



Happy New Year from MOD

Message from the Executive Director

As a new year (and a new administration!) begin, we celebrate the progress we've made. We thank former Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito for their steadfast leadership over the last eight years as MOD has grown and continued to serve the people of the Commonwealth. We also congratulate Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll and look forward to continuing this work under the new administration.

Our Disability Summit in October brought together our partners and friends from across the Commonwealth's disability community to learn from each other about creating a more accessible digital world. Check out our [Summit recording](#) to relive the celebration and hear from our speakers, a diverse array of digital accessibility experts.

We'd also like to celebrate and congratulate the recipients of our [Municipal ADA Improvement Grant](#) for the FY22 cycle. Grantees are using these funds to improve accessibility in their communities in a variety of ways - through ADA planning to uncover accessibility needs, architectural modifications to open Massachusetts beaches, parks, and public buildings to a wider disability community, and more.

In the new year, we're continuing our focus on digital accessibility through our cross-secretariat AT/IT working group and online resources. We look forward to continuing our work with individuals with disabilities, cities, towns, nonprofits, and private entities through technical guidance and training. Our phone lines are open to answer your questions about your rights and obligations under disability laws and regulations.

Read on for our latest resources and upcoming events to help you improve accessibility for all.

With best wishes for the new year,

Mary Mahon McCauley
Executive Director

Disability Summit: Accessibility in a Digital World



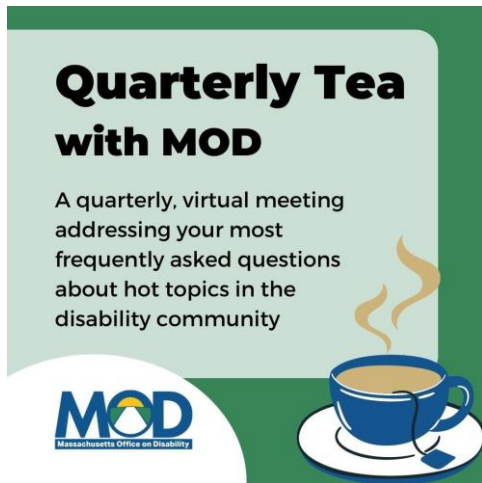
[Download Summit materials](#)

Remembering a disability advocate: Tom Hopkins



[Transcript and alternative text: Tom Hopkins memorial video](#)

Upcoming MOD trainings



Quarterly Tea with MOD: Navigating Support Options to Resolve Disability-Related Issues

Wednesday, February 15
1 – 2 PM

When you're looking for answers or support to resolve a problem, sometimes simply working out who does what and how to effectively ask for assistance can be a major hurdle. This quarter's Tea will get you started with real-world examples and information on:

- Properly identifying your needs and goals
- Finding and navigating relevant information and sources of support
- Planning your course of action
- Tips for effective interactions with sources of support
- How and when MOD can provide support

MOD's Quarterly Teas address your most frequently asked questions and concerns related to hot topics in the disability community. Quarterly Teas are scheduled for one hour. The last 20 minutes are reserved for a live Q&A. Bring your questions about where and how to best get the help you need from disability-related government agencies and organizations!

Presenters:
Naomi Goldberg
Assistant Director for Disability Rights
Director, Client Assistance Program

[Register for Quarterly Tea](#)

Disability Disclosure in Employment Workshops

MOD's Client Assistance Program (CAP) has developed a free, interactive workshop series, consisting of three separate workshops over Zoom. The series is aimed at employees and jobseekers with disabilities and their advocates. There is no cost to attendees.

The [Decision to Disclose](#) focuses on things to consider when deciding to disclose a disability. [Reasonable Accommodations](#) offers guidance on best practices for requesting a reasonable accommodation. [Disability Discrimination](#) explores workplace interactions that could be discriminatory and discussing steps to deter or address them.

[Upcoming CAP workshop dates and registration](#)

Resources



Assistance animals: Your rights in different settings

Many people with disabilities use assistance animals to accommodate their needs. Your rights and the laws depend on the type of assistance animal you have and the setting in which the animal is being used. Some questions to ask yourself:

1. What type of animal do you have? Is it a service, emotional support, or therapy animal? Therapy animals and pets have the same rights under the law.
2. What's the context? Are you using the animal at home, at work, or while traveling? Your rights and responsibilities may vary depending on the setting.

Our new webpages on assistance animals can help you answer these questions and learn more about your rights and responsibilities:

[Disability rights for users of assistance animals](#)

[Assistance animals in housing](#)

Tips for creating accessible electronic documents

Accessible documents are designed, structured, and written in a way that allows people with disabilities to use them effectively. Creating an accessible document ensures that the information you are trying to convey is received and understood by all audiences. Our new webpage provides some foundational tips for making your electronic documents accessible.

[Foundational principles to help make electronic documents accessible](#)

Quarterly Tea: Digital Accessibility

Our November "Quarterly Tea with MOD" webinar addressed your most frequently asked questions related to digital accessibility: why it's important, what's required, and fundamentals of ensuring accessibility in your digital communications.

[Quarterly Tea: Digital Accessibility recording](#)

ADA Coordinator Basics Training

MOD's ADA Coordinator Basics training gives municipal ADA coordinators the information you need to succeed in your role: an overview of relevant disability laws and legal obligations, how to handle reasonable accommodation and modification requests, accessibility tips and resources, and more. This training includes hands-on, interactive scenarios to test out and apply your knowledge. ADA Coordinator Basics is designed for all municipal ADA coordinators, whether you are new to the role or experienced and looking for more guidance and answers.

[Municipal ADA Coordinator Basics Training: Recording](#)

Disability: Part of the Equity Equation

This webinar, cohosted by MOD and the Massachusetts Division of Apprentices Standards, featured conversations with disabled apprentices and their employers reflecting on how apprenticeship has benefited their lives, impacted their career outlook, and changed recruitment.

[Disability: Part of the Equity Equation recording](#)

DPH training for healthcare professionals

The Health and Disability Program at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is offering 2 new free, online, on-demand trainings for healthcare professionals to learn about working with people with disabilities and making health care practices accessible. CMEs/CEs are available for physicians and nurses, and any healthcare provider is eligible to complete them.

[Creating a Responsive Practice for Individuals with Disabilities](#) reviews how to create accessible healthcare practices, recognize health inequity and disparities, and more.

[Responsive Practice: Accessible and Adaptive Communication](#) reviews how to effectively communicate with people with disabilities with a variety of communication needs to best provide care for your patients.

After completing the trainings, you'll be invited to attend technical assistance sessions with the Massachusetts Health and Disability Program and self-advocates with disabilities.

Opportunities

Job Posting: Executive Assistant

Join the MOD team! We're seeking an Executive Assistant to provide both job support and clerical support to the agency Executive Director. This may include taking notes at staff and informational meetings, explaining graphs and other visual content in an auditory manner, web research which includes finding

disability data and other pertinent information, managing the Executive Director's calendar and contacts on Microsoft Outlook, organizing and filtering of incoming and outgoing email, and managing the Executive Director's MS Office 365 electronic files.

[Executive Assistant: Learn more and apply](#)

Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB)

MOD is accepting resumes from individuals interested in serving as members on the [Massachusetts Architectural Access Board](#) (MAAB). The MAAB develops and enforces regulations designed to make public buildings accessible to, functional for, and safe for use by persons with disabilities. We encourage individuals with knowledge or experience working with accessibility in the built environment and/or individuals with lived experience needing access to the built environment to apply.

MAAB members serve for a term of three years. Board members attend and vote at [board meetings](#), which are held every other Monday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Appointments are made by the Governor as vacancies arise.





Individuals interested in serving on the board should submit resumes to Mary Mahon McCauley, MOD Executive Director, at MaryMahon.McCauley@mass.gov

People

Abigail Shneyder, Program Coordinator

Abigail (Abby) Shneyder is the new Program Coordinator for Emergency Preparedness at the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Born and raised in Greater Boston, Abby is excited to venture far and wide across her home state, delivering trainings—on personally preparing for emergencies—to people with disabilities, seniors, and anyone with other access and functional needs. Before working with MOD, Abby was a field and community organizer for Democratic campaigns and an AmeriCorps service member at a housing advocacy nonprofit.



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