



Massachusetts Disability Quarterly

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

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Accessible Kiosk Updates

By Moss Lynch

With the steady rise in today's technology we are starting to see kiosks at our airports, restaurants, banks, and places where employee-customer interaction was, at one time, the only means of communication. Although kiosks can often help to save time, money, and even decrease wait times at establishments, these kiosks have an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to be accessible by all individuals with disabilities.

There are various factors to consider when discussing the accessibility design of kiosks such as front and side reach limits, obstructions, operable parts, protrusion limits, and floor space requirements. Each component is crucial during the design stages.

The accessibility standards and laws are constantly evolving, and updates are being built and added to kiosks frequently. Some current accessibility feature updates include not only the physical requirements of these kiosks but also the interface elements. Some of these interface elements include instructional videos that provide American Sign Language, screen reading software and Braille instruction, text magnification, and closed-functionality features that allow ease of use for individuals with physical disabilities.

As technology improves, so will the accessibility features of kiosks around the country. We look forward to continuing to provide updates as we continue to learn about these features.

References

- 1-www.justice.gov/crt/itm-accessibility-checklist
- 2-www.adakiosks.com
- 3-developer.paciellogroup.com/blog/2017/11/considerations-for-making-an-accessible-kiosk/

Disclaimer: The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is not affiliated with and does not endorse the above-mentioned programs and organizations. This article is for informational purposes only.



Fourth Annual Disability Summit 2018

By Evan Bjorklund

On October 5, 2018 the Massachusetts Office on Disability welcomed approximately 350 guests to the agency's fourth annual Disability Summit. Held at the Partners Healthcare Assembly Row Branch, the Summit was designed to inspire state and local agencies, non-profit organizations, attendees, advocates, and individuals with disabilities to raise awareness of, and continue the conversation around, healthcare, employment, addiction, and state services. Speakers included Evan Bjorklund, the Interim Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Dr. Andrew Houtenville, Associate Professor at the Institute on Disability for the University of New Hampshire, Oce Harrison, the Project Director of the New England ADA Center, and Dr. Miriam Heyman, Senior Program Officer of the Ruderman Family Foundation.

Oz Mondejar, Senior Vice President of Mission and Advocacy for Partners Continuing Care and Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, moderated a panel that featured Commissioners from Health and Human Services agencies including MCDHH, MRC, DMH, DDS, and MCB. This was by far our largest, and most successful, Summit to date.



Photos by Timothy Sullivan, Director of Communications for The Spaulding Rehabilitation Network & Partners Continuing Care

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

By Jakira Rogers and Karl Bryan

The Massachusetts Office on Disability proudly introduced the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Grant Program (ADA Grant Program) in 2017. This grant program is aimed at supporting capital improvements specifically dedicated to improving access for individuals with disabilities in cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.

During the FY18 grant cycle our office awarded 27 grant requests in 24 municipalities. Within the FY18 grant cycle, \$956,614.85 was distributed amongst municipalities in order for them to remove barriers and increase access to services, facilities, and programs. This also helped them develop ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition plans for municipalities to identify areas of improvement for the future.

The ADA Grant Program is separated into two categories: Planning Grants and Project Grants. Planning Grants are used to create or update existing ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition plans as required under Title II of the ADA. During the FY18 grant cycle our office granted 13 Planning Grant requests totaling \$293,041.92. Project Grants are used to make physical practical changes to facilities and services by removing barriers and adding ADA compliant amenities. For the FY18 grant cycle there were 14 Project Grant requests totaling \$663,572.93.

The \$663,572.93 that was awarded for Project Grants was used to improve access for individuals with disabilities by removing barriers and creating accessible routes, accessible restrooms, accessible entrances, and vertical access in public buildings. Some municipalities used the Project Grant for things such as automatic door openers that will improve accessibility for all people in important public buildings such as town halls.

North Andover, a FY18 Project Grant recipient, used their grant to purchase a Braille printer. This would allow the town to have a communication device that can translate a text document into braille and print out a readable format for individuals with visual impairments. Purchasing a Braille printer allowed for students and employees within the town to establish a way to maintain effective communication with all individuals, while also ensuring that individuals with disabilities are included within all communication processes.

Northampton, our largest Project Grant award recipient, was awarded \$250,000. This municipality used the grant to provide access to their three most heavily used municipal buildings and to the most heavily used urban park in their city. Their project renovation provided access into their City Hall, Municipal Office Building, and their Memorial Hall. Previously, those buildings were served by inaccessible sidewalks with deep cracks and ruts that were extremely difficult to cross or navigate. These buildings also had steep drop-offs, inadequate handrails, poor lighting, and inaccessible wheelchair ramps. Our Project Grant provided them with concrete walkways, wheelchair ramps, detectable warning panels, crosswalk safety improvement, walkway lighting, and handrails to address the deficiencies. It also funded their city park, Pulaski Park. This park now has accessible walkways, accessible ramps, and warning panels, along with various other accessibility improvements. Previously, going from the park to the primary city public buildings was not accessible for individuals with disabilities. At present, these three establishments are accessible along with Pulaski Park. Read more about our Grant Program at mass.gov/mod/adagrants.

Commonwealth Disability Mentoring Week 2018

By Evan Bjorklund

In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October of 2018, MOD and the Commonwealth's Human Resources Division (HRD), partnered to host the second annual "Disability Mentoring Week (DMW)." DMW was an opportunity for people with disabilities to explore career opportunities with the Commonwealth. The first day began with presentations for the Mentors and Mentees. Mentees had the opportunity to learn about resume building, interview skills and to learn how to navigate and apply for jobs on MassCareers. The Mentors learned about the ADA, Title I employment initiatives, the application process for individuals with disabilities, and about the interactive process and reasonable accommodations for their employees.

Throughout the following two days, several Massachusetts state agencies, including the Massachusetts Office on Disability, welcomed Mentees to shadow their office, attend meetings, and to learn about the various responsibilities of Executive Branch employees. Each Mentee was paired with state employees working in the Mentee's area of interest and/or education background. Feedback from both Mentors and Mentees has been extremely positive with some Mentees even securing jobs.



Photos by Moss Lynch, Massachusetts Office on Disability

Introducing Christina Belforti

By Christina Belforti

My name is Christina Belforti, and I am very excited to begin my role as Advocate within the Client Services Unit of MOD. I have always been passionate about public service and advocacy; what is most important to me both personally and professionally is fighting for justice by giving a voice to those who have none. I am so excited to join the efforts of MOD to help ensure that people with disabilities can equally participate in all aspects of life. As an advocate, I will be working to inform and advise people on their civil rights, and orient people with disabilities in the right direction towards a more inclusive reality.

Prior to working at MOD, I was an Executive Assistant at Brown Rudnick LLP where I worked within the client services and IT departments. I also have experience interning at the DA's office in Worcester, working in Union's Admissions Department, and spent many years as a lifeguard and YMCA camp counselor. I love working with people to solve problems creatively. For many years I was fortunate enough to participate in a non-profit educational program called Destination Imagination, which focuses on teaching students STEM and 21st century skills through collaborative problem solving challenges. I managed a team of middle school students for three years, and also participated in the program when I was in elementary school.



I received my Bachelors of Arts from Union College in 2017, where I majored in English and minored in History. At Union, I was the captain of the swimming and diving team, a member of the English National Honors Society, and a member of Sigma Delta Tau. My senior year, I published an honors thesis on the exploration of non-normative identities in 19th Century Literature, focusing on the work of British writer Helen Oyeyemi. I am a self-proclaimed English nerd, coffee lover, and huge fan of the beach!

I am happy to answer any questions, and help out in any way possible. I can be reached at (617)-727-7440. I am looking forward to working with you all, and thank you so much for such a friendly welcome!

Introducing Karl Bryan

By Karl Bryan

I am excited to have begun working at the MOD as the Grant Compliance Coordinator. In this position I am responsible for serving as the liaison between municipalities and the MOD when it comes to the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant program which began in the 2017 fiscal year, as well as confirming compliance with awarded municipalities. I was born in Boston and have lived in Malden MA for my entire life. I have always been interested in government and serving the people around me through government work which is what brought me to finding employment with MOD. I love the idea that I am participating in a program that is helping to secure the right of access to people across the Commonwealth.

Prior to coming to work at the MOD while in college, I served as the Public Policy Intern at the Metro West Chamber of Commerce evaluating pending legislation in the Massachusetts State House and writing reports on how said legislation would affect business and industries in the state. I also worked as a Resident Assistant while in college for 3 years helping students with academic and personal issues, while ensuring safety in the Resident Hall.



I attended Framingham State University and Graduated with a degree in Political Science with a Criminology minor. I was also quite involved in Student Government and had the honor of serving as the Student Trustee for 2 years.

I look forward to working with the Commonwealth's residents. Please feel free to contact me with any inquiries about the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program at (617)-727-7440. Thank you!

Assistive Technology Development Updates

By Moss Lynch

Individuals with disabilities are gaining even more independence as assistive technology further develops. These assistive technologies are helping individuals to engage and work more comfortably in everyday tasks, conversation, and in a professional environment.

A vital assistive technology program that is aiding individuals with disabilities is screen reading software which allows individuals with disabilities the opportunity to navigate websites, read documents, search for links within the text, and to define images. The goal of this technology is to essentially explain everything on a screen, in order, with functional links, and alternate text for images, as if the screen were turned off. This allows individuals who are blind or have low vision to utilize websites and documents seamlessly without missing any vital information.

Updates to eye scanning assistive technology are improving the way in which individuals with disabilities can utilize their eyes to operate all features of their computer so that they can comfortably make telephone calls, participate in conversation, type documents, and even play videogames. An excellent feature of this assistive technology is that it can convert text into spoken word, and this text-to-speech programming allows individuals to type their conversation utilizing their eyes, and then the conversation is read aloud by the computer. This technology may help individuals with disabilities to perform daily job functions as well, for it is programmed so that individuals can operate video calls, navigate websites, and send emails using the built-in eye scanners.

MOD will continue to provide assistive technology updates as they continue to develop, for these advancements are steps forward in supporting and aiding individuals with disabilities to live and work independently.

Addiction, Recovery and the ADA

By Oce Harrison

Project Director of the New England ADA Center, Institute for Human Centered Design

The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. This includes people with addiction to alcohol, and people in recovery from opioid and substance use disorders. To help people understand their rights and responsibilities, a new document has been published by the New England ADA Center, "Addiction, Recovery and the ADA." The PDF illustrates how the ADA applies to alcohol addiction, and the illegal use of drugs differently. This difference is illustrated through various scenarios about alcohol, opioids, cocaine and marijuana. It also addresses how the ADA applies to persons that become addicted while using a legally prescribed drug like Percocet. There are thousands of people newly in recovery, unaware of their civil rights under the ADA; please share freely. Read more at the following link, <https://www.newenglandada.org/addiction-recovery-and-ada>.

Jeffrey's Access Corner: Portable Toilets

By Jeff Dougan

In this edition of Jeffrey's Access Corner, I want to discuss what the obligations are under both the 2006 revision of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board's rule and regulations (MAAB) and the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Design Standards (2010 ADADS) when it comes to the provision of portable toilet units. We typically see these at recreation fields or outdoor events, not only in the Spring and Summer, but also in the Fall and Winter at holiday events or other festivals. Portable toilets at construction sites used exclusively by construction workers are not covered by either of these regulations.

While both the 2006 MAAB and 2010 ADADS will require that 5%, but not less than 1, accessible portable toilets be provided at each location, there is often confusion related to what the obligation actually is.

Whether it be a municipal recreation department, a school athletic department, a business holding a festival, or a private group, if the general public can use those facilities, these obligations apply. For example, if the parents of a soccer league want to rent a portable toilet to be used where practices are being held for the soccer team, the portable toilet would need to be accessible. Another example is if a town wants to provide portable toilets at their beach, the portable toilet would need to be accessible.

First let's look at what is meant by "location." The best way to explain this is to think of a square field. If a singular portable toilet were provided on each corner (4 in total), the regulations would require that there be 4 accessible portable toilets available; 1 in each location. Now if we change that up and only provide the 4 portable toilets at 1 corner of the field, then the regulations would only require that 1 (5% of 4 is 0.2 which rounded up equals 1) accessible portable toilet would need to be provided. Each location that portable toilets are provided, whether all bunched in a singular location or spread throughout a facility; 5%, but not less than 1, need to be accessible at each cluster.

Now let's take a look at what the regulations mean by "accessible." While I will not go into each detail, considerations need to be made for where the accessible portable toilet(s) are placed, the dimensions of the portable toilet, the interiors and features provided, and identification needed. There are 3 types of portable toilets that can be rented: a small, a medium, and a large; the large toilet measures at an overall 5'x5' size, and allows for maneuvering clearances, a wider door, grab bars, and other amenities for accessibility.

It should be noted that there are costs associated with this. While the small portable toilet will cost less, the industry does charge the most for the larger portable toilets. While I won't comment on the fee structure of the industry, I will suggest that the clustering of the portable toilets be considered when deciding where and how many will be provided or are required to be provided.

To be accessible, you also need to consider the location of where the portable toilets will be placed on the site. Let's go back to the square field that provides portable toilets at each corner. The 2 regulations both require that there be an accessible route for someone to be able to get to the accessible portable toilets. If this route involves grass, such as at a soccer field or a grass field at a festival, then the regulations would indicate that there is no accessible route provided; so, placement is key. Placing it on a hard packed or paved surface that is level is crucial.

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.

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

Winter 2019 Calendar

January

1-Happy New Year 2019!

4-World Braille Day

Learn more at nfb.org/blog/article/344

National Birth Defects Prevention Month

Learn more at www.nbdpn.org/national_birth_defects_prevent.php

February

4-World Cancer Day

Learn more at www.worldcancerday.org/about-us

American Heart Month

Learn more at www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/index.html

AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month

Learn more at lowvisionmd.org/february-is-amd-macular-degeneration-low-vision-awareness-month/

March

1-International Wheelchair Day

Learn more at disabilitybenefitscenter.org/blog/intl-wheelchair-day

3rd Week- **Crisis Line Awareness Week**-BC Crisis Line Association

Learn more at healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/crisis-line

National Developmental Disabilities Month

Learn more at nacdd.org/ddam



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