

# Department of Youth and Community Development

## Accessibility Progress Report

### 2024-2025

#### 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.

DYCD published an accessibility plan on March 25, 2024, and this is the agency's first annual progress report.

#### 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

ADA Coordinator/Disability Service Facilitator Members of the public who have issues accessing our programs or services can contact the Disability Service Facilitator:

Ruma Debi

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development

123 William Street, 17th Floor

New York, NY 10038

Phone: (646) 343-6722

Email: [DycdAccessibility@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto: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**

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 DYCD's Disability Services Facilitator at 646-343-6722 or [DycdAccessibility@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto:DycdAccessibility@dycd.nyc.gov)

## **Progress Report**

**As of May 2025:**

### **Effective Communications**

- DYCD developed standard operating procedures (SOP) on inclusive events considering the diversity of events that DYCD staff are involved in. **Inclusive events** are defined as those that create an environment where attendees are offered equal access and opportunities to participate in, benefit from, and contribute. This includes designing with accessibility and language access in mind.
- DYCD is planning on conducting training on the different aspects of inclusion to support the implementation of the SOP. The training is expected to take place in spring/summer 2025.
- Agency's Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer provided digital accessibility training to 269 employees through out the agency. In addition, detailed training was provided to our Communications Team on Word & PPT accessibility features.

## Workplace Inclusion

As of May 2025:

- 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 was conducted to inform supervisors and managers about their responsibilities in the process of making an accommodation request on August 20, 2024.
- 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 2024, 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.

- **Making Programs Accessible:** Work with experienced accessibility educators to design curricula and activities for youth or community-based programming that will be more universally accessible. This workshop will introduce promising practices within accessibility and, through a hands-on workshop, inspire and challenge participants to enhance plans and strategies to be inclusive of a wide variety of learners. **This was offered in October 2025, and we are planning to repeat it in June 2025**
- **Accommodation and Accessibility:** This course will review key concepts in creative accessible spaces to boost inclusion across physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities. Participants will learn the language of inclusion and the basic legal foundations for implementing accommodations. The course will dive deeply into universal design, a model for creating programs that work for people of a wide range of abilities. **This is self-paced training that our vendor expects to complete and launch this month.**

- **Accessible and Inclusive Events:** This workshop will guide participants through specific strategies for designing events and activities that are inclusive to all including people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency. The workshop will focus on accessible and inclusion principles specific to key areas when organizing events: inclusive places, universal design, materials and resources, facilitation and staff preparation. **This workshop will take place on 5/6.**
- In addition, when our program managers conduct their site visit, they have a variety of indicators to check their specific accessibility requirements as applicable.
- Many programs check ADA accessibility: others focus on ensuring specific staff have requisite training for working with youth with disabilities.

## **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.

DYCD's main entrance for visitors (located at 2 Lafayette Street) is wheelchair accessible. As of May 2025, for the leased office space, we have contacted 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 a Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO) as the main point of contact on digital accessibility issues within the agency.

- Our DIO has been meeting with MOPD weekly since October 2024 for DIO training around accessibility with Documents, Slides, PDFs, social media, and Website Auditing.
- DIO is also actively working with the Communication and IT team to ensure our templates are digitally accessible as part of the DYCD brand update.
- We had already implemented proper alt text practices on all social media posts prior to the training, and we continue to apply those standards.
- Additionally, all videos uploaded to our YouTube channel are reviewed for accurate captions before posting.

## **Consultations and Feedback**

DYCD is committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. In order 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, through 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](#)