



Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program

May 21, 2026

Presented by:

Evan George, Grant Compliance
Coordinator



Massachusetts Office on Disability

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.

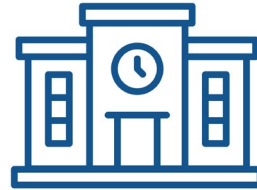


Who MOD serves



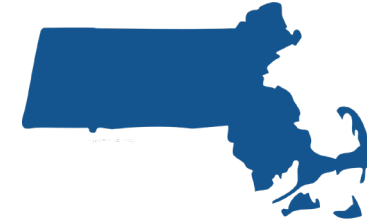
The public

- Explaining how disability civil rights laws and architectural access regulations apply to real people in real life – and offering practical steps to resolve issues
- Help drafting reasonable accommodation/modification (RA) requests for work, housing, state and local government programs, public accommodations, higher education, and more



Cities and towns

- Guidance and training for municipal ADA Coordinators
- Municipal ADA Improvement Grant funding for accessibility planning and projects
- Site visits to assess architectural accessibility
- Guidance for local Commissions on Disability



State agencies

- Overseer of Executive Branch ADA compliance
- Guidance and training for state ADA Coordinators

CAP assistance with VR and IL services

- “CAP” = Client Assistance Program
- Information and advocacy for people with disabilities who want or are receiving:
 - Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from
 - MassAbility and/or
 - the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), or
 - Independent living (IL) services from Centers for Independent Living
- mass.gov/MOD/CAP

Agenda

- Grant overview
 - Planning grants
 - Project grants
 - Tips to improve your score
 - Q&A
-



Grant overview

What is the ADA Improvement Grant?

- Founded in 2017, the grant ensures municipalities are meeting their ADA Title II obligations
- **Reimbursement funding** to municipalities, school districts, and housing authorities for:
 1. City-wide accessibility **planning** (ADA Self-Evaluation and/or Transition Plans) or
 2. Individual **projects** to remove architectural or communication barriers

Grant Selection Committee

- MOD's Executive Director chooses 4-7 people to serve as the Grant Selection Committee
- MOD reports to the Executive Office of Administration and Finance (A&F)

Types of grants

Planning grants

- To update or create a Self-Evaluation and/or Transition Plan as required under the Administrative Requirements of Title II of the ADA

Project grants

- To remove architectural or communication barriers or make physical/communication access improvements
- Only public properties or publicly owned facilities are eligible

Eligibility

Eligible

- Massachusetts municipalities
- Municipally owned properties
- School districts
- Housing authorities

Not eligible

- Private businesses
- Private property
- Non-profit organizations
- Private homes
- Other non-municipal properties

MBTA Communities Act

- The receipt of grant funds is contingent upon the grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act
- Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

MBTA Communities Act compliance review

- Three periods of review for compliance:
 1. Before Grant Selection Committee Review
 2. Before award notifications are sent
 3. Before contracts are signed
- Does not apply to school districts or housing authorities

Program overview

- Maximum grant award: \$250,000 per municipality
- Grants can (but do not have to be) matching
- Invoices must be dated after contract is signed and before June 30, 2027

Important dates: FY27 grant

**May 1 – June 12,
2026**

Online application open

Fall 2026

Executive Office of Administration and
Finance

**July - August
2026**

Review process begins:
Grant Selection Committee

Late Fall 2026

FY26 Grant contracts
issued to awarded
communities

FY26 Grant metrics

Applications Received: 197

Applications Approved: 86

Total Amount Requested:
\$22 million

Total Amount Awarded:
\$5.9 million



Required documentation for all applicants

1. Designation of a Responsible Employee (ADA Coordinator)
2. Notice of Non-Discrimination and proof of posting
3. An ADA Grievance Procedure

All documents must be up-to-date and match!

1) Designation of an ADA Coordinator

- Submit via MOD's [Municipal ADA Coordinator Contact Information Form](#)
- Include this information in your application by uploading:
 - A screen shot of your municipality's listing on MOD's [public listing of municipal ADA Coordinators](#), or
 - A screen shot of the confirmation email you received when you submitted the Municipal ADA Coordinator contact information form

Sample ADA Coordinator posting

Includes:

- Organization
- Category (city/town, housing authority, or school district)
- Who served (employees and/or the public)
- ADA Coordinator name
- Email
- Phone
- Special instructions

Search: Abington

9:13



100

Organization



Category



[Abington](#)

City or town

Who served Employees and the public

ADA Coordinator Kevin Cogan

Email kcogan@abingtonma.gov

Phone [\(781\) 982-0069](tel:(781)982-0069)

Special instructions

2) Notice of Non-Discrimination

- Include this information in your application by uploading:
 - A screen shot of the non-discrimination notice posted on your municipality's website, or
 - A Word or PDF file with the non-discrimination notice (see the New England ADA Center's [Sample ADA Public Notice](#) for a template)

Long

Americans with Disabilities Act

(Name of Public Entity) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: (Name of Public Entity) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with the ADA title I employment regulations.

Effective Communication: (Name of Public Entity) will, upon request, provide auxiliary aids and services leading to effective communication for people with disabilities, including qualified sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, documents in Braille, and other ways of making communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: (Name of Public Entity) will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy programs, services, and activities. For example, people with service animals are welcomed in (Name of Public Entity) offices, even where pets and other animals are prohibited.

Requests: To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures contact (ADA Coordinator name and contact information) as soon as possible, preferably XX days before the activity or event.

Complaints: Send complaints to (ADA Coordinator name and contact information).

Short

Americans with Disabilities Act

The (Name of Public Entity) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its programs, services, activities and employment practices.

If you need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (such as a sign language interpreter, an assistive listening device or print material in digital format) or reasonable modification to programs, services or activities contact the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible, preferably XX days before the activity or event.

A grievance procedure is available to resolve complaints.

Upon request, this notice is available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

(ADA Coordinator name and contact information)

Sample ADA Notice of Non-Discrimination

Includes:

- Statement that organization does not discriminate on the basis of disability in services, programs, activities, or employment practices
- How to request aids/services for effective communication
- How to request reasonable accommodations
- How to make a complaint
- ADA Coordinator name and contact information

Source: New England ADA Center

3) Grievance Procedure

- Include this information in your application by uploading:
 - A screen shot of your grievance procedure from your municipality's website, or
 - A Word or PDF file of the grievance procedure (see the New England ADA Center's [Sample ADA Grievance Procedure](#) for a template)

Sample ADA Grievance Procedure

Includes:

- Steps of procedure
- Reasonable time frames for reviewing and resolving grievances
- Appeal procedure
- ADA Coordinator name and contact information

Source: New England ADA Center

Sample Grievance Procedures

Long

Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the ADA. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the (Name of Public Entity).

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number, email address of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted as soon as possible, preferably within 60 calendar days of the alleged violation to:

(ADA Coordinator name and contact information).

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, (name of ADA Coordinator) will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, (name of ADA Coordinator) will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format that is accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the (Name of Public Entity) and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by (name of ADA Coordinator) does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the (Head of Public Entity) or designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the (Head of the Public Entity) or designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the (Head of the Public Entity) or designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format that is accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

Short

Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

Complaints concerning discrimination on the basis of disability by the (Name of Public Entity) may be sent to (ADA Coordinator name and contact information). (Name of ADA Coordinator) will contact the complainant within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint to discuss the complaint and will respond in writing within 15 days of the discussion.

Resources: Title II compliance

- ADAActionGuide.org
 - Documents, forms, how to create a grievance procedure, etc.
- mass.gov/MOD
- [Architectural Access Board \(AAB\) rules and regulations](#)

Step 1 - Start Implementation

Step 2 - Appoint an ADA Coordinator

Step 3 - Provide Public Notice

Step 4 - Adopt a Grievance Procedure

Step 5 - Conduct a Self-Evaluation

Step 6 - Develop a Transition Plan

Step 7 - Create an Action Plan

Self-Evaluation Forms

Sample Documents



Planning grants

Creating or updating
ADA Self-Evaluation or
Transition Plans

Former planning grant: Canton ADA Self Evaluation

- Findings:
 - Designated, trained ADA Coordinator
 - Established Grievance Procedure
 - No surcharge for accommodations, effective communication, or accessibility features
 - Town meetings, hearings, and workshops are held in accessible locations
- Recommendations:
 - Add appeal information to Grievance Procedure and post to website
 - Add written protocols for ensuring meetings are accessible and clearly post accessibility information

SECTION 5: OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS + RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information from the Town's website, completed survey responses and discussions with staff, the Town has made progress in meeting its ADA obligations not to discriminate based on disability. Following are specific findings and recommendations.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Town has made significant progress fulfilling its Title II administrative requirements.

Finding A1: ADA Coordinator. The Town has designated Charles J. Aspinwall (Town Administrator) to fulfill the responsibility of an ADA Coordinator. Mr. Aspinwall has received training in the requirements of Title II of the ADA.

Finding A2: Grievance Policy & Procedure. The Town has adopted a Grievance Policy and Procedure to resolve disability related complaints (see Appendix). Mr. Aspinwall, Town Administrator is responsible for receiving and processing discrimination complaints. However, there are additional statements that should be included to make the policy more comprehensive.

Recommendation A2:

- The policy should include the steps that a complainant can pursue if they do not agree with the ADA Coordinator's decision, for instance a statement indicating a person's ability to appeal to the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.
- The grievance policy should be easily located on the Town website.

Finding A3: Surcharges. The Town does not impose surcharges to recover the cost of accommodations, effective communications services or accessibility features.

Finding A4: Meetings at Accessible Locations. Procedures are established to assure meetings, hearings, workshops, and conferences, are held in accessible locations. For example, KMA had a discussion with the Facilities Department whose office is located on the second floor of a non-elevated building. The staff member we spoke with confirmed that there is a phone on the lower level that can be used to alert the Department of a person who cannot access the second level and the Department is able to meet in other accessible locations.

Recommendation A4: All departments, boards and commissions should have written protocols for ensuring that meetings are accessible. If the public is expected to phone an office that is not accessible, this information must be clearly posted.

Former planning grant: Pulaski Park Transition Plan

- Function and description of facility and programs
- Responsible party
- General description of accessibility barriers
 - No accessible routes of travel to 2 monuments, gazebo
 - No level area for wheelchair adjacent to benches
- Accessibility assessment table
 - Sections for: General description of obstacle, 2010 ADA Guidelines, MAAB 521 CMR Guidelines, Action Steps, priority level, facility number, temporary facility (yes/no), and cost estimate

PULASKI PARK

Function and Description of Facility and Programs: Pulaski Park is a public green space on Main Street within the central business district. The area serves as a passive recreational area, green space, and location for civic events. The park contains 8 benches, 2 monuments, a gazebo, and a fountain. There are walkways which go through the park providing access to the benches, gazebo, and fountain.



Responsible Party: Mayor, City Council, Parks and Recreation.

General Description or Obstacle Which Limits Mobility or Access: There is no accessible route of travel to the 2 monuments. There are no level areas for a wheelchair adjacent to the benches. There is no accessible route of travel to the gazebo with the only means of access via 2 sets of stairs. The stair railings are non-compliant as they are not round or oval in shape, are too wide, and lack top and bottom extensions. There are abrupt changes in level surface along the walkway at the transition from concrete to brick near the gazebo and lamp posts. The fountain is not accessible.

Pulaski Park Accessibility Assessment

<u>General Description of Obstacle</u>	<u>2010 ADAAG</u>	<u>MAAB 521 CMR</u>	<u>Type of Action to be Taken</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>TF</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>
<u>Gazebo</u> There is no accessible route (vertical access) to the gazebo.	206 403	20	A ramp with compliant slopes (no greater than 2.0% c.s and 8.3% r.s.); railings (paired 34" to 38" a.f.f. and 18" to 20" a.f.f. to the top of the railings); top and bottom 12" railing extensions; minimum 48" clear width between railings (521 CMR); and a level landing must be provided (S.405 and 505 of the 2010 ADA Standards and S.24 of 521 CMR).	1	3	N	Up to \$20,000+

Former planning grants

CANTON, MA: ADA Self-Evaluation

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Recommendation A4: All departments, boards and commissions should have written protocols for ensuring that meetings are accessible. If the public is expected to phone an office that is not accessible, this information must be clearly posted.

Findings A5 & D: Service Animal Policy. The Town does not have a written policy regarding service animals in municipal facilities.

Recommendation A5 & D: Develop a written Service Animal policy and post it in Town facilities

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The stairs (2 sets) have railings that are rectangular in shape, are 5½" wide, and lack top and bottom extensions. See Photo Pulaski 1.	505	27	Assuming one of the stairs will be replaced with a ramp, the remaining set of stairs will need to have the railings replaced with ones that are round or oval in shape, 1½" – 2" in outside diameter, have top extensions that are 12" parallel to the floor, have bottom extensions that are the slope distance of one tread then 12" parallel to the ground, and are 34" to 38" a.f.f. to the top of the railings.	1	3	N	Up to \$2,500

Section 1: Requestor information

- Organization
- Applicant name and contact information
- Grant type (planning or project)

Section 1 - Requestor Information

Applicant (Required)

Grant Type (Required)

Contact Full Name (Required)

Contact Phone (Required)

Contact email (Required)

Contact Address 1 (Required)

Contact Address 2

Contact City (Required)

Contact State (Required)

Contact Zip (Required)

Responsible Employee (ADA Coordinator) Info

Same as Contact

Responsible Employee Full Name (Required)

Responsible Employee Phone (Required)

Responsible Employee email (Required)

Responsible Employee Address 1 (Required)

Responsible Employee Address 2

Responsible Employee City (Required)

Responsible Employee State (Required)

Responsible Employee Zip (Required)

Section 2: Qualification

- Upload documentation:
 - Responsible employee
 - Posting of Non-Discrimination
 - Grievance Procedures
 - Self Evaluation
 - Transition Plan
 - Duly Established COD
 - Member of Community Compact
 - Public Accessibility Best Practice
-

Section 2 - Qualification

Responsible Employee (Required)



Posting of Non Discrimination (Required)



Grievance Procedures (Required)



Self Evaluation (Required)



Transition Plan (Required)



Duly Established COD (Required)



Member of Community Compact (Required)



Public Accessibility Best Practice



Section 3: Planning grant

Planning request

- Grant type (Self-evaluation, Transition, and/or Update)
- Amount requested
- Grant scope
- Renovation and construction history
- Applicant history
- Additional planning information

Impact information

- Census data

Other information

- Applicant team
- Architectural Board History
- State and federal agency history

Section 3 - Planning Grant

Section 3.1 - Planning Request

The type and scope of the proposed Planning Grant. Please select the appropriate grant type and please describe the specific request under the Grant Scope section

Grant Type Self Evaluation Transition Update Amount Requested **(Required)**

Grant Scope

Renovation/Construction history of applicant

Renovation and
Construction
History

History of Applicant's prior planning efforts related to disabilities or access, if any

Applicant History

Any other information relevant to the Applicant's request or need for planning monies under this Project **(Please be advised, all work must be invoiced no later than June 30)**

Additional
Planning
Information

Section 3.2 - Impact Information

U.S. Census microdata or other projection that provides estimates of the number of persons with disabilities residing in the applicant municipality, district or region, if any

Census Data

Section 3.3 - Other Information

Applicant's planning grant submission team and contact information, including any persons with disabilities involved in application process

Applicant Team

Applicant's history of interactions with the state's Architectural Access Board, if any

Architectural Board
History

Applicant's history of interactions with any state and/or federal agencies with regards to accessibility related issues

State and Federal
Agency History



Project grants

Removing architectural
and communication
barriers at municipal
facilities

Project grants: Required documentation

- Same as planning grant, plus:
 - Self-Evaluation/Transition Plan
 - Add page and section that identifies your project!

Former project grants



Project grant: Application questions

Project request

- Grant type (renovation, new construction, or both)
- Amount requested
- Grant scope
- Cost estimate
- Project timeline
- Proposed use
- Staffing and maintenance plan
- Renovation and construction history
- Additional funding sources

Impact information

- Impact on people
- Impact on access
- Monthly usage
- Census data

Other information

- Applicant team
- Architectural Board history
- State and federal agency history

Section 3 - Project Grant

Section 3.1 - Project Request

The type and nature of the project, including description of the project, and whether project is renovation/repair of existing facility or asset or new facility or asset

Grant Type

Amount Requested **(Required)**

Grant Scope

Is the proposed project identified in the current Self-Evaluation and/or Transition Plan?

Proposed Work

Cost estimate of project

Cost Estimate

Proposed project schedule or timeline **(Please be advised, all work must be invoiced no later than June 30)**

Project Timeline

The proposed use and/or programming for the project, including proposed user fees if any for project

Proposed Use

The proposed operating, staffing and maintenance plans for the project, if applicable

Staffing and Maintenance Plan

Renovation/construction history of the affected facility or asset if applicable

Renovation and Construction History

Any other expected sources of funding, support or participation in project, including Applicant's and third parties

Additional Funding Sources

Section 3.2 - Impact Information

Number of persons with disabilities that will or are expected to be impacted by the project

Impact on People

The impact that the project will have on the overall access to the facility and/or the Projects

Impact on Access

Data or projection regarding the average monthly use of the facility and/or Project

Monthly Usage

U.S. Census microdata that provides estimates of the number of persons with disabilities residing in the applicant municipality, district or region

Census Data

Submission tips

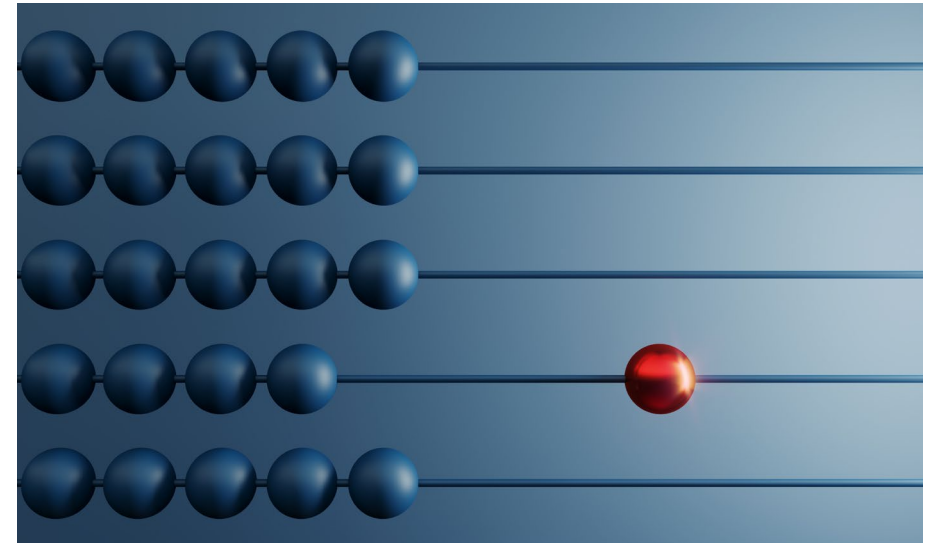
- **Upload** documents before filling out the application
- Once you click “Submit”, **do not exit the page** prior to receiving the application submission confirmation pop-up.
- You will receive an email within 15 minutes confirming your application submission was received.
- **If you did not receive a confirmation email** or see the appropriate screens mentioned above, your submission was unsuccessful, and you will need to resubmit.



Tips to improve your score

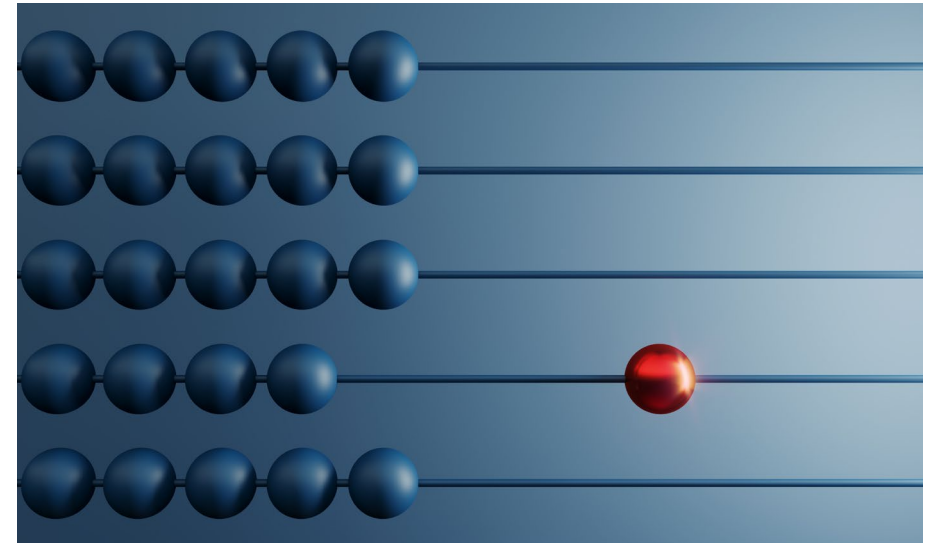
Scoring: Primary considerations

- Grant details
- Realistic timeline
- Outlined cost estimate
- Project from updated SETP
- Age of SETP



Scoring: Secondary considerations

- COD support
- Letters of recommendation
- Grant history
- Innovation



Top 3 tips to improve your score

Include a full breakdown of costs

- Equipment costs
- Estimate of labor
- Materials
- Any additional costs
MOD is not reimbursing?

Match your timeline

- Look at the timeline for the grant!

Establish a COD

- CODs should be part of every step in the grant process!

Resources for Commissions on Disability (CODs)

- Municipal Commissions on Disability (CODs) advise municipal governments on the disability community's needs in their city or town
- Complete the [COD Contact Information Form](#) to update your contact information with MOD

Reminder: Required documentation for all applicants

1. Designation of a Responsible Employee (ADA Coordinator)
2. Notice of Non-Discrimination and proof of posting
3. An ADA Grievance Procedure

All documents must be up-to-date and match!

Reminder: Important dates for FY27 grant

May 1 – June 12, 2026

Online application open

Fall 2026

Executive Office of Administration and Finance announces awardees

July - August 2026

Review process begins:
Grant Selection Committee

Late Fall 2026

FY26 Grant contracts issued to awarded communities



Contact MOD

Evan George

Grant Compliance Coordinator

Office: 617-727-7440 ext. 27313

Cell: 857-248-7924

Email: Evan.George@mass.gov

Website: mass.gov/MOD



Q&A
