopee City Hall houses several municipal offices that residents come to on a regular basis to conduct business. For example, since residents cannot pay their utility bills online and must come to City Hall to do so, the building is heavily frequented by members of the community. Additionally, developers come into the building for planning related meetings, people need to get certification and licensing at this location, the Mayor has frequent visitors, and there are city employees who use mobility devices that work in the building. These previous barriers made access a priority for the city to update their elevator to improve access for all members of the community.

With the update to the elevator and its components, the elevator cab was widened to 64x65 inches to accommodate people using mobility devices and other mobility aids. In addition, the button fixtures are in locations that can be easily reached. With this needed update, all floors of the building are now fully accessible, and people can now move vertically throughout the building without concerns.

The elevator modernization project is part of a larger project being done at the City Hall Auditorium. With the assistance provided by this grant program and the contributions made by the City of Chicopee the elevator project completed a big step towards this long-term goal.

The photo below, on the left, shows the exterior of the modernized elevator, complete with call buttons, visual indicators, door jamb markings, and other items. The photo on the right shows the interior of the modernized elevator with appropriate lighting and features.



Town of Duxbury

“These mats not only help people who have limited mobility but also help people with limited sight. My mother is blind and with these mats she can get to the beach without worrying about the rocks or other pit falls.” Cris Luttazi, Executive Director of the Duxbury Beach Reservation

The Town of Duxbury was awarded a \$16,000 Project Grant and contributed \$5,000 towards the project to improve accessibility at Duxbury Beach by removing existing barriers that limited to the beach and the recreation areas. The accessibility improvement was achieved at Duxbury Beach by the purchasing and installation of several Beach Access Mats, which allows people to traverse over the sand and rocks easily. This improvement benefits all visitors to the beach as it provides a firm, stable, slip resistant surface.

Duxbury Beach is a major recreational area, not only for the residents of Duxbury, but also for thousands of people across Plymouth County and the state that visit each year. The installed mats weigh approximately 60 pounds each and are sturdy enough to withstand normal wind gusts that would threaten to blow lighter mats away. The mats were installed in two locations in a “U” shape so that they are accessible from two arrival areas. Each “U” has an entry point on one side which connects to the parking lot near accessible parking spaces to limit the amount of travel for people with mobility related disabilities. The other entry point of each “U” connects to access ramps which provides for an even easier access point for those who may not want to go through the inclined dune, even with the access mats in place. The mats themselves are tactile, which creates a grip and lessens the chances that someone may slip and injure themselves. The Town also installed rest areas to the side of the main path so that people can move to the side and take a rest if they need or to just enjoy the beach from that location. The installation of the beach mats also incorporated safety into the project by allowing the mats to run adjacent to the lifeguard stations at both locations so all visitors have equal access during an emergency. Not only do these mats cater to people who have mobility related concerns, the mats also assist people with low vision due to their bright blue color. By covering the rocks and possible divots, the route over the sand is safer to travel. The Town of Duxbury also has Beach Wheelchairs that the people can reserve at no cost so that someone wishing to go into the water has that opportunity to do so.

The picture displayed on the lower left shows newly installed Beach Access Mats that allows for beach patrons to get onto the beach through the dunes with the added accessibility. The picture displayed on the lower right shows the newly installed Beach Access Mats that allows beach patrons to move about the beach with the added accessibility over the rocks that are found at the beach.



The Town of Longmeadow

“This is a much loved and often used playground and park in our Town. I’m just glad that people will be able to get here from all different directions without needing to go over grass or chipped paving.”

Andrew Krar, Longmeadow Town Engineer

The Town of Longmeadow was awarded a \$150,000 Project Grant, and contributed \$50,000 towards the project, to improve accessibility and remove barriers at Bliss Park. This was done by repaving the main parking lot, restriping the six existing accessible parking spaces across all three parking lots, repaving existing pedestrian paths, and putting in four additional routes that connect to the existing sidewalk.

Bliss Park is a frequently used public park that the residents of Longmeadow enjoy. The park contains a playground, a basketball court, a baseball field, a pool, and access to a wooded nature walking path. People take leisurely walks through this park as a way of getting away from the sidewalk and street traffic. With all the attractions that this location offers, it was a priority for the Town of Longmeadow to make accessibility improvements. The updated pedestrian paths snake through the park and allow access to the many activities provided. These paths go around the playground, between the basketball court and the baseball field, and completely around the baseball field. The updated paths not only increase safety for people who walk on them, but the construction crews also provided pavement that goes right up to the benches dotted along the path. This allows for people to easily use the benches without needing to go over grass or mud. The newly constructed pedestrian routes connect to the existing sidewalk along the street and were constructed to allow one to enter the park from the sidewalk regardless of the direction one may come from. The repainted accessible parking spots are also near the pedestrian paths that connect to the respective lots.

The picture on the left below shows the newly repaved main parking lot with its newly painted van-accessible parking spaces and appropriate signage. The picture on the right below shows the newly installed access path that leads from the sidewalk to the park near the baseball field and basketball court.



The Town of Lunenburg

“We did not want anyone to not be able to enjoy the outdoor spaces that we can provide but it was just impossible for people to safely get into these spaces. We are so happy that these areas are accessible now” **Matthew Marro, Conservation Administrator, Lunenburg Conservation Commission**

The Town of Lunenburg was awarded a \$7,500 Project Grant and contributed \$10,000 towards the project; to improve accessibility at the Cowdery Property, the Lane Conservation Area, and the Small Town Forest. This was achieved through repaving the parking lots and installing an accessible nature trail at each location. In addition, van-accessible parking spaces were installed in the Lane Conservation Area and the Small Town Forest.

The Cowdery Property is a conserved nature park in Lunenburg that offers hiking trails, picnic areas, and other outdoor recreational activities. In order to improve accessibility for all residents, Lunenburg installed an accessible nature trail at the entrance of the property that connects to the rest of the hiking trails that wind through the area. The trail was constructed using stone dust and is smooth, meeting grade so that there are no changes in level or steep inclines. The trail connects to the parking lot with a smooth transition, making it flush with the newly paved parking lot. Prior to the construction the parking lot was the natural forested ground. Roots, dirt, fallen leaves, pine needles, and uneven surfaces made it difficult for people with limited mobility or limited vision. With the project grant funds and the municipal investment, the parking lot was smoothed out and made into an accessible parking lot that is easy to traverse.

The Lane Conservation Area was also updated as a part of the project grant. The Lane Conservation area’s parking lot is two tiered. At the entrance of the property the parking lot has an incline at the back. At the top of this incline is another, smaller, parking area. In order to improve accessibility in the parking lot, the Town of Lunenburg repaved both tiers of the parking lot, making it smooth and easy to travel over, as well as providing a new van-accessible parking space closest to the trail entrance. Just beyond the upper tier parking lot is where the Town installed the new accessible nature trail. Like the accessible trail installed at the Cowdery Property, this nature trail is flush with the parking lot, creating a flush transition from parking lot to trail. In addition, the trail was also smoothed out, and lacks any major inclines or obstacles in its path.

Finally, the Small Town Forest was given an accessibility update. The Town installed a new accessible parking space that is located directly adjacent to the entrance to the nature trail for the Small Town Forest. The new accessible nature trail is inclusive, mirroring other local trails at other locations.

The lower left picture shows the entrance to the nature trail at the Cowdery Property that connects to the newly paved parking lot with an informational sign for the property. The lower right picture shows newly installed accessible nature path that was added to the Small Town Forest that will allow residents to visit the Forest and traverse the area without having to worry about inaccessibility.



The Town of Montague

“It is a world of difference from before to now. Not only can people get through this area much easier, but businesses are being attracted to these storefronts (those directly in front of the new sidewalk)” Steven Ellis, Town Administrator of Montague

The Town of Montague was awarded a \$45,000 Project Grant, and contributed \$10,000 towards the project, to improve accessibility on the northwest sidewalk between 3rd and 4th Street in Turner Falls. This was achieved by removing the existing sidewalk and replacing it with an accessible concrete and brick sidewalk.

The new sidewalk, free of obstacles, provides the appropriate clear width and provides a compliant cross slope and provides a sturdy and safe surface for users to traverse. Prior to the construction, benches reduced the path between the sidewalk and parking spaces provided on the street. After the construction the benches were removed and the path between the sidewalk and street parking was opened. At the ends of the sidewalk, where it connects to the street, truncated dome strips were added to the existing curb cuts, which alert persons who are blind or who have low vision that they are transitioning surfaces that intersect with a vehicular way.

Power Town Housing provides housing to seniors and people with disabilities and is located near the new sidewalk which is traversed daily by residents of the housing complex. In addition, a small outdoor patio area is located at that location, which again, increases traffic in this area. Now with the newly installed sidewalk, residents and visitors to the town have a more inclusive and usable surface.

The lower left picture shows the sidewalk that was improved before any work was done. The picture on the lower right shows the sidewalk after work was completed, making it accessible for the residents of Montague.



The Town of Nantucket

“These boardwalks are great because they aren’t only going to serve people with disabilities. As time goes on and as people on the island grow older these boardwalks are going to increase in the already high value.” **Mark Voigt, Facilities Manager, Nantucket DPW**

The Town of Nantucket was awarded a \$41,009 Project Grant and contributed \$17,584 towards the project; to improve accessibility at the Children’s Beach, Jetties Beach, and Galley Beach. This was achieved through the installation of accessible boardwalks at all three locations.

Children’s Beach lies just north of the Hyannis Ferry Depot and is in a location that also has a playground and other attractions that families enjoy. Using both the grant funds and the contributed funds, the Town was able to install a pressure-treated wooden boardwalk which is accessible by a ramp. The ramp meets the parking lot right next to the accessible parking space so that people can get to the ramp without having to traverse lengthy distances. The boardwalk also has seating towards the back of the platform so people can relax and enjoy the beach. Once on the platform of the boardwalk, the beach sands are easily traversable as the platform is flush with the sand.

Jetties Beach also had a pressure-treated wooden boardwalk installed just off the parking lot. Like the boardwalk at the Children’s Beach, it is located right next to the accessible parking space in the Jetties Beach parking lot. The transition from parking lot to boardwalk is smooth and was graded to mitigate any difficult transitions. The boardwalk extends out to a playground area with accessible play equipment so that all families can enjoy the playground. The boardwalks also have seats installed so that people can relax on them.

Finally, Galley Beach also received a newly installed, pressure-treated wooden boardwalk. This boardwalk, unlike the other two, does not have seats installed on it. This boardwalk extends all the way from the accessible parking spaces provided within the lot to the water's edge.

With the installation of these new boardwalks, these three beaches have become more accessible and inclusive. At no cost, residents can reserve accessible beach wheelchairs that allow their users to more easily traverse sand as well as enter the water.

The picture on the left below shows the newly installed pressure-treated wooden boardwalk at Galley Beach that extends to the water's edge. The picture on the right side below shows the new pressure-treated wooden boardwalk at Jetties Beach with resting benches installed.



The City of New Bedford

"For the past 50 years the only way onto this deck was to go up these stairs. It takes a huge weight off my shoulders to finally be able to open this space up to everyone" **B.G Shanklin, New Bedford Commission on Disabilities.**

The City of New Bedford was awarded a \$36,379.62 Project Grant and contributed \$365,000 towards the project; to improve accessibility at the Community Center at Hazelwood Park. This was achieved by installing a new accessible hallway that connects the inside of the building to the outer deck that wraps around the structure, installing two new accessible restrooms, and installing an exterior walk that connects the new hallway to the outside deck.

Two new accessible restrooms were installed inside the Community Center. Inside each restroom there are two accessible toilet stalls, one serving as the accessible stall and one serving as an alternative ambulatory stall, with appropriate grab bars at the correct height on the sides of the stalls in order to provide a point of leverage for people transferring on and off the toilet. The sinks, soap dispensers, and towel dispenser in the restrooms are also accessible, located at the correct height, and are within the appropriate reach ranges. In addition, the soap dispenser and towel dispenser are automatic, making operability more sanitary and user friendly.

The doors to the restrooms are located on the sides of a newly built hallway that goes from the entry of the Community Center to the outside deck. This hallway provides a way to access the outside deck without needing to go outside and then up a set of stairs.

Finally, to make the outside deck fully accessible, a sloped walk was installed which connects the door leading outside from the newly installed hallway to the deck. This improvement allows easier access to the deck from inside the building, especially so for anyone who may use a mobility device. The sloped walk has handrails provided on both sides so that people can safely navigate down onto the deck.

The picture provided below, on the left, shows the newly built hallway which accesses the newly installed sloped walk on the outside deck attached to the Community Center. The picture on the right side below shows the sinks, mirrors, soap dispenser, and towel dispenser that were installed in one of the newly constructed accessible restrooms.



The Town of New Marlborough

“Not every disability is one that we can see, and some people don’t speak up if they can’t hear or follow along in another way. With these devices people can use them at their own discretion and our meetings will be far more inclusive.” Anne Marie Enoch, Town Administrator, New Marlborough

The Town of New Marlborough was awarded a \$4,841.44 Project Grant to improve accessibility at town meetings and events, by removing barriers to communication. This was achieved by purchasing a William’s Sound Assisted Listening Device for public use.

The device works by transmitting the sound of a speaker’s voice at a meeting through a microphone and into the receivers being used by attendees. The sound transmits directly to users’ headphones or through a Bluetooth connected hearing aid. The speaker’s voice can be heard loudly and clearly in the ears of the user. Twenty of these receivers can be used at a time and are signed out to ensure that they are returned after use. The receivers are light weight and fit in the palm of a person’s hand, so they are not cumbersome or difficult to use. With the neck loops included with the system they can also be worn around someone’s neck so that their hands are still free to take notes or to

conduct other business. Alternatively, if a meeting is taking place in a larger, more echoing room, the devices can also be used just to cut down on ambient noise so that a listener can more easily concentrate to what's being discussed.

The receivers come with rechargeable batteries that re-charge through the included docking station. The receivers are stored in the docking station within the carrying case so they will always be charged and ready for use when needed. Finally, the carrying case allows for easy transport of the system if a meeting is taking place at a different location. The case is light weight and as small as a traditional briefcase.

The picture on the left below shows a stock photo of the listening device and the carrying briefcase with the receivers and headphones displayed in an array to the left of it. The picture on the right shows the listening device's transmitter sitting on a table.



The City of Newton

"I walk to and from work every day and I walk through two intersections with the new APS. Before I would need to find the post and it could be difficult, but now I can locate them easily and get to work much safer." Jini Fairley, Newton ADA Coordinator

The City of Newton was awarded a \$50,464 Project Grant and contributed \$12,616 towards the project to improve accessibility throughout the city for pedestrians. This was achieved through the installation of 83 Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS's) at 14 separate street intersections.

The APS's are equipped with a lot of features that assist persons with various types of disabilities in safely crossing the streets. There are locator tones that beep, indicating its location to users. When activated, the signals emit an audible "chirping" sound that alerts pedestrians that traffic has stopped in all directions and it is safe to cross. The volume increases the longer the push arrow is pressed to allow for customization of tone volume between pedestrians. The signal system also has accessible features for people with low hearing as well. The push arrow will vibrate at the same time the chirping sound is emitted to alert the person touching the arrow that it is safe to cross when they may not be able to hear the audible tone.

There was some concern by people living near the altered intersections that the signal volume may disturb them in their homes; however, the signal volumes can be adjusted remotely via an app so that they do not cause issues with nearby residents while also assuring the usability and accessibility of these devices. The sound of the APS's is also audible to drivers and, as such, is an alert to them as well that there are pedestrians either crossing or about to cross the street. These improved amenities increase safety especially during the dark hours of the day or when drivers make right turns on red lights. The signals are also transportable, meaning that they are not hardwired into the poles where they have been installed. This means that, in the future when the City plans on renovating the poles, they can easily install these signals on new poles. With institutes like the Carroll Center for the Blind and the many public parks and schools throughout the City, the APS's will increase safety for all travelers.

The picture on the left side below shows the APS system that the City had previously installed on poles connected to the Traffic Control Signals. The picture on the right side below shows the new APS installed on a pole that is in use by members of the Newton community who are crossing the street utilizing its amenities.



The Town of Truro

“There is a boy who lives around here who uses a wheelchair and it makes me so happy that he will be able to fully play with his friends here rather than sit on the side lines.” Kelly Clark, Assistant Town Manager, Truro

The Town of Truro was awarded a \$41,889.52 Project Grant to assist in a project where the Town also contributed \$153,000; to improve accessibility at the Puma Play Park by removing barriers. This was achieved by installing new accessible play equipment, renovating existing equipment, creating an accessible route using Poured-in-Place rubber, and installing a concrete walkway which leads to the playground entrance.

At the entrance of the playground the town installed a new concrete walkway. This walkway starts at the back door of the Council on Aging building and near a van-accessible parking space to allow

people who wish to go to the playground an easy access point. This paved walkway leads right into the playground and connects to the newly re-surfaced playground.

The new surfacing for the playground is Poured-in-Place rubber that is not only accessible but is also safer for children than the previous wood chip surface. The wood chip surface also caused moisture to be absorbed into the wood, placing the structural foundation beams in danger of rotting. To address this, as well as improving accessibility, the Town took out the wood chips and put down a concrete layer and wrapped the footings of the play equipment to prevent moisture from damaging the equipment. The concrete layer also served as a base for the Poured-in-Place rubber surface.

As for the play equipment, two existing playground structures were renovated to be fully accessible. There are two boats on the playground that the kids can play in. The existing boats required a small step at its narrow entry point. After the renovations were completed to the boats and the playground, the boats' entries were ramped and were widened to increase the level of access being provided.

The new play equipment that was installed improved access and addressed more than just the mobility related access needs. For example, one of the newly installed pieces of equipment was a drum-like piece designed to be accessible for children with sensory processing disorder or who are on the Autism spectrum. In addition, the Town also purchased a piece of equipment that children can stand at and pretend to drive a car with a steering wheel. The "car" provides a gap that allows for children who use a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or a walker, to go right up to the steering wheel for a more inclusive experience. Adjacent to this play equipment is another tactile sensory play station that provides user with different sensations depending on what they touch at that station. Finally, a spinning roundabout was installed at the playground that allows children to get on it and spin in place. This specific roundabout is large enough to accommodate a child who uses a mobility device to also get on it and enjoy the spinning sensation.

The photo on the left below shows the Puma Play Park before the renovation and shows the wood chip surface and other elements that have access barriers. The photo on the right below shows the Puma Play Park after the improvements were made. The picture is focused on the new accessible roundabout but shows the new Poured-in-Place rubber surfacing and an accessible play boat in the background.



The City of Watertown

“People come in here every day who use mobility devices. These doors always posed an issue for people, but I don’t think we will need to worry about that now!” **Caitlin Browne, Assistant Director, Watertown Public Library**

The City of Watertown was awarded a \$28,780 Project Grant and the City also contributed \$5,000 towards the project; to improve accessibility at the Watertown Public Library. This was achieved by installing auto door openers on three sets of doors inside the building and extending the brick patio outside the front of the building to accommodate people who use mobility devices.

The Watertown Public Library offers many resources and programs that the people of Watertown have free access to. In order to ensure that all the programs and resources offered at the Library are accessible, the City installed auto door openers on the doors to the Children’s Room, the Teen’s Room, and the Watertown Savings Bank Meeting Room. In the Children’s Room the Library has “Story Reads” and other programs that encourage children to enjoy reading. Parents attend with their children and frequently bring strollers. With the new auto door openers installed, people who use mobility devices and strollers now have a much easier time entering that location. The Teen’s Room offers similar programs that are offered in the Children’s Room, but the Teen’s Room programs are geared towards young adults. Again, to ensure the room is fully accessible to all patrons of the Library, auto door openers were installed on the Teen Room’s doors.

The Watertown Savings Bank Meeting Room, located in the back of the Library, was outfitted with auto door openers as well. This room often hosts Municipal meetings and other library events. People who used mobility devices can now more independently enter meetings and take part in their cities business. Finally, the City extended the brick patio out in front of the building to allow people to access all the patio tables with enough maneuvering space.

The picture on the left below shows the outside brick patio prior to any improvements made at the Library. The picture on the right side below shows the brick patio after the improvements were made. In the picture on the right, it shows a man about to sit in a chair and he is extending the chair onto the newly widened section of the patio.



The Town of Webster

“People walk through this property all the time and with the proportion of seniors who live here these benches are a great place for them to rest safely.” Anne Marie Peperato, Chair of the Webster ADA Commission

The Town of Webster was awarded a \$4,000 Project Grant to improve accessibility at the Golden Heights housing complex. This was achieved by installing eight new metal benches throughout the property for public use.

The Golden Heights housing complex has two buildings, one building with 72 apartments and another building with 62 apartments. Three of the eight benches were spread throughout the complex along the concrete pathway that snakes between units. Many of the residents are senior citizens who walk through the complex to avoid walking along the busy street outside the complex. Tenants who have dogs also frequently walk throughout the complex. The three benches offer an area for them to rest while they walk.

One of the eight benches was installed immediately outside the Community Center entrance. The Community Center is frequented by the residents during typical days but the Community Center also serves as an emergency shelter in case of power outages or other events. Not only is the bench right outside the main doors, the bench is also adjacent to the accessible parking space. This allows people waiting to be picked up a place to rest and wait.

Another bench was installed outside the home unit for those with disabilities that are chronic. Like outside the Community Center, the tenants of that unit can use the bench right outside of their front door as a place to wait for a ride or just to rest. Finally, the remaining three benches were installed at the centrally located, tree shaded, Mini Park. This location is tree covered so it offers great shade during hot days.

The picture on the left below shows the newly installed benches at the central, tree shaded, Mini Park. The picture on the right side below shows a newly installed bench outside the Community Center, adjacent to a van-accessible parking space, so that people can wait in comfort for their rides.



Internal Controls

Internal controls for the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program were accomplished through contracts, statements of work, periodic summaries of work, and timely receipt of invoices from all grantees. For all Planning Grants, receipt of plans via email were required. For all Project Grants, on-site visits were conducted to ensure work was completed as described for the scope of the project.

Reflection and Forecast

The Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program had two primary goals: to increase the number of new and/or updated Self Evaluation and Transition Plans, and, to increase access and remove barriers to programs, services, and activities for residents within the Commonwealth. Utilizing awarded funds from the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, these two goals were achieved. The program allowed for the creation of new and/or updated Self Evaluation and Transition Plans and resulted in numerous accessible updates among the awarded communities. Looking ahead, FY20 already proves continued interest in the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program from municipalities within the Commonwealth. The FY19 program received a total of 92 grant applications. FY19 recipients continue to be municipalities that range in size, demographics, and location within the Commonwealth. They address a variety of disabilities and align with MOD's mission to,

*“Bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life...
in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination.”*