

**NYC Emergency Management
First Accessibility Progress Report
Under the 2024-2028 Five-Year Accessibility Plan**

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Introduction

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 in consultation with 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, and shared with the Mayor and Council by March 31, 2023. NYC Emergency Management met all of these requirements on time. Additionally, each agency was required to provide annual reports on progress made towards achieving the goals included in their agency’s Five-Year Accessibility plans.

This is the first Annual Report on the progress made in fulfilling the elements articulated in NYC Emergency Management’s Five-Year-Plan pursuant to Local Law 12.

General

Under the NYC Charter and Administrative Code, NYC Emergency Management (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 leading the coordination of various City agencies' responses to both natural and man-made emergencies and potential incidents which require a multi-agency response, in close collaboration with public, private, and community partners, as needed. NYC Emergency Management helps New Yorkers before, during, and after emergencies through preparedness, education, and response.

Statement of Commitment

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. A link to NYCEM's accessibility statement is available [here](#).

Disability Service Facilitator and Other Key Accessibility Information

Dennis R. Boyd, Senior Disability and Civil Rights Counsel is the Disability Service Facilitator (DSF) for NYCEM. Saiena Shafiezadeh is the Legal Director of Civil Rights at NYCEM. Both Boyd and Shafiezadeh are NYCEM's ADA Advisors during activations and can be reached by email at adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov. Dennis Boyd can be reached by phone at 718-422-4660. Saiena Shafiezadeh can be reached by phone at (718) 422-3000. Alternatively, individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities can use the 711 relay service to connect.

The agency grievance procedure is available here: [grievance process](#). The agency website accessibility statement is available here: [NYCEM Website Accessibility Statement](#).

Feedback Process

NYCEM welcomes feedback on both its Five-Year Accessibility Plan and this Annual Accessibility Progress Report and accessibility issues regarding the agency generally. Members of the public and employees can share any feedback they may have about the agency's accessibility plan, policies, practices or procedures by email to adacoordinator@oem.nyc.gov.

Progress Report

This annual progress report addresses the five areas identified in section (b)(2) of Local Law 12 (NYC Admin Code § 1004(b)(2)) and covered by the agency's initial Five-year Accessibility Plan, for the years 2024-2028. Those areas include:

- Physical Access
- Digital Access
- Programmatic Access
- Effective Communications
- Workplace Inclusion

Physical Accessibility

- As published in NYCEM's initial Five-Year Accessibility Plan, NYCEM's headquarters are currently accessible. Additionally, plans are still underway for a possible expansion of NYCEM's agency headquarters as published in the initial Plan.
- While there is a desire to conduct remediations to NYCEM's headquarters due to the expansion of staffing at the agency, there is no immediate plan to do so.
- The City has maintained emergency shelter capacity for up to 120,000 people with disabilities by remediating 75 NYC Public Schools buildings to meet or exceed ADA standards. Accessible shelters are activated during coastal evacuations and include mobility and communication aids, expanded space for individuals with service animals or mobility devices, and Special Medical Needs Shelters for those requiring additional care. No changes have occurred since the original implementation.

Digital Accessibility

- NYCENYCEM has been using Nixle, a communication platform that allows public safety agencies, including NYCEM, to share real-time information with residents and other stakeholders, for several years. NYCEM is piloting additional Nixle functionalities to identify various disruptions to road and public transportation, NYC Fire Department and Police Department activity, in addition to other emergencies. This is being done to make Nixle messaging more targeted to specific neighborhoods within NYC.
- NYCEM has appointed an employee as the Agency's Digital Inclusion Officer. This role will focus on identifying both internal and external assets at NYCEM and developing plans to make them accessible over the next three years.

Programmatic Accessibility

- NYCEM promotes inclusion of equitable considerations in the crafting and refinement of future short and long-term recovery operations. To support this, NYCEM provides analytical tools that help City agencies and the public identify and understand potential risks to and impacts on underserved populations, economies, and communities. These tools analyze critical data and trends to inform more equitable and effective recovery planning.
- NYCEM offered its employees Language Testing International Commercial Certification to provide broader language access in agency operations.
- NYCEM targeted outreach to climate-vulnerable communities to assist New Yorkers during severe heat.
- NYCEM hosted a presentation on cultural preservation in emergency response, including guests from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Heritage Emergency National Task Force and leading conservation organizations.
- NYCEM developed the design process for the NYC Risk Landscape, Reduce Your Risk Guide, and Hazard Mitigation Plan - a plan created by NYCEM that identifies natural hazard risks and vulnerabilities that are common to NYC and long-term strategies for reducing them. Graphic materials are designed with integrated accessibility. NYCEM's selected graphic design vendor's tasks were required to be accessible in our initial Request for Proposal and their Scope of Work. The NYC Hazard Mitigation Plan also incorporates disability, access, and functional needs (DAFN) into the process to broaden the understanding of New York City's social environment and better inform hazard risk profiles and mitigation strategies. To accommodate diverse abilities and interests among agency representatives, mixed engagement methods are being used to collect information on the impacts of mitigation actions that have been put in place as part of NYC's Hazard Mitigation Plan. These tools will continue to be used in NYC's 2025 Mitigation Actions update. The Mitigation Actions Database includes an entry identifying and prioritizing actions that address social vulnerability, including regarding DAFN. This ensures compliance with plan protocols and serves to include potentially overlooked viewpoints. These methods include:
 - Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Lists, and direct submissions through email.
 - In-person meetings, Microsoft Teams meetings, and phone calls.
 - Engagement through lectures and site visits.
- NYCEM developed the NYC Urban Risk Index, which incorporates variables regarding DAFN into its methodology for calculating risk scores related to various hazards. Some themes sourced from the "Social Vulnerability Index" which informs the risk score include, socio-economic status, household composition and disability, minority status and language, and housing type and transportation.

Effective Communication

- Multilingual Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), a federally managed program that sends geographically targeted emergency notifications to mobile devices to warn the public about imminent threats, disasters, and urgent safety information will expand to support the 13 most spoken language in the United States (Arabic, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), French, German, Haitian, Creole, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese) & ASL via form fillable template. ASL alerts will be supported by video templates. This is expected to be implemented by mid-2027.
- Strengthening Communities is an initiative led by NYCEM's Community Engagement unit to enhance local emergency preparedness. Participating groups work to address a range of community needs. NYCEM actively promotes increased access to funding opportunities, including grants for community-based organizations. Notably, both past and current cohorts of the initiative have included organizations that provide services to people with disabilities.
- NYCEM's Ready New York program has helped New Yorkers — including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs — prepare for emergencies by providing guidance on creating emergency plans, gathering supplies, and assembling Go Bags. As part of this effort, Ready New York: My Emergency Plan, a specialized workbook, has supported individuals in building a support network, capturing important health information, planning for evacuation, and preparing emergency supplies. First responders and caregivers have also used the workbook to assist people during emergencies. Additionally, Ready New York has delivered accessible presentations through trained staff and NYC CERT volunteers, offering events in multiple languages and formats at workplaces, schools, community centers, and houses of worship, with accommodations available to meet diverse needs.

Workplace Inclusion

- NYCEM developed and finalized the Agency's first Racial Equity Plan, reflecting goals, outcomes, strategies, and indicators for NYCEM.
- It developed a new cohort of the agency's Equity and Diversity Council, made up of volunteer staff convened regularly to advance equity, inclusion, and belonging within the Agency. The Equity and Diversity Council has continued to present its Religious Literacy Series to agency staff, by discussing and highlighting the cultural and religious practices of different communities in NYC.
- The Agency has offered three Conflict Resolution Training sessions to staff in partnership with the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution at the City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH), equipping staff with tools to manage and resolve workplace conflicts.

- NYCEM continues to evaluate and integrate DAFN considerations to reflect evolving needs. These efforts will continue through the duration of the current Five-Year Plan.
- As a coordinating agency, NYCEM regularly conducts “exercises” - realistic emergency preparedness scenarios – in collaboration with partner agencies and organizations. DAFN considerations are routinely incorporated.
- In 2024, NYCEM conducted 51 exercises that incorporated DAFN considerations.
- As of May 1, 2025, NYCEM has conducted 11 exercises that incorporated DAFN considerations.
- Below are examples of some specific exercises with a disability component:
- Coastal Storm Plan Exercise Series (Annual series; internal series conducted by NYCEM for each Emergency Service Function)
- No-Notice Drill (March 2024; internal exercise conducted by NYCEM for the Blue Team revolving around a building collapse scenario) (For emergency activations, NYCEM staff are divided into three teams: Red, White, and Blue, who share the role of primary responders throughout the calendar year.)
- Recovery Working Group Tabletop Exercise (June 2024; interagency exercise conducted by NYCEM for the RWG)
- Emergency Exercise for Language Access Coordinators (April 2024; interagency exercise conducted externally by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs)
- City Hall Functional Exercise Series (2024; 3 interagency exercises conducted by NYCEM for Citywide Leadership)

Consultations and Feedback

NYCEM has a dedicated team of employees who focus on providing planning, mitigation, response and recovery services geared towards people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. This group meets monthly, often inviting community-based advocates who serve the disability community, elderly populations, non-English speakers, children, and people who are unhoused, among others. The group seeks feedback from these advocates about how best to serve their constituents. These lessons learned are incorporated into the methodology of the agency, by providing input into agency planning efforts throughout the year. NYCEM is also currently working to convene service providers with various specialties across the disability community to identify ways the Agency can better tailor planning, response, mitigation and recovery to particularly identified needs.

Conclusion

This first Annual Report reflects NYCEM's continued commitment to accessibility for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in emergency services, in accordance with Local Law 12. Through sustained collaboration and inclusive planning, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts, NYCEM continues working to ensure that emergency preparedness and response are accessible and equitable for all New Yorkers.