

NYC Department of Design and Construction

Accessibility Progress Report 2024-2025



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General

Local Law 12 of 2023 (“Local Law 12”), codified as section 23-1004 of the NYC Administrative Code, requires agencies to prepare and publish 5-year accessibility plans using a template provided by the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). Proposed plans were required to be published no later than December 31, 2023, and final plans, following a public comment period, were required to be published no later than March 15, 2024, which DDC met both publication dates.

Local Law 12 further requires agencies to publish an annual report, setting forth the progress they have made towards achieving the goals in their 5-year accessibility plan. These reports must be published on agency websites by May 1, 2025, and submitted to MOPD by May 15, 2025.

The New York City Department of Design and Construction’s (DDC) **ADA Compliance Unit** is responsible for preparing, updating, implementing, and reporting on DDC’s Five-Year Accessibility Plan.

Pursuant to Local Law 27 of 2016, every City agency is required to designate a **Disability Service Facilitator (“DSF”)** to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the ADA and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning accessibility for persons with disabilities. DDC’s Disability Service Facilitator is:

Nicholas Katsarelis
30-30 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101
Phone: 718-391-1259
Katsareni@ddc.nyc.gov

DDC’s website contains useful information for individuals with disabilities, including:

1. Five-Year Accessibility Plan
2. Language Access Plan
3. Website Accessibility Statement

For more information on DDC’s accessibility resources, please visit DDC’s website at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/ddc/about/WebsiteAccessibilityStatement.page>

Please see the appendices of this document for the [DDC Notice of Rights and Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and [DDC’s Website Accessibility Statement](#).

Individuals may request a copy of this document in an accessible alternative format by contacting the DSF at Katsareni@ddc.nyc.gov or (718) 391-1259.

Agency Overview

About NYC DDC

The Department of Design and Construction (DDC) was created to build and renovate the City's public works as its chief design and construction manager. DDC delivers public works to every part of the City, designing and building best-in class public buildings and infrastructure. These projects enhance every neighborhood and each borough, improving the lives of more than 8.5 million New Yorkers.

As the City's primary capital construction project manager, DDC builds many of the civic facilities New Yorkers use every day. We provide communities with new or renovated structures such as firehouses, libraries, police precincts, courthouses, senior centers and more. To successfully manage this \$28 billion portfolio, DDC collaborates with other City agencies, as well as with emerging and world-renowned architects and consultants, whose experience bring efficient, innovative, and environmentally conscious design and construction strategies to City projects.

DDC also designs and improves vital public infrastructure. Our staff delivers roadway, sewer, and water main construction projects in all five boroughs. We provide sidewalks, street reconstructions, pedestrian ramps, green infrastructure, water mains, sewers, and public plazas — quality infrastructure that is essential for a healthy, resilient city.

DDC's First Annual Progress Report Overview

Within this report, you will find an overview of the advances that DDC has made internally to increase accessibility throughout our agency, and to better improve access to our portfolio of capital projects, within the five boroughs. Although DDC is not a public-facing agency, our focus remains on ensuring that each person, regardless of ability, has access to equal employment opportunities, services, public spaces, and amenities our city offers.

Please note Local Law 12 was issued without any additional funding to each respective agency. Therefore, all work outlined below was at the expense of our agency. Furthermore, DDC leases its properties; therefore, this imposed additional restrictions to the work DDC wanted to perform, based on our initial assessment of our three properties.

Statement of Commitment

At DDC, ensuring accessibility is a fundamental principle for our design and construction services. Our guiding [Design and Construction Excellence](https://www.nyc.gov/site/ddc/projects/design_construction_excellence.page) principles, which define our broadest goals for all our projects and orient our partners to the agency's values, emphasize that the spaces we build must be civic and community-oriented, as well as inclusive, healthy, and safe. A guiding tenet within these principles is **creating accessibility for all** through dignified, well-designed spaces that are universally accessible, inviting, comfortable, and promote equitable usability for people with diverse needs. For more information on DDC's Design and Construction Excellence program, please visit DDC's website https://www.nyc.gov/site/ddc/projects/design_construction_excellence.page

As the City's leading design and construction agency, we ensure our Infrastructure projects, which include public spaces like streets and sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, plazas, and pedestrian ramps, comply with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the DOT Standard Details of Construction, and the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines, as well as industry standards and best practices. In DDC's **Pedestrian Ramp initiative**, the agency partners with DOT on the City's 30-year, \$6 billion program to overhaul more than 180,000 sidewalk pedestrian ramps to ensure they are ADA-compliant. DDC's **pilot Design-Build program** includes both a pedestrian ramps project and a raised crosswalks project, two critical portfolios where time savings are crucial and where the work will most benefit from the potential for innovation and collaboration.

Our Public Buildings projects, which include new buildings, renovations, and systems upgrades, are reviewed by a dedicated **ADA Compliance Unit**, whose sole function is to ensure that the design and construction of our public works projects comply with the latest ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Chapter 11 of the NYC Building Code, ICC A117.1, and Title 8 for equal and non-discriminatory facilitation.

At DDC, we recognize that accessibility is not just a legal requirement but an ethical commitment that enhances the inclusivity and usability of our services and programs for all New Yorkers. To that end, DDC is committed to upholding the following principles in its policies, practices, and procedures:

1. Ensuring that people with disabilities can benefit from DDC-managed projects as end users, sponsor agencies, design consultants, vendors, and/or employees, while preserving their dignity and independence. This involves delivering capital projects compliant with all accessibility standards.

2. Adapting communication methods when engaging with people with disabilities, considering their specific disability and preferred mode of communication.
3. Ensuring our three offices provide equal access and an inclusive workplace for people with disabilities.

These principles form the foundation upon which DDC operates to support inclusivity and accessibility for people with disabilities.

Progress Report

Below outlines the five areas identified in Section (b)(2) of Local Law 12, otherwise known as NYC Administrative Code §1004(b)(2), which have been accomplished by DDC in less than a 12-month period, since the release of our Local Law 12 Report.

Physical Accessibility

The NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) operates out of three Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)-leased buildings:

30-30 Thomson Avenue, Queens, NY 11101. DDC's main office, which consists of shared spaces located on the first through fifth floors.

40 Worth Street, New York, NY 10013, eighth floor (shared).

101 Tyrellan Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10309, second floor (and shared parking lot).

As part of DDC's ongoing effort to improve physical access to all its locations, as of May 2025, DDC has completed the following actions as part of its five-year plan:

- Removed and replaced the existing, non-compliant reception desk, at DDC's Main Office at 30-30 Thomson Avenue. The newly replaced reception desk now provides compliant heights for customer service interactions, as well as compliant heights for the employed staff.
- Since no proposed alterations are planned in the near future which would trigger an Induction Loop Assistive Listening System, DDC purchased a portable FM Assistive Listening device for use in all conference and meeting rooms, which can be transported to any of the three locations. Furthermore, DDC staff has been notified of the availability of such system,

and how to request it ahead of any meetings. Lastly, all Public Announcements include information for the public to request such accommodations ahead of any meetings conducted by our agency.

By May 2026, we will:

- Continue to address the protruding objects observed throughout our three locations, which consists of wayfinding signage, fire extinguishers, AEDs, and paper towel dispensers.
- Continue to address the mounting heights of operable parts and controls throughout our three locations, that are considered common use, and lower to a permitted reach range of less than 48" above the finished floor.
- Continue our conversations with building management to increase access, wherever possible, as part of our lease negotiations.

Digital Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Ensured DDC's internal and public-facing websites meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA.

By May 2026, we will:

- Incorporate digital accessibility tasks and standards for all employees responsible for content creation.
- Continue to ensure that all workforce- and public-facing documents, virtual engagement, and digital content are fully accessible.

Programmatic Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Implemented new policies and procedures which include new ADA Checklists and guidance materials for internal staff to better ensure compliance of our capital building projects. Furthermore, the ADA Compliance Unit has acquired additional staff, and has conducted two technical trainings to help inform our staff of commonly observed design and construction errors on our Public Buildings projects.
- Administered 32 infrastructure construction projects, which resulted in the upgrade of over 4,800 sidewalk corners and 9,600 pedestrian curb ramps that exceed the ADA requirements, in the 2024 calendar year.
- Ensured DDC's internal and public-facing websites meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA.

- Ensured all public outreach content (digital and physical), services, and programs are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

By May 2026, we will:

- Develop a tracker to record pedestrian ramp upgrades on our Public Buildings projects.
- Continue to make improvements to our three DDC locations to ensure the agency's facilities are inclusive and accessible to all, including people with disabilities.

Effective Communications

As of May 2025, we have:

- Ensured all public outreach content (digital and physical), services, and programs are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Informed employees on policies and procedures for accommodation requests to ensure continued awareness among staff.
- Conducted a Disability Etiquette and Awareness Training, which is now a mandatory and recurring virtual training for staff.
- Conducted two ADA and Accessibility Workshops, held in-person and virtually, to better inform staff of the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which included a segment on outdated/ exclusionary language and offensive terms, and the correct terminology and pictograms to use on DDC projects.

By May 2026, we will:

- Continue to conduct in-person and virtual Disability Etiquette and Awareness Trainings, and ADA and Accessibility Workshops.

Workplace Inclusion

As of May 2025, we continue to:

- Review all new postings to ensure positions are disability-inclusive (i.e., that they focus on the essential duties of the job and do not include any outdated/ exclusionary language).
- Post open positions on NYC: ATWORK job boards, via the Job Submission Form.
- Post open positions with State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and other organizations that work with people with disabilities, such as CUNY LEADS, Job Path, and independent living centers in New York City.

- Use the 55-a Program to hire people with disabilities for competitive positions, which has been ongoing since 2009. Furthermore, we continue to promote persons with disabilities, at all levels.
- Ensure hiring managers use structured interview questions, and continue to conduct in person and virtually, interviews to be more inclusive.
- Provide tools, technology, and workspaces that are accessible to all employees, such as ergonomic office equipment and the availability of access technology (magnification, voice recognition, and screen readers).
- Follow DCAS's Reasonable Accommodation Procedural Guidelines for DDC's reasonable accommodation process and continue offering this process in person, over the phone, via email, and virtually, which has been ongoing since 2009.
- Offer trainings and professional development opportunities to all employees, including people with disabilities.

By May 2026, we will:

- Establish clear procedures for facilitating any accommodations required for interviews, such as reserving rooms that are fully accessible and providing auxiliary aids and services like ASL interpretation and CART.
- Support an affinity group/employee resource group (ERG) for people with disabilities. To date, no such group has been requested.

Consultations and Feedback

Consultations

DDC is fully committed to representing the voices and thoughts of people with disabilities. After the release of our 2024 DDC Accessibility Plan, DDC had conversations with other government agencies, which also perform capital construction, to seek areas of improvement. Although DDC has not had any additional conversations past our initial conversations, DDC plans to hold quarterly meetings with other agencies to further improve our operations.

Feedback

After the release of our 2024 DDC Accessibility Plan, DDC released an employee survey where employees voiced their concerns and helped identified areas for improvement. All areas that were within our ability to be corrected, were added to our five-year plan.

Feedback Process

We understand that improving accessibility at DDC is an ongoing process and we are committed to engaging in the process through receiving feedback and conducting consultations with people with disabilities. We welcome and appreciate any feedback we receive from members of the public or employees, which can be submitted anonymously, regarding our First Annual Progress Report or regarding our three office locations. All feedback received will be considered for our future accessibility goals. If you wish to provide feedback, please contact our DSF, Nicholas Katsarelis, at Katsareni@ddc.nyc.gov or (718) 391-1259.

Conclusion

DDC understands and actively pursues inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of our organization. We hope to continue our progress and demonstrate our commitment to improving accessibility, addressing current and future barriers, and ensuring that our operations are accessible to everyone.