



**Fire Department
City of New York**

**Local Law 12 of 2023
5-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2028)**

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Background

Local Law 12 of 2023 requires every New York City agency to develop and implement a five-year accessibility plan, in consultation with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (“MOPD”). The legislation mandates that the accessibility plan outline the steps that agencies are taking to “ensure that the agency’s workplace, services, programs and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities” by improving physical, digital, and programmatic access, and providing effective communications for persons with disabilities.¹ These efforts include, but are not limited to: “any alterations or structural changes to facilities or premises that are owned and operated by the agency or contracted for use by the agency or otherwise under the agency’s jurisdiction; any planned upgrades or investments in technology or tools that will improve accessibility within the agency or access to such agency’s services and programs; and additional steps to make the agency’s programs and services more accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities.”²

Statement of Commitment

As first responders to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, disasters and terrorist acts, the Fire Department of the City of New York (“FDNY”) protects the lives and property of New York City residents and visitors. The FDNY advances public safety through its fire prevention, investigation and education programs. The timely delivery of these services enables the FDNY to make significant contributions to the safety of New York City and homeland security efforts.

The FDNY believes in an equitable and inclusive environment and is committed to providing persons with disabilities with access to the Department’s services, both within its workforce and the greater community. As the FDNY continues its unwavering mission to protect and serve, it is also committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility. The FDNY strives to use reasonable efforts, consistent with the purpose of this legislation, to ensure that policies and practices to advance accessibility, traditional and new, are seamlessly woven throughout the FDNY.

¹ Local Law 12 of 2023, available at: <https://intro.nyc/0682-2022>.

² Id.

Online Resources

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

1. Five-Year Accessibility Plan³
2. Grievance Procedure for members of the public
3. Website Accessibility Statement
4. Information on how to contact the Disability Service Facilitator
5. Texting 911

Accommodation Requests

Under Local Law 27 of 2016, every City agency is required to appoint a Disability Service Facilitator ("DSF"). The DSF coordinates 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. These individuals are liaisons to New Yorkers with disabilities, connecting people with disabilities to City government.

Employees and/or members of the public who need assistance accessing a particular program or service, should contact FDNY's DSF:

Valerie A. Loubriel, Esq.
Fire Department – City of New York
9 Metrotech Center, Brooklyn, NY 11201-3857
Telephone: (718) 999-1446
Fax: (718) 999-1289
eeora@fdny.nyc.gov
TTY: (212) 504-4115
New York Relay Service: 711

³ To access FDNY's online accessibility resources, please visit our website.

Executive Summary

FDNY is committed to equity both in our workforce and when serving the community. To comply with the ADA and Local Law 12 of 2023, the FDNY has designed this accessibility plan to identify priority areas to remove barriers to accessing FDNY's services and to empower its workforce to better serve all New Yorkers. This plan addresses access in the following areas: (1) Physical Access; (2) Digital Access; (3) Programmatic Access; (4) Communications; and (5) Workplace Inclusion.

The purpose of this plan is to outline how the FDNY will make reasonable efforts to meet these goals and ensure compliance with the ADA and other legal mandates. This plan was informed by consultations with relevant FDNY stakeholders: the Regulatory Compliance office, Facilities Management, Budget, Public Information Office, which oversees digital communications, and the FDNY's EEO Office, which handles disability-related inquiries and processes reasonable accommodations requests and is considered a subject matter expert on accessibility issues throughout the FDNY. The FDNY's plan will continue to evolve with the goal of achieving our accessibility objectives and keeping pace with the advancement of accessibility standards.

Agency Plan

Implementation Timeframe: 2025-2028

The FDNY's proposed 5-Year Accessibility Plan was published for public comment between 12/31/2024 through 2/14/2025. During this time period, the FDNY received four comments, which it carefully reviewed. The FDNY will consider these comments and suggestions in its continuing efforts to make the FDNY, its facilities and services more accessible.

Physical Access

The FDNY operates over 300 facilities, which include firehouses, EMS stations administrative buildings, and two training academies. These facilities are located throughout the five boroughs of New York City, some of which are over a hundred years old and are staffed with firefighters, EMS members and civilian employees, serving the entire community. The FDNY headquarters, which also includes areas that are not restricted to the public, is fully ADA compliant. In addition, the first-floor restroom in most firehouses is ADA compliant. New firehouses now include an elevator for accessibility. The goal of the FDNY is to ensure that its facilities comply with all applicable ADA requirements.

In addition to addressing physical access for our employees at the over 300 facilities owned or operated by the FDNY, we are also focused on addressing physical access issues faced by individuals with disabilities, whose access to public walkways may be impacted by the FDNY operations. It has recently been brought to FDNY's attention that improperly

parked FDNY vehicles might be blocking the path of travel for people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. This was raised specifically in the context of ambulance parking. FDNY Compliance Unit is working actively to address these issues by engaging in messaging through training of EMS members and direct e-mails to EMS members and ensuring that discipline is imposed where appropriate. As part of its Agency Plan, the FDNY will remain committed to addressing issues of physical access for the members of the community.

Digital Access

Local Law 26 of 2016 requires agency websites to meet accessibility standards set out according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA or a successor standard adopted by the City, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration in service or present an undue financial burden. As of November 2023, the City had adopted WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the applicable standard.

The FDNY's External Affairs Bureau is responsible for ensuring content is accessible on FDNY's websites and will continue to strive to meet these Guidelines for both our internal and public facing websites. The Associate Commissioner of Strategic Communications, Amanda Farinacci, is designated as the Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO). On the FDNY's public facing website, there is a Website Accessibility Statement⁴ reinforcing our commitment to ensuring that its digital content is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. In addition, there is Conformance Status statement explaining the WCAG requirements to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the definition of the three levels of conformance and the FDNY's level of conformance, which is partially conformant. On this webpage, there is also a Feedback section encouraging the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of our digital content by using the [Website Accessibility Feedback Form](#). Finally, there is contact information of the FDNY's Disability Services Facilitator, Valerie Loubriel, Esq., at (718) 999- 1446 or email eeora@fdny.nyc.gov.

The FDNY will take reasonable measures to update its website and other platforms and to improve its practices around the creation of digital content to provide further conformity. We are also exploring providing more content in American Sign Language (ASL).

In addition, the FDNY is also committed to raising awareness for the Deaf and hard of hearing community and those with speech disabilities about ways they can contact the

⁴ nyc.gov/site/fdny/about/resources/policy-and-agreements/website-accessibility-statement.page

necessary services in case of an emergency. In collaboration with the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) and MOPD, the FDNY will institute a robust campaign aimed at educating individuals about Text-to-911 and the interactive LINKNYC kiosks around the City, which include, among other things, hearing aid induction loops and ASL assistance with reporting emergencies.

Programmatic Access

Accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities is a core value of the FDNY. The FDNY is committed to ensuring that services, activities, and programs of benefits by the Fire Department are accessible to all members of the public, and staff, without barriers.

Below is a list of some of the services that the FDNY provides/adopts:

1. Text-to-911 – A safe way to reach emergency services in New York City. (Currently available in English and Spanish)
2. Closed Captioning Tapping Protocol – A way to request emergency services such as Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services from emergency call boxes that does not require communicating by voice.
3. Providing an American Sign Language Interpreter, large print or Braille documents and real time captioning, also known as computer-assisted real-time transcription (CART), when requested within a reasonable timeframe.

Effective Communications

The FDNY is committed to providing accessible services to people with disabilities and making our information and communications accessible to them. As noted above, the FDNY will designate a digital inclusion officer and make efforts to improve its digital accessibility. The FDNY will also continue to provide, upon request, and seek out updated information on the appropriate auxiliary aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities to ensure all possible measures are taken to support all individuals. These services may include, but are not limited to, qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, closed captioning, speech-to-text software, or other technology that would make communication, services, and information, accessible to people with speech, hearing, or vision disabilities, among any other applicable disability.

Workplace Inclusion

The FDNY is compliant with the City’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, as well as its own internal enhanced policy, to ensure that its workplaces are free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. This includes compliance with the City’s Reasonable

Accommodation policy which provides applicants and employees with a reasonable accommodation, based on disability, to perform the essential functions of their job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. The FDNY's EEO Office has a robust reasonable accommodation process, and it continuously creates strategies to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Furthermore, the FDNY is committed to ensuring that our recruitment, assessment and on-boarding processes are fair and accessible to all applicants and potential employees.

The FDNY will also continue to provide reasonable accommodations to assist employees in performing their essential job functions. The FDNY's mission is to provide essential fire suppression, fire prevention, and emergency medical services to the people of New York City. Accordingly, the FDNY must always be able to maintain staff capable of performing and providing such essential public safety services. A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or alteration of a facility, equipment or job duty that enables an employee with a disability to apply for a job, perform the essential job duties/functions, or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of FDNY employment without imposing an undue hardship on the FDNY. Therefore, it is the policy of the FDNY, to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities, as long as there is no undue hardship to the Department, in order for them to enjoy equal employment opportunities consistent with applicable law and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.), the New York State Human Rights Law, and the New York City Human Rights Law.

FDNY also plans to make disability etiquette and awareness training mandatory for all its employees by the end of calendar year 2025.

Methodology

Beyond meeting ADA compliance requirements, the FDNY is dedicated to identifying priorities to increase accessibility and inclusion. To remove and prevent accessibility barriers during the applicable period (2024-2028), the FDNY will continue to review existing accessibility policies and procedures, making revisions and updates, where and when necessary. The FDNY believes it is critical to understand any barriers in its practice and develop reasonable solutions to overcome said hurdles, to provide an accessible and supportive environment to all individuals, while continuing to carry out the mission of serving the City of New York.