

New York City Health Department Accessibility Progress Report 2024-2025



May 2025

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
42-09 28th St., Long Island City, New York 11101

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General

With an annual budget of \$1.6 billion and more than 7,000 employees throughout the five boroughs, the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) is one of the largest public health agencies in the world. It is also one of the nation's oldest public health agencies, with more than 200 years of public health leadership.

Every day, the NYC Health Department protects and promotes the health of 8 million New Yorkers. The agency's work is wide-ranging. It can be seen in the inspection grades of restaurants, the licenses dogs wear, the low- to no-cost health clinics in neighborhoods, and vaccination programs for all New Yorkers.

The Health Department also works behind the scenes with epidemiologists who investigate and work to stop the spread of communicable disease and who study the patterns, causes, and effects of health conditions in NYC neighborhoods. These studies shape policy decisions and the City's health agenda.

In compliance with Local Law 12 of 2023, the Health Department wrote its Five-Year Accessibility Plan in 2024. The plan was designed in collaboration with representatives from the disability community, disability community allies, and offices within the agency that support reasonable accommodation requests and disability-related inquiries. The Health Department published a proposed plan for public comment and received comments considered for the final plan.

In this first annual Progress Report, the Health Department highlights some of the achievements from the past year. This Progress Report also indicates some of the items of focus for the next year and beyond.

Accessibility Statement

The Health Department is proud to declare our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that welcomes and supports people of all abilities. We firmly believe in the inherent dignity and unique contributions of every person. As such, we are dedicated to addressing bias and mitigating remnants of ableism, neuro-ableism, and discrimination in favor of nondisabled people so that all staff and members of the public accessing Health Department programs and services can thrive as their authentic and unlabeled selves.

At the Health Department, we recognize that a truly inclusive environment requires proactive and intentional efforts to remove barriers and challenge stereotypes and that we must seek input from the people who are most impacted. We are committed to cultivating a culture that not only respects diverse backgrounds and experiences but actively celebrates the strengths that arise from our differences and aims to constantly expand our thinking and actions with respect to accessibility to fully represent the diverse array of people we serve. We continue to seek to understand and address the unique challenges faced by people with disabilities, taking care to partner with them and center their lived experiences. When communicating with people with disabilities, the Health Department uses person-first language, unless otherwise directed by the person, and their preferred method of communication.

The Health Department strives to be a beacon of inclusivity, knowing that it is through our diversity that we can achieve greatness. We welcome everyone to join us in this journey toward creating a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive environment.

NYC Health Department Disability Services Facilitator

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NYC Health Department Office of Access and Disability Justice

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Attn: Office of Accessibility and Disability Justice

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The Office of Access and Disability Justice (OADJ) is responsible for preparing and updating the NYC Health Department's accessibility plan.

NYC Health Department Office of Equal Employment Opportunities

Sye-Eun Ahn, EEO Director and Digital Inclusion Officer

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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice of Rights and Grievance Procedure

[nyc.gov/site/doh/about/about-doh/ada-notice-of-rights.page](https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/about-doh/ada-notice-of-rights.page)

Website Accessibility Statement

[nyc.gov/site/doh/about/about-doh/website-accessibility-statement.page](https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/about-doh/website-accessibility-statement.page)
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/about-doh/website-accessibility-statement.page>

Feedback Process

The Health Department is committed to uplifting the voices of the disability community and welcomes feedback on accessibility-related issues within the Health Department. Provide feedback to the Health Department's Disability Services Facilitator via email or mail.

Email: access@health.nyc.gov

Mail: NYC Health Department

Attn: Amanda Alvarado-Frantz

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Agency Progress Report

In creating the following Progress Report, the Health Department worked with teams across the agency and considered goals outlined in our Five-Year Accessibility Plan to highlight the areas we have addressed and the ones we will target in the coming year. This report covers the five areas of accessibility required by Local Law 12: physical accessibility, digital accessibility, effective communications, programmatic accessibility, and workplace inclusion.

Physical Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Enhanced the accessibility of the Bushwick Health Clinic by renovating the accessible ramp and installing an ADA push button to automatically open the main entry doors. The Health Department also designated accessible parking spaces.
- Completed new interior construction at our Zerega Avenue Environmental Health mobile food vending site to increase accessibility. This site now features a transaction counter at an ADA-compliant height and wheelchair accessible seating space in the waiting room. The Health Department also changed the door hardware to have lever handles, and the site now has accessible door clearances and hallway widths in public areas. This location also has accessible restrooms and ADA-compliant interior door signage.
- Made accessibility improvements at the Staten Island Animal Care and Control (ACC) Center by ensuring it has an accessible ramp, accessible restrooms, maneuvering clearances, tactile wayfinding signage, and designated accessible parking spaces.
- Ensured accessibility at the Manhattan ACC Pet Adoption Center by including an accessible main entrance, accessible restrooms, and maneuvering clearances. This site also features moveable seating in the main lobby to create accessible seating for wheelchair users.

By May 2026, we will:

- Open a new Public Health Laboratory that is fully compliant with accessible building code and other ADA requirements. The building features an accessible main entrance, and auditorium seating, tactile wayfinding signage, and accessible restrooms.

- Survey the existing ramps located at the main entrances of the Bedford Health Clinic and Brownsville Health Clinic and determine if they are ADA-compliant or if modifications are required.
- Renovate the Corona Health Center's exterior and interior lobby, which will enhance accessibility. This location's ramp and main lobby will be ADA-compliant.
- Design the Brooklyn and Bronx ACC Centers with accessible restrooms, an accessible main entrance, designated accessible parking spaces, and tactile wayfinding signage.

Digital Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Reviewed all new digital projects for external audiences, including webpages, web tools, and surveys, for accessibility.
- Continued the Health Department's ongoing project of remediating PDFs currently posted on the agency's website to ensure accessibility.
- Provided training facilitated by the OADJ to hundreds of Health Department employees on the importance of creating accessible events, whether hosted virtually or in person, and started sharing strategies on how to do so.
- Collaborated with the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response (OEPR) and the Bureau of Hepatitis, HIV, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (BHHS) on digital accessibility training.

By May 2026, we will:

- Add a section to the employee manual with expectations and best practices for digital accessibility.
- Continue making PDFs accessible as we continue to publish new digital assets.
- Continue work to migrate the Health Department's website to a new template that will facilitate accessible design for all users.
- Continue to remediate older web content for accessibility as part of our website migration.
- Create an agency-branded guide for accessible digital communications.

Effective Communications

As of May 2025, we have:

- Provided interpretation services for 89 Health Department events.
- Enhanced the agency's Language Access training to include education to staff on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate customer service.
- Added agencywide access to American Sign Language (ASL) Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), which is now integrated into the LanguageLine InSight application and website.
- Developed a new Four-Year Language Access Implementation Plan.

By May 2026, we will:

- Schedule regular meetings with language access liaisons to improve coordination and information sharing.
- Develop enhanced Language Access training for public-facing staff.

Programmatic Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Hired a Director of Accessibility, who also serves as the agency's Disability Services Facilitator, and an Accessibility Operations Manager to staff the OADJ. This office is responsible for coordinating the Health Department's efforts to implement the agency's responsibilities under the ADA and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning access to agency programs and services by people with disabilities.
- Announced the OADJ as a resource to the Health Department for providing consultation on disability justice and inclusion practices in areas such as Long COVID surveys, supporting disability community engagement meetings to gather data for the upcoming Healthy Black New Yorkers Report, and empowering employees as they navigate the reasonable accommodations process among other disability and accessibility-related issues.
- Established an Accessibility Liaison Committee comprised of 30 representatives from all agency divisions to assist in the implementation of the Five-Year Accessibility Plan and report on accessibility progress and challenges.
- Partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to provide training to the Health Department's Accessibility Liaison Committee members on physical and digital accessibility.
- Initiated advocacy through Disability, Resource, Empowerment, Access, Movement (DREAM), the Health Department's disability-focused employee

resource group, to broaden the accessibility and inclusivity of the annual WorkWell NYC “Let’s Move NYC” steps challenge.

By May 2026, we will:

- Develop a resource hub on the Health Department’s intranet to provide employees with easy access to agency-branded accessibility implementation tools including accessibility checklists, guides, and toolkits.
- Follow up on disability justice training provided in fiscal year 2025 with a training specifically focused on implementing anti-ableist strategies into the Health Department’s work.
- Continue tracking and working to address access-related issues submitted by New Yorkers and agency employees with disabilities.

Workplace Inclusion

As of May 2025, we have:

- Partnered with the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Community Relations Bureau, DCAS, and MOPD to host six agencywide virtual education workshops on various inclusion topics, including an overview of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) reasonable accommodation process and 55-A eligibility, which had 816 employee participants.
- Participated in disability awareness-building presentations organized by DREAM, led by external facilitators and community partners, including “The Intersection of Climate Justice and Disability Justice” led by community activist Daphne Frias, “The Impact of Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence on the Disability Community” led by Safe Horizon, and a “Deaf Culture and Language Workshop” facilitated by the New York Sign Language Center.
- Facilitated disability justice training for seven Health Department divisions and bureaus to increase awareness of the Disability Justice Framework and increase confidence in engaging with disability justice work at the agency.
- Included information on accessing reasonable accommodations and contact information for OADJ in the new First Day Initiative employee and hiring manager checklists aimed at enhancing the experience of new hires.
- Through DREAM, created a Food Allergen Awareness poster that has been posted in common eating areas at the agency’s Gotham Center location at 42-09 28th St. in Queens, and made a fillable Food Ingredient Label card to be completed by event hosts allowing employees to make educated choices about what they eat.

- Drafted guidelines for “Allergen Reduced Zones” to create safer spaces for employees with food allergies to eat at the agency’s Gotham Center location.
- Developed and distributed a survey led by DREAM to assess barriers that members experience in navigating the reasonable accommodations process, then analyzed the data to propose data-driven solutions to EEO to make the process more equitable.

By May 2026, we will:

- Develop, distribute, and analyze the data from a disability justice audit to explore areas of success as well as growth opportunities.
- Continue to support the DREAM employee resource group and partner with it whenever appropriate to promote disability justice across the agency.
- Work to enhance the experiences of employees with disabilities navigating the reasonable accommodations process by establishing a workflow to streamline the process and make it more efficient.
- Maintain and grow the partnerships established with DCAS, NYC CHR, and MOPD to provide opportunities for staff to learn more about disability rights, justice, and opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Work with DCAS to address potential employment barriers for people with disabilities and continue educating hiring managers about the 55-A program as a pathway to expanding their recruitment options.
- Review workplace policies and procedures and revise them as necessary to ensure they use inclusive language and consider the needs of people with disabilities.

Consultations and Feedback

Since finalizing our plan, the Health Department assembled an interdivisional accessibility liaison committee to develop short-term goals and timelines and to assist with achieving these goals within divisions. This committee, made up of 30 employees, meets on a quarterly basis to provide updates on our accessibility goals and strategically plan to address the challenges their divisions, bureaus, and programs face in implementing the Five-Year Accessibility Plan. In addition to the committee, the Health Department has consulted and received feedback on disability and accessibility-related issues from DREAM.

The agency has promoted the opportunity for New Yorkers to provide feedback on disability and accessibility-related matters via email or mail. Additionally, the Health Department engages disability communities as needed to provide feedback on specific initiatives of the agency to ensure the Health Department considers the diverse needs and experiences of all New Yorkers.

Conclusion

This first annual Progress Report highlights some of the achievements the Health Department has made in the year since finalizing the Five-Year Accessibility Plan. It also indicates some of the Health Department's anticipated projects and initiatives planned for in the upcoming year.

The Health Department remains committed to ensuring its facilities, programs, services, and workplace are inclusive of and accommodating to people with disabilities. By establishing the OADJ, the Health Department is increasing opportunities for agency employees to engage more deeply in disability justice work and further its dedication to embedding equity into daily operations.

Since the development of the Five-Year Accessibility Plan, the Health Department has made progress in all five Local Law 12 areas of accessibility: physical accessibility, digital accessibility, effective communications, programmatic accessibility, and workplace inclusion. The Five-Year Accessibility Plan will continue to guide accessibility work, and the Health Department welcomes feedback from the public on accessibility and disability-related issues via the methods listed under the Feedback Process section of this report.