



Proposed Five – Year Accessibility Plan

(2024 - 2028)

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NYCEDC Five-Year Accessibility Plan

Local Law 12 of 2023 (“Local Law 12”), codified as N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 23-1004, requires agencies of The City of New York (“City”) to prepare and publish five-year accessibility plans using a template provided by the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (“MOPD”), see <https://accessibilityplans.cityofnewyork.us/>. NYCEDC supports the City’s efforts to promote and increase accessibility, and proposes a Five-Year Accessibility Plan, as described herein.

General

NYCEDC has designated the following person by name and contact information as its Director of Accessibility:

Seema Malik

Director of Accessibility

Equity and Community Impact

New York City Economic Development Corporation

One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006

accessibility@edc.nyc

(212) 312-1277

The name of the office responsible for preparing and updating NYCEDC’s five-year plan:

NYCEDC Equity and Community Impact

- [link to NYCEDC’s grievance procedure for members of the public](#) (See Appendix I)
- [link to NYCEDC’s website accessibility statement](#) (See Appendix II)

NYCEDC Equity Statement

NYCEDC is deepening its commitment to promoting equitable outcomes within its projects. As part of these efforts, NYCEDC is seeking to ensure that its programmatic and contracting activities are appropriately targeted towards historically underrepresented groups to ensure that they are promoting fair and equitable growth.

Executive Summary

In late summer of 2023, NYCEDC’s Equity and Community Impact Division hired a full time Director of Accessibility to ensure the success of its accessibility strategy. The Director of Accessibility is responsible for the development of internal and external programs to ensure NYCEDC compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) and other federal, state, and City regulations relating to people with disabilities.

Key Focus Areas

- The Director of Accessibility will craft and develop a comprehensive, organization-wide approach to addressing accessibility for people with disabilities impacted by NYCEDC programs and projects.
- The Director of Accessibility will collaborate across NYCEDC departments; to identify possible barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities, to develop reasonable methods to remove barriers, and to develop plans and goals, including resources for implementing such goals to promote accessibility for people with disabilities, including advancing Universal Design (“UD”) principles and goals.

The Director of Accessibility works with NYCEDC’s Accessibility Employee Resource Group (“ERG”). The mission of the ERG, a volunteer employee-led group, includes

supporting NYCEDC employees who have disabilities, other accessibility needs, or an interest in learning and supporting accessibility initiatives by fostering an inclusive, accessible community that values people with disabilities and their allies, and provides a safe space for understanding and discussion.

Potential areas of growth

- Develop consistent guidelines and standards of practice related to digital access and effective communication for NYCEDC staff that will be implemented across all departments.
- Explore initiatives to promote ADA accessibility in NYCEDC programs.
- Explore initiatives to include Universal Design principles in NYCEDC projects. Increase NYCEDC's knowledge base as it relates to accessibility by looking into providing staff training.

Accessibility Statement

NYCEDC is committed to ensuring that its public spaces, programming, and digital media are inclusive of all New Yorkers, including people with disabilities. NYCEDC intends to continue to develop programs in compliance with federal, state and City laws and regulations.

Methodology

NYCEDC is developing a five-year plan describing the steps it is currently taking and will take over the next five years to ensure that its workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of people with disabilities.

Pre-assessment

In late summer of 2023, NYCEDC hired a full time Director of Accessibility. The Director of Accessibility reviewed all guidance and training provided by MOPD to City agencies.

Accessibility Review Process

The Director of Accessibility convened an internal team that included senior and executive level staff in various departments: External Affairs, Human Resources, Management Information Systems, Equity & Community Impact, and Corporate Services. The team engaged in a self-evaluation process, based upon guidelines provided by MOPD and it was found that NYCEDC staff is making a “good faith” effort to identify and if possible, eliminate barriers.

NYCEDC Five-Year Plan

NYCEDC’s proposed plan describes the steps it is currently taking and will take over the next five years to ensure that its workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to, and accommodating and inclusive of, persons with disabilities. The plan is organized into the following areas:

- Physical Access
- Digital Access
- Programmatic Access
- Workplace Inclusion
- Effective Communication

Physical Access

NYCEDC’s principal place of business is One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006. This is a leased office space which is owned and operated by Brookfield Properties.

Access Achievements

All events that are open to members of the public are typically held on the 14th Floor. The NYCEDC reception desk is located on that floor. NYCEDC's office meets the following physical access requirements:

- elevator access to all floors,
- accessible routes that are stable, firm, slip resistant and more than 36 inches wide,
accessible and gender-neutral bathrooms, wellness rooms,
- drinking fountains with clear approach,
- signs with text characters in contrast with backgrounds, in braille and located at elevators, bathrooms, and conference rooms,
- fire alarm systems with both flashing lights and audible signals,
- ergonomic furniture, and
- wayfinding – strong graphics with a common theme but varied colors which help with orientation.

Short Term Goal

NYCEDC intends to complete a comprehensive survey of its office space and make a good faith effort to improve the space.

Long Term Goal

- NYCEDC will conduct accessibility surveys, develop appropriate strategies to make a good faith effort and work to remove any identified barriers to accessibility that are readily achievable.

Digital Access

NYCEDC conducted a self-evaluation of its website, based on guidelines provided by MOPD. It was found that good faith efforts are being made across departments to meet various guidelines. The following key determinations were made:

Access Achievements

- The NYCEDC website meets all web accessibility requirements, and the web accessibility notice has been posted on NYCEDC's website.
- The name of the Director of Accessibility is clearly stated on the NYCEDC website.
- NYCEDC hired dedicated social media staff to the Public Affairs department, critical for establishing and maintaining consistency in the accessibility of posts.

Short Term Goals

- NYCEDC will work on developing consistent policies and standards of practice across departments for practices related to web accessibility, electronic documents, mass or automated emails, virtual meetings and review of digital content.
- NYCEDC will make a good faith effort to offer whenever possible training to increase staff knowledge and best practice standards as it relates to making digital content accessible, available to various departments with priority to those creating public documents.
- NYCEDC will develop standards of practice to produce descriptive alt-text for images on its website.
- NYCEDC will add to its website the ability for a member of the public to submit a request for a reasonable accommodation or file a grievance with the Director of Accessibility.

Long Term Goals

- NYCEDC will establish and implement standardized language for printed and digital event materials to ensure the general public can make reasonable accommodation requests.
- NYCEDC will establish a protocol and timing for regular review of website content and set standards for content including plain language, accessibility goals, audit images and description for quality.

Programmatic Access

In keeping with our mission to make our programs more inclusive, NYCEDC launched several programs and initiatives.

Access Achievements—NYC Ferry

- The NYC Ferry website (www.ferry.nyc) is a fully accessible website managed by NYCEDC's operator.
- NYC Ferry riders may submit complaints/grievances via voice mail, email, website or social media.
- NYC Ferry vessels are equipped with wheelchair security devices.
- NYC Ferry vessels have accessible restrooms.
- NYC Ferry vessels allow boarding with service animals.
- NYC Ferry operates accessible shuttle buses.
- In September 2022, Mayor Adams and NYCEDC announced the Ferry Forward vision plan, which strives to build a more equitable, accessible, and financially sustainable system. One of the key changes enacted through the Ferry Forward plan was the expansion of the NYC Ferry Forward discount program. The discount program offers \$1.35 one-way tickets to seniors, people with disabilities and other riders who participate in the Fair Fare NYC Program.

Short Term Goals

- All NYC Ferry vessels will be equipped with onboard wi-fi for passengers.
- NYC Ferry's operator will implement land-side automatic audio announcements to alert passengers how long it will be until the next ferry arrives.
- NYC Ferry's operator will implement onboard visual and audio stop announcements, to let passengers onboard know which stop is next.
- NYC Ferry's operator will implement real-time schedule information via SMS text and phone call.

Effective Communication

NYCEDC conducted a self-evaluation based on guidelines provided by MOPD. It was found that good faith efforts have been made across departments to meet various guidelines. The following key determinations were made:

Access Achievements

- NYCEDC installed hearing loops and other assistive learning devices in its main conference room that serves as NYCEDC's public meeting space.
- NYCEDC currently contracts with third party vendors to address reasonable accommodation requests for specific auxiliary aids and services.
- NYCEDC has standardized PowerPoint templates with attention to color contrast and larger font size.
- NYCEDC's website will allow members of the public to make a reasonable accommodation request to the Director of Accessibility.

Short Term Goals

- NYCEDC intends to offer an organization-wide presentation to share NYCEDC's accessibility strategy and goals of the five-year accessibility plan.
- NYCEDC will offer resources on using plain language to staff.

- NYCEDC will make a good faith effort to conduct all in-person, offsite events at locations that are accessible.

Long Term Goals

- Upon request, NYCEDC will provide for or arrange for the provision of alternative formats and communication of NYCEDC documents.
- Upon request, NYCEDC will provide or arrange for alternative formats and communication support for receiving and responding to feedback from people with disabilities.
- NYCEDC intends to provide training to NYCEDC staff on communications with people with disabilities.

Workplace Inclusion

NYCEDC conducted a self-evaluation based on guidelines provided by MOPD. It was found that good faith efforts have been made across departments to meet various guidelines. The following key determinations were made:

Access Achievements

- NYCEDC participates in various career fairs and ensures they are disability-inclusive and accessible.
- All job applications submitted to NYCEDC are made readable by a program which is optimized for use with a screen reader.
- All promotion opportunities at NYCEDC are open to everyone, regardless of disability status. This affirms NYCEDC's commitment to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and one that embraces inclusion and diversity.

- NYCEDC recently relaunched its Accessibility focused volunteer ERG Group, for which one objective is to attract, retain, and engage a diverse and talented workforce.
- The NYCEDC office has accessible bathrooms, gender neutral bathrooms as well as wellness rooms. In addition, with regard to fire and life safety, the building at 1 Liberty Plaza has an established procedure in place to support employees and visitors with physical disabilities. NYCEDC has a Deputy Fire Warden and Security Team who are trained to provide assistance to people with disabilities.

Short Term Goals

- NYCEDC is able to provide electronic and large print documents upon request.
- As to hiring, best practices are followed while developing all job descriptions, however all descriptions will be reassessed periodically to ensure they are disability inclusive (i.e., that they focus on the essential duties of the job and do not include outdated or exclusionary language).
- NYCEDC is in the process of researching and shortlisting disability focused job boards to post job openings.
- Interview training is being developed for all managers and employees involved in the hiring process. It is being designed to help familiarize them with the hiring process, provide information on basic interviewing skills, and provide insights into avoiding common pitfalls as it relates to communicating with people with disabilities.
- NYCEDC has posted a procedure for requesting a reasonable accommodation for NYCEDC staff on its NYCEDC intranet. For external job applicants, a process for requesting a reasonable accommodation has been added to the interview confirmation.

Long Term Goals

- NYCEDC will assess its resources to provide braille documents and business cards.
- NYCEDC intends to make disability awareness training available to employees.

Appendix I

NYCEDC Grievance Procedure

NYCEDC Policy Prohibiting Discrimination Against People with Disabilities in Access to Services

NYCEDC does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of its programs, services and activities. It is the policy of NYCEDC to comply with all applicable federal, state and City laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the ADA, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the New York State Human Rights Law and the New York City Human Rights Law.

NYCEDC strives to be welcoming to and inclusive of people with disabilities. Any member of the public who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures in order to participate in NYCEDC's programs, services or activities (involving matters other than employment) is invited to direct their needs and preferences to NYCEDC's Director of Accessibility by email, phone or mail:

Seema Malik

Director of Accessibility

Equity and Community Impact

New York City Economic Development Corporation

One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006

accessibility@edc.nyc

(212) 312-1277

Requests should be made as soon as possible but no later than seven (7) business days before the scheduled program, service, or activity. Questions, concerns or requests for additional information may be directed to the NYCEDC Director of Accessibility.

NYCEDC Grievance Procedure for Members of the Public Alleging Discrimination Based on Disability

Any member of the public alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by NYCEDC may file a grievance with NYCEDC, which should contain:

- the name, address, telephone number and/or email of the grievant;
- summary of the alleged discriminatory act(s) giving rise to the grievance;
- date(s) and location(s) of the alleged discriminatory act(s) and whether the alleged discrimination is ongoing;
- factual basis for the grievance and request to NYCEDC for assistance.

“Grievance” is the term for the allegation filed with NYCEDC by a member of the public.

“Grievant” is the term for the person alleging discrimination in the grievance.

When and How to File a Grievance

The grievance should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the alleged violation to:

Seema Malik

Director of Accessibility

Equity and Community Impact

New York City Economic Development Corporation

One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006

accessibility@edc.nyc

(212) 312-1277

- The grievance may be filed in one of two ways: in writing by mail or email using the above address; or

- Upon request, by an alternative means, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged discrimination. A request for an alternative means of filing may be granted as an accommodation for a grievant with a disability.

Timeline Following Filing of Grievance

Within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the grievance, the Director of Accessibility or its designee will contact the grievant to discuss the grievance and possible resolutions.

Within thirty (30) business days of this contact with the grievant, the Director of Accessibility or its designee will provide a response to the grievance in writing, unless additional time is requested. Grievant may request the response in an additional format accessible to he/she/they such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the grievance, describe NYCEDC's position, and offer options for substantive resolution of the grievance, where applicable.

All written grievances and responses in connection with a grievance made to NYCEDC will be retained for at least three (3) years.

Note: Upon request to the Director of Accessibility, this page can be made available in an alternative format.

Appendix II

NYCEDC Website Accessibility Statement

NYCEDC is committed to ensuring its digital content is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. We are continually improving the user experience for everyone and applying the relevant accessibility standards.

Conformance Status

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) define requirements for designers and developers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. It defines three levels of conformance: Level A, Level AA, and Level AAA. NYCEDC’s digital content is partially conformant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to this accessibility standard.

Assessment Approach

NYCEDC assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

NYCEDC Five-Year Accessibility Plan

NYCEDC’s five-year accessibility plan will be available to view at edc.nyc/accessibilityplan