

Department of Youth and Community Development Accessibility Progress Report 2025-2026

General

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish. DYCD supports New York City youth and their families by funding a wide range of high-quality youth and community development programs. DYCD strives to improve the quality of life of New Yorkers by collaborating with local organizations and investing in the talents and assets of our communities to help them develop, grow and thrive.

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) initial 5-year Accessibility Plan pursuant to Local Law 12 of 2023 was issued on March 25, 2024, and this is the agency's 2nd annual progress report. DYCD's plan frameworks the steps DYCD is taking to safeguard that the agency's workplace, services, programs and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities by cultivating physical, digital, and programmatic access, and providing effective communications for people with disabilities. LL 12 requires agencies to publish an annual report, setting forth the progress they have made towards achieving the goals in their five-year accessibility plan. This report provides DYCD's second annual update regarding the agency's efforts to implement accessibility improvements put out in its Five-Year Accessibility Plan.

Statement of Commitment

At the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), we are committed to ensuring an inclusive and accessible environment for all our employees and our program and service participants. That means we're committed to reducing barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities, to have equal access to our resources and opportunities including in the workplace, and in the communities we serve. We understand that accessibility is essential to prevent discrimination and create a more inclusive and diverse workplace, which has been known to have positive effects on employee morale and productivity. Through this five-year accessibility plan, we are committing to taking proactive steps toward reducing or removing existing barriers.

Disability Service Facilitator and Other Key Accessibility Information

DYCD's Disability Services Facilitator ("DSF") manages agency efforts to comply with and carry out the agency's responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning access to agency programs and services by persons with disabilities. Employees and/or members of the public who need assistance accessing a particular program or service should contact the Disability Service Facilitator:

Ruma Debi
123 William Street, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10038
Phone: (646) 343-6722
Email: DycdAccessibility@dycd.nyc.gov

DYCD's website contains useful information for individuals with disabilities, including:

- [Notice of Rights - DYCD](#)
- [Grievance Procedure – DYCD](#)
- [DYCD Website Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Contact ADA Disability Coordinator - DYCD](#)

Feedback

DYCD welcomes feedback including anonymous feedback from our employees and members of the public regarding accessibility and our Five-Year Accessibility Plan. 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 DYCD's Disability Services Facilitator at 646-343-6722 or DycdAccessibility@dycd.nyc.gov

Definitions

Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the design and implementation of an environment that enables all people, including those with disabilities, to participate fully and equally in all aspects of the workplace and to access all services provided by DYCD.

Disability: Any physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment, or a history or record of such impairment.

Reasonable Accommodation: Any change in the work environment, or the way the job is performed, to help an applicant or an employee with a need on a qualifying basis to apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

Progress Report

Effective Communications

In 2025, the Department of Youth and Community Development did the following:

The Five-Year Accessibility Plan was designed to cover many areas, helping the agency take as many steps as possible to improve accessibility. DYCD reviewed its needs and resources, as well as the needs of the public attending our meetings across the years.

- DYCD ensure that, where feasible, print documents comply with the print accessibility guidelines that will be issued pursuant to Local Law 187 of 2025.
- DYCD has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for Inclusive Events It has provided guidance on communication requirements for outreach and engagement events. This includes preparing materials in plain language and using high color for content designing. In May and June 2025, DYCD provided how to write plain language for staff who produce public facing content.
- Within the SOP DYCD has included information in all notices of public hearings about how prospective attendees can request reasonable accommodation ahead of an event. Training was provided to over 80 employees in DYCD who organize public events.

Language Access:

- In 2025, DYCD launched the Community Needs Assessment, a survey to understand needs and priorities of NYC communities. During this quarter, DYCD were added to get information on people with disabilities. The agency received over 20,000 Responses in the survey and about 12% were from people with disabilities. These responses were used to inform program design and investments.

Workplace Inclusion

As of April 2026:

- DYCD has been working with NYC: ATWORK job boards via the Job Submission Form to post open positions.
- The Agency's EEO Officer follows City of NY DCAS's Reasonable Accommodation procedures Guidelines when an employee (including full-time, part-time, intern and temporary) file a Reasonable Accommodation request to meet their accessibility needs.
- A Reasonable Accommodation Request Process information session has been conducted to inform supervisors and managers about their responsibilities in the process of making an accommodation request.
- The EEO office distributes quarterly emails to all DYCD staff and Hiring Managers informing them of the 55-a program and encourages Hiring Managers to utilize the 55-a program.
- For FY 2025, Disability Awareness Etiquette training was deployed from March 11-April 19, and the agency had a 95% completion rate.

Programmatic Access

As part of our agency's commitment to advancing equity and inclusion, we launched training focused, specifically on accessibility, to improve programmatic access for individuals with disabilities. We also developed training on broader equity concepts, inclusion of LGBTQ+ participants, religious diversity and culturally relevant programming and many more. DYCD has a small budget for capacity building, but we've done a lot and continue to do more for our providers and our staff. By preparing providers with the knowledge and tools needed to reduce barriers, we are building a more inclusive service environment for all.

- **Designing Inclusive Spaces Workshop** – this was offered in May 2025 exclusively for DYCD-Funded organizations. The event goals were that participating DYCD Providers will learn about DYCD's new approach to creating inclusive events and create an action plan for designing inclusive spaces. A planning guide on Designing Inclusive Spaces was shared with the providers. The participants had an opportunity to explore concepts of universal design and accessibility and explore ways to incorporate into their work.
- **Expanded including in agency competitions (RFPs):** During 2025 DYCD expanded the language included in program solicitations such as COPASS solicitation DYCD afterschool program has additional requirements for disability inclusion. DYCD commits to train and coach providers in this work. Program Directors are required to complete one-hour training on accessibility and universal design.

- In addition, all staff are required to take a one-hour training on mental health and mental illness, teaching deescalation strategies and mental health resources.
- In 2025, the Youth Teams Sports included explicit language to prioritize adaptive and integrated sports. This program will support or integrate sports and opportunities for youth with disabilities.
- Program managers do not currently assess accessibility during site visits. DYCD plans to address this through a phased approach: establishing policy, developing indicators, and then implementing performance monitoring.
- Accessibility considerations are not yet standardized across programs and will be aligned under a future agency-wide policy before formal monitoring is introduced.

Physical Access

The Department of Youth and Community Development operates out of the following buildings:

City-Owned Building:

2 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10007

DYCD occupies floors 14,18,19,21 and 22.

Leased Office Space:

123 William Street, New York, NY 10038

DYCD occupies floors 17 and 18.

Leased Space:

Kew Gardens Community Center

80-02 Kew Gardens Road,

Kew Gardens, NY 11415

DYCD's main entrance for visitors (located at 2 Lafayette Street) is wheelchair accessible. As of April 2026, for the leased office space, we are having ongoing conversation with the building's management office to inquire about accessibility compliance and future accessibility enhancements planned for the building.

Digital Access

- DYCD identified Mark Benavides as Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO) as the main point of contact on digital accessibility issues within the agency while developing the plan in 2024.
- DIO is also actively working with the Communication unit, IT unit and with the Chief Equity Inclusion Officer to ensure our templates are digitally accessible as part of the DYCD brand update.
- DYCD made significant progress with bringing our public facing application into WCAG 2.1, Level AA compliance as part of the initiative to meet the Justice Department's web accessibility requirements due 4/24/2026.
- Part of planning for the year 2026 - We have not started the work on our internal applications yet. Accessibility work will be roll into the modernization plan for the Financials portfolio which the team is targeting to start this year.
- Our Chief Equity Inclusion Officer hired a College Aide to assist with bringing our main DYCD website into compliance. College Aide has been reviewing the website for compliance and logged over 100 errors that need remediation.
- In 2026, DYCD is planning to create specific policies and procedures related to the creation of accessible digital content such as Digital Accessibility Policy, which will set forth our commitment to plain language, visual accessibility standards required by WCAG 2.1, clear and descriptive hyperlinks, alternative text description for public material visuals, utilizing Outlook 365 Accessibility Checker before sending mass emails to the public, and other accessibility goals and requirements. Digital Access College Aide will be working closely with the Communication Team to do the remediation.

Consultations and Feedback

DYCD is committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. To create this plan, DYCD's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity worked with the Agency's Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer and the Legal team. DYCD did not consult with people with disabilities outside of MOPD in creating this plan, however, the EEO Office, though the reasonable accommodation process, interacts with individuals with disabilities and has both a historical and a present understanding of disability-related inquiries and needs.

Employees are encouraged to report barriers that they have identified for themselves or others by reaching out to the DYCD's EEO Office. A proposed plan was circulated for public comment, but no comments were received.

Conclusion

As a public-facing organization, we are deeply committed to ensuring that all individuals—regardless of ability—can access, navigate, and benefit from our services, spaces, and information. DYCD recognizes that improving accessibility is a work in progress, we are committed to continuing the work that is already ongoing. To further our commitment, we are actively working on a range of future accessibility improvements, including:

Digital Accessibility Enhancements: We plan to conduct regular audits of our website and mobile platforms to align with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Inclusive Communication: We aim to provide alternative formats for all public-facing content (e.g., large print, braille, captions, and ASL interpretation) to ensure inclusive interactions in both digital and in-person.

User Feedback Integration: 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](#)