



New York City Emergency Management
Five-Year Accessibility Plan
(2024 – 2028)
Under Local Law 12 of 2023

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Introduction

Local Law 12 of 2023 (“Local Law 12”) requires all New York City (NYC) agencies to prepare and implement a Five-Year Accessibility Plan in consultation with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). The Local Law requires agencies to outline the concrete steps each agency is and will be taking to remove or prevent barriers that impede access to the agency’s services, programs, activities, and workplace for people with disabilities, as well as efforts to expand that access.

Links to NYCEM’s Proposed Five-Year Accessibility Plan were shared with a Disability Advisory Group that provided input from 2016 to 2020 regarding ways the City could improve the accessibility of its emergency planning, response, and recovery efforts, as well as in weekly newsletters sent to organizations participating in NYCEM’s Strengthening Communities program, its Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and its ReadyNY program from January through mid-February 2024.

In addition, MOPD posted the proposed plan and notice of opportunity to comment on the NYC Agency Accessibility Plans website and publicized the site via its email list, social media channels and at its quarterly community meeting in early January.

No substantive feedback was received during the period for public comment, but the agency has provided several updates and corrections to the proposed draft.

Accessibility Statement

New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) is committed to providing people with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all its programs, services, and activities in a manner that is integrated, to the maximum extent feasible, with programs available to all members of the public and, in the case of the workplace, to all employees, invitees, and guests who visit or use NYCEM facilities and offices or otherwise engage with NYCEM staff. NYCEM works diligently to include equitable disability considerations into all phases of the emergency cycle from mitigation to preparedness, response, and recovery in the face of the varied emergencies faced by the City of New York (City), its residents, and its visitors.

About NYCEM

Under the NYC Charter and Administrative Code, NYCEM is the city agency designated and charged with the responsibility of comprehensive citywide emergency planning for myriad types of emergencies, of wide-ranging scale and proportions. It had been a part of the Mayor's Office until 2002, when it became an independent agency, headed by a commissioner who reports to the mayor. It is responsible for coordinating the various City agencies' responses to those emergencies and potential incidents which require a multi-agency response, and typically close collaboration with public, private, and community partners. NYCEM is a coordinating, as opposed to a direct-service, agency, but it does engage regularly with the public and community members before, during, and after emergencies.

NYCEM is staffed by approximately 225 dedicated professionals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, including individuals assigned from other City agencies. The agency is made up of the following bureaus and offices:

- Bureaus:
 - Community Engagement
 - External Affairs
 - Logistics
 - Readiness
 - Response
 - Planning & Resilience

- Offices:
 - Office of the Chief Counsel
 - Office of the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer
 - Office of the Chief Financial Officer
 - Office of the Chief of Staff
 - Office of the Chief Operating Officer
 - Office of Strategic Operations

NYCEM's Office of the Chief Counsel is the office responsible for preparing and updating NYCEM's Five-Year Accessibility Plan ("Plan"). The agency grievance procedure for people with disabilities can be found here: [grievance process](#). This procedure is also attached to this Plan as Appendix A.

A link to our agency's Website Accessibility Statement can be found here: [Website Accessibility Statement](#). The agency's Website Accessibility Statement is also attached to this Plan as Appendix B.

NYCEM's Mission

NYCEM's mission is to help New Yorkers before, during, and after emergencies through inclusive preparedness, education, response, and recovery. The agency is responsible for coordinating citywide emergency planning and response for all types and scales of emergencies.

Disability Service Facilitators

Disability Service Facilitators (DSFs) are assigned, under Local Law 27 of 2016, by the head of each City executive agency to coordinate with MOPD in agency efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning accessibility for people with disabilities.

DSFs are to be knowledgeable about the provisions of the ADA, and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning persons with disabilities. They serve as the primary contact within their respective agency for people with accessibility requests for auxiliary services, coordinating such auxiliary services, responding to inquiries from the public concerning accessibility, developing agency policies and procedures to ensure full accessibility for people with disabilities, conducting periodic training for agency staff on disability access issues, assisting in the investigation of any complaints alleging agency noncompliance with applicable disability rights laws, and other related legal obligations, as well as any other functions assigned to them by the head of their agency.

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NYC Emergency Management's Five-Year Accessibility Plan

Executive Summary

This Plan first outlines the many significant steps already taken by the agency in the areas outlined in Local Law 12 of 2023: physical access, digital access, programmatic access, communications access, and workforce inclusion.

It then details NYCEM's plans for the next five years to further enhance efforts in these areas. In this section programmatic and communication efforts are covered under a single heading due to their interrelated nature.

In accordance with Local Law 12 of 2023, the draft is being made available for public comment, including to people with disabilities, to gather suggestions for improving the Plan before it is finalized and implemented.

In addition, in early 2024, NYCEM will conduct a series of meetings with community organizations already involved with a program NYCEM created called Strengthening Communities to further guide alterations that NYCEM may implement under the Plan.

Methodology

The development of this Plan involved NYCEM's Office of the Chief Counsel and its Disability and Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) unit soliciting input from across the agency to assess NYCEM's progress in removing barriers and providing accessibility to people with disabilities in a non-discriminatory manner. NYCEM conducted a comprehensive gap analysis to determine potential ways to improve physical access to sites, digital access to our programs, programmatic access generally, including communications access for people with sensory disabilities, and inclusive and non-discriminatory treatment of all employees and applicants for employment who have disabilities. The analyses incorporated lessons learned from recent incidents and include current emergency management trends and improvements from across the country.

As mentioned in the previous section, NYCEM also plans to meet with current community partners to further guide how NYCEM can receive additional input regarding relevant needs of people with disabilities.

Summary of Current Staffing, Barrier Removal, Accessibility Improvements, and Disability Access and Functional Needs Efforts

NYCEM moved into its current accessible location on Cadman Plaza East, in Brooklyn, in late 2006.

1. Staff Dedicated to a Focus on People with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs

Over the past ten (10) years, NYCEM has strategically appointed two leadership positions and added multiple other staff members dedicated to integrating the access needs of people with disabilities or access and functional needs into the broad spectrum of emergency programs and services. This commitment extends beyond just periods when the City activates its Emergency Operations Center (EOC), encompassing the intervals between emergencies, preparedness planning, response efforts, recovery operations, and the various support functions. It includes, among others, the Senior Disability and Civil Rights Counsel, the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer, the Chief Technology Officer, the Systems Engineer Manager, the Legal Director of Civil Rights, staff from Learning and Development, Human Services, and others.

All DAFN staff are responsible for remaining abreast of and applying developments in law as well as both agency and City policy that impact people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, as well as always working to meet the needs of the City's DAFN populations.

2. Accessible Emergency Sheltering Capacity

To provide emergency accessible sheltering for as many as 120,000 people with disabilities in the event of coastal storms and other emergencies, the city has remediated 75 Department of Education (DOE) schools, hiring ADA accessibility experts to survey to levels that meet or exceed the current ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

When Coastal evacuations are ordered, the city activates emergency sheltering in an integrated setting, which includes City-provided mobility and communication devices, as well as a greater amount of sleeping space for people using mobility devices or who have service animals with them. Additional accessible shelter capacity is under development and the City provides multiple Special Medical Needs Shelters for people who have a higher need for supportive care than is available in the regular, accessible shelters. The mobility and communications aids developed for sheltering purposes are also made available at City-run respite and service centers.

3. Emergency Transportation Planning and Assets Developed for Evacuation and Repatriation

The city has inventoried all its accessible vehicles for potential use in transporting people with mobility disabilities during emergencies and has instituted plans to continue increasing the City's fleet of accessible vehicles. It has also strategically and extensively coordinated and developed integrated plans with 311, the New York City Housing Authority, and with both providers of transportation and owners of transportation infrastructure throughout the New York City metropolitan area, ranging from the MTA to private point-to-point ride providers and private ambulance services.

4. Tools Used for Effective Accessible Communication

NYCEM developed protocols and policies to include provision of materials in alternative formats in its public-facing settings. These formats include braille, large print, audio tape, and other media for City-generated materials distributed at shelters and service centers and used in community outreach. Sign Language Interpreters and Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) are used during high-level press conferences and both sign language interpretation and video remote interpretation (VRI) is provided at service centers and shelters.

Tools have also been introduced to make presentations accessible during virtual and in-person meetings among staff as well as between staff and the public.

5. NYCEM Support and Coordination of Citywide Operations

NYCEM and FDNY developed a series of improvements to practices regarding evacuation of high-rise residential buildings for people with disabilities unable to evacuate on their own during emergencies. These included FDNY training on the ADA to improve their readiness, and promotion of inclusivity in emergency preparedness, designed drills, and outreach to landlords and residents.

Related plans include the Homebound Evacuation Operations (HEO) for evacuating people with disabilities from their homes, including high-rise buildings, and transporting them to shelters, as well as returning them back home once the emergencies have ended. Upgrades to the City's HEO and 311 operations included expanding 311 hardware and increased call receiving and sorting capabilities. The collective strategic planning with agencies has been a fundamental part of success of the process.

The Post-Emergency Canvassing Operation (PECO) is run by the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). It was established to provide safety checks post-storm on the well-being of people who may not have

evacuated before the arrival of a storm, including the distribution of food, water, and medication, as well as possible evacuation, if needed. This neighborhood canvassing is conducted by trained DOHMH staff and trained volunteers.

Internally, NYCEM has developed means of surveying for accessibility prospective sites for use as shelters, respite centers and service centers for accessibility where otherwise accessible sites close to an incident had either not previously been identified or were not available when needed.

6. Support for People with Disabilities in the Event of Power Outages

When opened in response to emergencies, NYCEM provides shelters and service centers opened on behalf of the City with sufficient power strips to facilitate the charging of essential medical devices and mobility equipment by people with disabilities. Additionally, the City embarked on a partnership with Con Edison and PSEG Long Island (which provides electrical power to the Rockaways) to provide the City with ongoing situational awareness of individuals impacted by disasters who participate in the utilities' Life Sustaining Equipment (LSE) and Medical Hardship programs.

7. Community Planning and Coordination with People with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

NYCEM follows a "whole community approach" to emergency planning. This is comprised of people with disabilities, along with older adults, children, people with limited or no English proficiency, individuals with health vulnerabilities, and others who may need heightened assistance or support during an emergency due to their condition or status.

NYCEM trains volunteers and community organizations in developing community emergency networks that include disability and access, and functional needs organizations to develop inclusive planning efforts and assistance in time of an emergency.

The organizations that NYCEM's Community Engagement Bureau works with are provided guidance and training in how to ensure physical accessibility, use of assistive listening devices, evacuation planning, working with life-sustaining equipment customers, preparedness tips and emergency alerts, including preparedness tips and programs geared specifically towards people with DAFN.

NYCEM offers dedicated DAFN training for community-based organizations and faith-based groups. The training focuses on additional emergency preparedness

and response measures to assure the inclusion of people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs. The training provides an overview of:

- ADA requirements for accessible design
- Assistive listening devices
- Evacuation tips
- Life-sustaining equipment customers
- Individual preparedness

NYCEM also offers the public and partner organizations disaster-specific webinars in hurricane and coastal storm preparedness, heat emergencies, winter weather, as well as a webinar about its Community Emergency Planning Toolkit. All these webinars include considerations about how best to include people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

NYCEM is the host of NotifyNYC, a platform that delivers accessible emergency messaging to over 1,100,000 recipients. Over the past five years, an average of 2,826 NotifyNYC messages have been distributed annually, ensuring timely and effective communication during emergencies.

NYCEM also issues Advance Warning System (AWS) messages to some 2,300 organizations that provide direct services to people with disabilities across the City, and to 6,200 individuals. These elements are all fundamental to the City's work to provide and publicize its accessible transportation evacuation plan to meet the emergency transportation needs of New Yorkers with disabilities.

8. Training and Diversity Initiatives

All drivers of accessible City-owned vehicles used to transport people during emergencies are required to undergo extensive training on disability literacy, effective communication with individuals with cognitive, hearing, and sight-related disabilities, and about the proper operation of the wheelchair lifts on their vehicles, as well as in the proper handling of durable medical equipment and the mobility devices used by the people they may be transporting.

In addition to a variety of trainings offered during onboarding of new employees and current staff, NYCEM conducts a series of exercises for employees with other agencies involved in emergency planning and response, including Introduction to Heat Emergencies, Coastal Storm Activations and Winter Weather Emergencies. Each exercise in the series includes coverage of how to serve people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

Since its inception in 2020, the agency Equity and Diversity Council has worked in partnership with NYCEM's Human Capital Management (HCM) team on recruitment, retention, and employee engagement, and the Council has sub-committees dedicated both to Recruitment and Retention. In 2022 HCM and the Equity and Diversity Council created an Employee Engagement Survey, which has resulted in the creation of several employee affinity groups at the agency. The Equity and Diversity Council and HCM also created a Recruitment Best Practices document, outlining steps hiring managers are to take to enhance the diversity of their applicant pool when they seek to fill a vacancy.

9. Risk Reduction and Recovery Initiatives

The NYCEM Risk Analysis and Recovery (RAR) unit is responsible for New York City's Hazard Mitigation Plan. This FEMA-mandated plan establishes the City's eligibility for various federal mitigation grants. The plan identifies hazards that pose a risk and what the city is doing to reduce the impacts of these hazardous events. The Hazard Mitigation plan identifies threats to vulnerable populations and those populations with disability, access, and functional needs. The 2024 Plan provides a comprehensive overview on NYC's vulnerability with access to maps, tools, and data that are all publicly accessible and discuss different aspects of social vulnerability, DAFN, environmental justice, housing, and other characteristics. The plan compiles all potential actions from City Agencies and applies FEMA's evaluation criteria, which gives prioritization for those projects that address a socially vulnerable population.

Additionally, for this web-based Hazard Mitigation Plan, accessibility was a key pillar of the design process from beginning to end. The NYCEM RAR unit started the process by meeting with the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities (MOPD) to review the website and gather feedback for improving accessibility. Based on their review the following feature were incorporated:

- Tested colors for accessibility
- Used alt-text on images. The importance of this became evident during the utilization of the text-to-speech tool.
- Hovering/navigating/tabbing through links now have a visual indicator.
- Coded the left-hand navigation menu as a list.
- Removed drop-down menus and created dedicated links

Also, the NYCEM Mitigation unit within RAR partners with city agencies to apply for and implement FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance-funded projects,

measures that reduce the risk and impact of future disasters. These grants prioritize projects that benefit disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations and meet the goals of the “Justice 40” Initiative established by the federal government. Grant applications undergo screenings via a climate and economic justice tool that identifies areas faced with significant burdens in climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development.

Additionally, the Mitigation unit manages NYCEM’s Interim Flood Protection Measures (IFPM) program. As of December 2023, the IFPM program includes 4 neighborhood sites (2 in Brooklyn and 2 in Manhattan), where flood protection measures such as barriers to stop flood inundation are pre-deployed in the public right-of-way. The IFPM neighborhood site design process included a review by the MOPD to provide accessible sidewalk access around deployed flood protection measures for people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

II. Prospective, Planned Elements of the Five-Year Accessibility Plan

1. Elements of NYCEM's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

NYCEM updated its Strategic Plan to cover the years 2022-2026. The new plan builds on the progress made over the previous years and further advances and improves programs and operations across the agency.

NYCEM's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan focuses on multiple priorities relevant to populations and individuals with disabilities, including:

1. The agency-wide focus on equity principles in its programs, services, policies, and practices,
2. Improved operations, communications, and outreach to understand and meet the needs of NYC's diverse communities, and
3. Improved agency hiring and retention practices, so its workforce reflects the makeup of NYC communities and delivers quality, effective service to all.

As part of the Strategic Plan and this Accessibility Plan, NYCEM will expand its efforts to engage in more cross-sector grassroots and community-level partnerships throughout the City through outreach, broad input, as well as the nurturing of a diverse workforce.

The Strategic Plan aims to increase collaboration with organizations serving people with disabilities and other access and functional needs, to better understand and meet these populations' needs as it promote citywide resilience to, and recovery from, significant and varied emergency events.

III. Physical Access

1. Physical Accessibility Remediation of NYCEM Headquarters

Plans are under way for possible expansion of NYCEM's agency headquarters at 165 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, to accommodate the substantial growth in the number of agency employees over the last 10 years. If approved and funding for the expansion is identified, a final design will be developed and if, as expected, that design includes assembly areas, at least one assembly area in the project will include the installation of an induction loop assistive listening system, as required by Local Law 51 of 2017.

IV. Digital Access

1. NYCEM Website Accessibility

This portion of the Plan focuses on continued monitoring and improvement to NYCEM’s website accessibility through regular monitoring for compliance with applicable website standards, and active engagement with staff across the agency to effectuate this effort. This plan is to be adapted and modified based on the adoption of any changes in applicable web accessibility standards and evolving technical capabilities.

Year 1: Conduct the Initial Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identify existing accessibility barriers and areas of improvement.▪ Hire a professional accessibility consultant to audit the Local Law 12 of 2023 website, budget permitting.▪ Create a baseline report that outlines the current state of website accessibility at NYCEM, highlighting gaps in meeting accessibility standards.▪ Draft an updated accessibility policy outlining the commitment to providing a continuously inclusive and accessible website and detailing plan to address accessibility gaps.
Year 2: Begin Website Remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create documentation that outlines accessibility features to be implemented on the website.▪ Develop a prioritized plan for addressing accessibility issues based on the audit findings, beginning with high-priority issues with significant impacts on users.▪ Create user training resources, covering assistive technologies, and common accessibility settings.
Year 3: Complete Website Remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Implement accessibility features, integrating alt text, keyboard navigation, and proper heading structures.▪ Ensure compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise awareness within the organization about the importance of maintaining an accessible website.
Years 4-5: Continuous Monitoring & Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schedule periodic accessibility audits to monitor the website's compliance with accessibility standards. ▪ Use automated tools and manual testing to identify and address new issues. ▪ Implement a feedback mechanism for users to report accessibility issues. ▪ Establish a process to address reported issues and communicate resolutions promptly. ▪ Update the website to incorporate new features and improvements, as needed.
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify or allocate funding to kick off the initiative, support website accessibility efforts, and support training, audits, and technology updates. ▪ Develop and publish educational resources for website users on maximizing accessibility features. ▪ Stay abreast of technological advancements in web accessibility. ▪ Publish annual reports on the website's accessibility status, including key metrics, achievements, and plans for further improvement. ▪ Regularly check the website against relevant accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1). ▪ Ensure ongoing compliance with legal requirements.

2. Geographic Information Services Improvement in Data Use During Heat Season

NYCEM's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Unit will continue working with Con Edison to improve data sharing and streamlining of reporting during heat activations and power outages. This aims to improve both situational awareness and targeted outreach during canvassing operations that may occur during heat events and power outages potentially impacting people with disabilities.

3. Digital Inclusionary Practices

The role of NYCEM's current Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO) encompasses considerations of inclusion of people with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations who historically have limited access or tend to be unfamiliar with social media. This is most likely due to the way in which the technology has been and continues to expand; however, within the next fiscal year, NYCEM endeavors to have the CEDO, the Chief Technology Officer (CTO), and the DSF coordinate to develop policies around the inclusiveness of digital platforms used by the agency, both internally and externally.

4. Digital Inclusion Officer

NYCEM will explore the appointment of a Digital Inclusion Officer to better provide for ongoing oversight of inclusive design considerations as the agency continues to identify and implement technology solutions to meet current and future needs.

V. Planned Programmatic Access and Effective Communication Improvements

1. Miscellaneous Provisions

NYCEM is evaluating emergency management plans and operations through an equity lens on an ongoing basis to promote diversity and inclusion and reduce disparities in serving people with disabilities through consistently fine-tuning and expanding the agency's outreach to the City's populations of people with disabilities.

One example is the development of its Strengthening Communities initiative, which integrates local networks into the City's emergency response structure. Two of these networks specifically focus on serving people with disabilities. To encourage the implementation of community-based preparedness strategies, NYCEM is promoting enhancement of available funding mechanisms, including grant opportunities to community organizations, and will pursue membership in

the program by two additional disability service providers to join the next cohorts of the Strengthening Communities initiative.

To enhance connectedness to NYCEM's preparedness planning and response integration to communities across the city, NYCEM is exploring opening additional borough-based field offices to improve staff collaboration with its community networks and partners.

Recent messaging has been adopted for NotifyNYC to warn vulnerable individuals living in basement apartments, or in a low-lying, flood-prone, or poor drainage areas, to be prepared to move to higher ground or leave their apartments should flooding conditions worsen.

In combination, the Logistics and Response bureaus identified a series of locations for commodity distribution points used in the aftermath of large coastal storms. NYCEM will continue to develop more as needed, and survey them to plan for all these sites to be set up and managed in a way that makes them physically accessible.

The City and utility providers will explore possible ways to keep the Life Sustaining Equipment (LSE) lists maintained by the power companies current to avoid daily outreach attempts to inactive clients, thereby improving attention to active LSE customers who may need help.

2. Accessible Sheltering in Department of Education Sites

Currently, 75 sites have fully accessible footprints for Coastal Storm sheltering use. These sites, located outside of coastal storm evacuation areas include accessible routes in and out of each facility, as well as access to all program areas, and integrated cot space for people with mobility disabilities and service animals. Sites also include accessible signage, wayfinding, restrooms, food and water distribution, mobility aids, accessible informational materials, and communication devices for people with hearing and sight-related disabilities. NYCEM is working with the DOE to increase the number of such accessible shelters. NYCEM and DOE have surveyed 30 additional schools for potential use as shelters. Efforts will be made to remediate an additional four schools for shelter accessibility over each of the next five years, subject to available funding.

3. Selection and accessibility of reception centers and overnight shelters

New York City activates emergency operational sites, such as overnight shelters, respite locations, or service centers, in response to a variety of hazards including, but not limited to, building collapses, fires and flash flood events which displace

large numbers of city residents. When considering locations to host such operations, NYCEM utilizes pre-identified coastal storm sites when their use is feasible. Often these pre-identified locations may not be feasible due to their distance from the emergency or other City operations. In these cases, NYCEM identifies sites at the time of the event. These sites are evaluated with a final-approved Site Selection Protocol, involving field staff and designated DAFN advisors to confirm that chosen sites meet accessibility standards. These approved locations will be integrated facilities for people with disabilities and the rest of the population.

During operations that involve the American Red Cross (ARC), NYCEM's Human Services Emergency Support Function (ESF) Coordinator will work with ARC to determine ARC's sheltering capacity threshold and at what point the City's sheltering resources and operations may be needed during smaller operations. This will include discussions on DAFN considerations to identify the resources and/or supplies ARC might require in augmenting the capacity of its sheltering kits.

4. Risk Reduction and Recovery

The 2022-2026 agency Strategic Plan promotes inclusion of equitable considerations in the crafting and refinement of future short and long-term recovery operations. These tools help City agencies and the public better understand potential risks and impacts on underserved populations, economies, and communities by analyzing critical data and trends.

By consistently fine-tuning and expanding the agency's outreach to the city's underserved populations, NYCEM is evaluating its plans and operations through an equity lens to promote diversity and inclusion in all phases of the emergency management cycle – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery – to more effectively serve New York City's diverse racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and disability populations.

As mentioned above, the Mitigation unit manages NYCEM's Interim Flood Protection Measures (IFPM) program. No additional IFPM sites are planned at this time beyond the four that are already existing; however, any future feasibility assessments will incorporate accessibility requirements for pre-deployed measures, with planned notice to MOPD, as well as consideration of the social vulnerability of the areas considered for future potential deployment of flood mitigation.

The Mitigation unit is also looking into increased accessibility features in its program presentations, such as closed captioning and other features to use in its webinars.

5. Community Engagement Under the NYCEM 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

NYCEM's Strategic Plan focuses on community engagement with the aim of enhancing emergency management performance by close communication with community-based groups, including those in the disability community.

The Strategic Plan includes efforts of the Community Engagement Bureau of NYCEM's Ready New York campaign, which serves to prepare members of the public for emergencies. Its New York City Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) program includes programs for outreach to older adults and people with disabilities. Members of these diverse NYC CERT teams have extensive training in disaster preparedness and equitable emergency response to enhance service to local communities across the city. NYC CERT is involved in an average of 200+ deployments each year totaling a reported 12,000+ volunteer hours.

Specifically, NYCEM will renew the rotation of training new classes of CERT volunteers on disability etiquette, accommodation of members of the public with different disabilities and regarding service animals, in addition to continued coverage of information helpful to support their volunteer role, with topics such as language access and cultural awareness.

NYCEM continues to provide training and technical assistance in community emergency planning for community and faith-based organizations across the city. In 2023, 186 capacity building sessions were provided to local community groups, including those devoted to disability inclusion, through an inclusive emergency planning process.

One initiative in this effort is NYCEM's annual public symposium that brings together service providers, consumers, advocates, and community stakeholders for a forum to address planning for people who require a higher level of support during emergencies, including those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

To further build trust with local communities, NYCEM continues to develop new and innovative approaches for emergency messaging to reach all communities by incorporating non-traditional and culturally appropriate communication channels, accessible to people with sight and hearing-related disabilities, into the

agency's outreach strategy. NYCEM is consistently fine-tuning and expanding the agency's outreach to cover people with disabilities and other historically underserved populations throughout the city.

6. Review of Rules Regarding Health and Safety at Debris Sites

NYCEM will explore ways to improve environmental safety rules regarding air monitoring and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) use standards for City employees working near debris sites to maintain appropriate environmental health and safety (EHS) standards.

VI. Planned Improvements to Workplace Inclusion

1. Workplace Culture and Accessibility

NYCEM's Strategic Plan highlights several ongoing efforts to enhance the accessibility of NYCEM for its employees and applicants for jobs, facilitating the participation of a diverse workforce for diversity's own sake and to improve operational interactions with the public, which relies on NYCEM in times of emergency.

The Strategic Plan has goals explicitly focused on workplace improvement by prioritizing a people-centered culture to develop and retain the next generation of diverse emergency managers for New York City. This includes enhancing agency accessibility to attract diverse talent and routinely assessing the agency's organizational structure to meet the needs of a diverse city as the emergency management field itself evolves.

The agency routinely collects and analyzes employee satisfaction data, and is expanding mentorship programs, professional development, and wellness committee initiatives to focus critically on the goal of cultivating a workforce that reflects the diverse communities the agency serves.

Finally, in 2020, NYCEM personnel developed the Equity and Diversity Council, an advisory body to the commissioner, which includes disability-related needs and culture in its focus. It is working on a robust and ongoing basis to advance equity and diversity throughout the agency's workforce and in its external operations. Since its inception, the Equity and Diversity Council has collaborated with the NYCEM Human Capital Management Unit to issue an agency-wide survey regarding impacts from COVID and burnout and low morale. Agency personnel also participated in Unconscious Bias trainings led by an independent contractor. Additional diversity training will be provided to staff, going forward.

2. Hiring Practices

As part of the agency's Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy, NYCEM's Chief Equity and Diversity Officer will review job descriptions used in the hiring process before they are published to confirm they are disability inclusive.

Over the five years of this Plan, the agency's CEDO will track diversity levels in hiring regarding people who identify as having a disability according to job groupings.

Additionally, the agency's CEDO will review processes involved in conducting structured interviews and develop guidance with change-instructions regarding identified biases.

3. Training and Exercises

DAFN is incorporated into a recently developed series called the Integrated Planning and Preparedness Workshop (IPPW) for updating the interagency planning schedule through broader input from partner agencies in long-term planning. The timetable for the next two calendar years is scheduled to be finalized in the first quarter of 2024 and will better integrate both DAFN and diversity, equity, and inclusion into the current process.

NYCEM is also tracking which exercises include DAFN components and will continue to assess on an ongoing basis how to expand on and keep current with important developments and the ever-changing aspect of the needs of individuals with disabilities over the five-year term of this Plan.

The City has provided on-line Disability and Access and Functional Needs training to its staff since 2015. There are also in-person trainings provided for the role of DAFN Coordinator at shelters and service centers. In the 2022-2023 period 76 City employees have taken this training.

Over the course of the five-year term of this Plan, NYCEM will offer a course for staff four times per year which covers how to conduct accessible meetings and make materials distributed to the public accessible.

4. Review Process for New Programs or Changes to Existing Programs

NYCEM has implemented and continues to implement processes so that accessibility and the impact on people with disabilities are considered when the agency launches a new program or initiative or makes a change to an existing program or service.

VII. Budgeting

As of December 2023, NYCEM has an Other Than Personnel Services budget of \$495,000 for City Fiscal Year 2024 and for the future years, to support the agency's accessibility related work. Given the City's changing fiscal landscape, the agency will strive to preserve the funding level for its critical accessibility related work despite potential future budget cuts.

VIII. Glossary

The ADA - The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal civil rights law that was passed in 1990. It prohibits discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections that were provided under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal, but also requires reasonable accommodation in employment and reasonable modification of state and local governments policies, practices, and procedures.

The ADA 2010 Standards for Accessible Design – measures developed by the U.S. Access Board that were adopted as part of federal regulations and set minimum requirements for newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Assistive Listening Devices or Systems - Personal technologies that can help you communicate in one-to-one conversations. They are hand-held amplifiers with microphones that bring the sound you wish to hear closer to your ears. These small devices capture the sound you want to hear and may filter some background noise.

CDIs - Certified Deaf Interpreters - Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and have been certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as interpreters. They often work with a certified interpreter who is hearing, receiving a message in one communication mode (or language), processes it linguistically and culturally, and then passing it on in another communication mode that is more universal or more appropriate for the person or people for whom it is being interpreted.

CEDO – Chief Equity and Diversity Officer– a high-level executive who creates Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies to ensure diverse hiring and promotion at an agency or other organization, in addition to developing diversity training programs for employees.

CERT - New York City Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) members are dedicated volunteers who provide support to operations, as needed. They participate in training in interacting with the public and on basic response skills needed for fire safety, light search and rescue, community disaster support, disaster medical operations, and traffic control.

CTO – Chief Technology Officer– a high-level executive in charge of meeting an organization's short- and long-term technological needs as well as its research and development (R&D). Also known as a chief technical officer, this individual examines the short- and long-term needs of an organization and utilizes capital to make investments designed to help the organization reach its technological objectives.

DAFN – Disability and Access and Functional Needs – Individuals with disabilities and others who may have heightened needs before, during and after emergencies due to any temporary or permanent condition they have or situation they are in that may limit their ability to act in an emergency.

DAFN Coordinator - A title of individuals who have been trained and are assigned at NYCEM to help at shelters to meet the needs of shelterees, with and without disabilities, who may need additional assistance because of any temporary or permanent condition they have or situation they are in that may limit their ability to act in an emergency.

DEI – Diversity Equity and Inclusion - an organizational framework which seeks to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly members of groups who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination based on their identity or disability.

DOHMH – NYC Department of Health and Mental Health

DSFs – Disability Service Facilitators - employees of a NYC agency, assigned by the executive of that agency to coordinate with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) in agency efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning accessibility for, and the abolition of discrimination against, people with disabilities.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Standards - measures required by government regulations to protect the environment, people, and property from potential risks.

EOC – New York City Emergency Operations Center - a centralized location for officials from city, state, and federal agencies, nonprofits, private sector, regional, and utility partners to work side-by-side during emergencies to coordinate response efforts, make decisions, and gather and share information.

GIS – Geographic Information Systems - Geographic Information Systems - applications and tools used to make maps and other products that display data and are used in support of NYCEM planning, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

HCM – Human Capital Management, NYCEM’s Human Resources Department

HEO - Homebound Evacuation Operations - The Homebound Evacuation Operation or HEO provides a mechanism for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (DAFN) who are in at-risk Evacuation Zones and have no other means of evacuating to request evacuation assistance through 311, which directs requests for evacuation to the appropriate agency.

IFPM – Interim Flood Protection Measures

Local Law 51 of 2017 – A NYC law, requiring the installation of an induction loop assistive listening system or successor technology in at least one of any planned assembly areas for new construction or rehabilitation projects using City financing and an estimated construction cost of at least \$950,000. This law is effective on January 1, 2018.

Local Law 12 of 2023 – The NYC requiring City agencies to develop and implement a plan, including this Plan, that include the steps agencies are, and will be taking over the next five years to ensure that the agency’s workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

LSE - Life Support Equipment or Life Sustaining Equipment – This is a sub-group of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) and includes medical devices used to sustain life or relied upon for mobility (as determined by a licensed qualified medical practitioner), including respirators (oxygen concentrators), iron lungs, hemodialysis machines, suction machines, electric nerve stimulators, pressure pads and pumps, aerosol tents, electrostatic and ultrasonic nebulizers, compressors, intermittent positive pressure breathing (IPPB) machines, and motorized wheelchairs, among other equipment. Both Con Edison and PSEG, the electric companies that service NYC allow users of LSE to register with them if anyone in a residence relies on such machines.

MOPD – Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

Sign Language Interpretation - The translation between sign language, typically in the United States between American Sign Language (ASL) and another language, to allow communication between people who are deaf and hearing people. ASL interpretation is done by qualified ASL interpreters and is common in medical, legal, educational, mental health, and vocational environments.

VRI – Video Remote Interpretation - a video-communication service that uses devices such as web cameras or videophones to provide sign language or spoken language interpreting services through a remote or offsite interpreter.



APPENDIX A

NEW YORK CITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of New York City Emergency Management (“NYCEM”) to comply with all applicable laws including but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act, the New York State Human Rights Law, and the New York City Human Rights Law. NYCEM does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of its programs, services, and activities.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures to participate in NYCEM programs, services or activities is invited to direct their needs and preferences to NYCEM’s ADA Coordinator by mail, telephone, or email:

ADA Grievance Officer
Dennis R. Boyd, Esq.
NYC Emergency Management
165 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Tel: 718-422-4660
TTY: 212-504-4115
Email: adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov

Requests should be made as soon as possible but no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled program, service, or activity.

Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for additional information may also be directed to NYCEM’s ADA Coordinator.

Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act

This grievance procedure may be used by anyone who wishes to file a grievance alleging discrimination by New York City Emergency Management (“NYCEM”) on the basis of disability with respect to matters other than employment.

The grievance should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as the name, address, and telephone number of the grievant, as well as the location, date, and description of the complaint or alleged violation of the ADA. Alternative means of filing grievances, such as in-person interviews or an audio recording of the grievance, may be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.



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

ADA Grievance Officer
Dennis R. Boyd, Esq.
165 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Tel: 718-422-4660
TTY: 212-504-4115
Email: adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov

Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the grievance, the ADA Coordinator or his or her designee will contact the grievant to discuss the grievance and any possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of this contact with the grievant, the ADA Coordinator or his or her designee will respond to the grievance in writing or, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the grievant, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will explain NYCEM's position and offer options for substantive resolution of the grievance, where applicable.

The grievant or the grievant's designee may appeal the decision by the ADA Coordinator or his or her designee within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response by mail to:

Commissioner Zach Iscol
NYC Emergency Management
165 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201

The appeal should be submitted in writing. Alternative means of filing an appeal, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording of the grievance, may be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

NYCEM's response to the appeal will be provided to the grievant within sixty (60) days following receipt of the request for the appeal.

All responses by NYCEM will be in writing or, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the grievant. All written grievances, appeals, and responses received in connection with a grievance made to NYCEM, will be retained for at least three (3) years.

This document is available in alternative formats, including large print, audio recording, and Braille, from the ADA Coordinator upon request.

NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Effective Communication: NYCEM will, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in NYCEM's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision-related disabilities.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: NYCEM will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to all NYCEM programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcome in all NYCEM offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a NYCEM program, service, or activity, should contact the ADA Coordinator by mail, email or telephone at: NYC Emergency Management, 165 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, NY 11201, adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov, or 718-422-4660, as soon as possible but no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled event or activity.

The ADA does not require NYCEM to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or that would impose on it an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a NYCEM program, service, or activity is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to NYCEM's ADA Coordinator by mail, email, or telephone at: NYC Emergency Management, 165 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, NY 11201, adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov, or 718-422-4660.

NYCEM will not impose a surcharge to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

APPENDIX B NYCEM Website Accessibility Statement

NYC Emergency Management 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) defines 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. Our 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.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the accessibility of our digital content. Please let us know if you encounter accessibility issues by using the [Website Accessibility Feedback Form](#).

If you need assistance accessing a particular program or service, please reach out to NYCEM's Disability Services Facilitator, Dennis Boyd, at [DSF Phone] or dboyd@oem.nyc.gov.

Assessment Approach

NYC Emergency Management assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

Date

This statement was created on 02/16/2023.