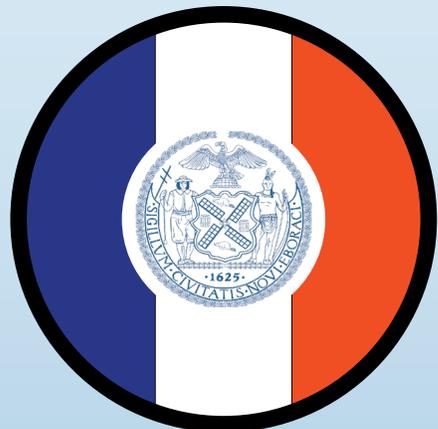
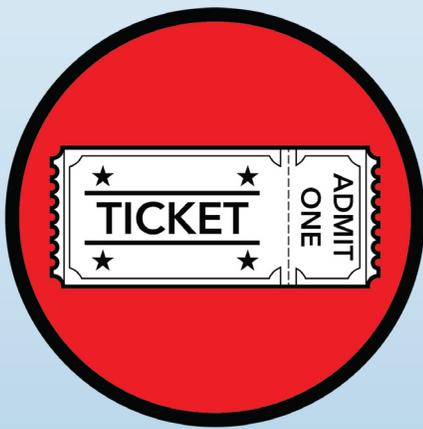




AccessibleNYC



2025




Eric L. Adams
Mayor

Suzanne - Miles Gustave
Deputy Mayor for Health &
Human Services

Christina Curry,
Commissioner
Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities

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Statement from Commissioner Curry

New York City is home to around a million people with disabilities whose contributions strengthen every neighborhood and every sector of our city. AccessibleNYC reflects our commitment to supporting all New Yorkers as they live, work, learn, travel, and participate fully in the life of our community. The updates described in this report demonstrate how City agencies and partners are working together to advance accessibility and inclusion across all parts of the city government.



Over the past four years, New Yorkers have seen meaningful progress across the housing landscape. This includes the continued implementation of disability set-aside units, clearer pathways for applicants to demonstrate eligibility, and expanded resources to help tenants and homeowners understand their options. Agencies also report on efforts that connect New Yorkers to rental assistance, legal support, and programs that make it easier to navigate housing opportunities.

Transportation remains essential to independence, and this report highlights accessibility improvements across the broader system. These updates include subway station accessibility projects, accessible for-hire vehicle options, ferry and commuter rail enhancements, and new communication tools that help riders plan trips with confidence.

A more accessible city is also reflected in the built environment. City agencies report installing thousands of new pedestrian ramps and accessible pedestrian signals, along with investments in design standards and capital projects that improve accessibility in public buildings, streetscapes, and community spaces. These improvements support safer, more welcoming environments for New Yorkers of all ages and abilities.

Accessibility also extends to health, education, culture, and recreation. This report highlights agency initiatives that expand access to public health programs, strengthen supports for students in NYC Public Schools and CUNY, and broaden opportunities for cultural participation, tourism, and adaptive recreation across the five boroughs.

MOPD continues to play an important role in advancing accessibility citywide. Recent efforts include strengthening digital accessibility, supporting Disability Service Facilitators across agencies, and expanding Deaf access. The passage of Local Law 12 of 2023, which requires every City agency to develop a five-year accessibility plan, represents a significant milestone that will deepen accountability and long-term planning for accessibility throughout city government.

Employment and financial empowerment remain key priorities. Through updates to NYC: ATWORK, accessibility initiatives across the Workforce1 system, the 55-a Program, youth employment pathways, and disability-informed financial counseling services, City agencies are working to expand opportunity and support New Yorkers in pursuing meaningful careers and financial stability.

The progress reflected in AccessibleNYC is made possible by strong partnerships with City agencies, community organizations, advocates, and employers, and, above all, by people with disabilities whose perspectives and leadership continue to guide this work. While we are proud of the strides made, we remain committed to the work ahead.

MOPD will continue to champion accessibility, equity, and inclusion so every New Yorker can live a full, independent, and self-directed life. Together, we are building a city that truly belongs to all of us.



Christina Curry, MA, MPA
Commissioner, NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Housing

This section provides an overview of New York City’s efforts to expand affordable, accessible, and stable housing options for people with disabilities. It highlights key programs, incentives, and cross-agency initiatives that reduce barriers to housing, support independent living, and strengthen long-term housing security across all five boroughs.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity

The City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, approved in December 2024, has made a big push for more housing in all neighborhoods and will result in more housing that is affordable and accessible city-wide. Through increasing new production, its expansion of supportive housing, reduction of parking mandates, legalization of Accessory Dwelling Units, and removal of barriers for shared housing, City of Yes will result in increased availability of accessible living options.

This initiative will:

- **Increase Construction of New Housing** – Creating more new homes that will comply with current accessibility standards.
- **Supportive Housing** – Supportive housing often includes units designed for people with disabilities. By easing zoning restrictions, the plan encourages the construction of supportive housing near transit and essential services, enhancing accessibility and independence for residents.
- **Parking Mandates** – Reducing parking requirements will lower construction costs and free up space for additional new construction housing that will be accessible and adaptable for people with disabilities.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)** – 1- and 2-family homeowners in all residential districts can now create ADUs such as basement apartments and backyard cottages. ADUs are good housing options for family members with a disability or caregivers as they provide both convenient proximity and independent spaces.

- **Shared Housing** – Shared housing consists of individual, independently rented rooms that share kitchen and bathroom facilities. This flexible living arrangement provides opportunities to offer a right-size level of independence for adults living with disabilities and to effectively share caregiving responsibilities across tenants living in a shared building.

Department of Housing Preservation and Development Initiatives

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) work to provide affordable housing options for a wide range of household sizes and income levels. These apartments are offered through a lottery system, where applicants are assigned a number at random that dictates the order in which they are processed. These homes are considered affordable because the rent or purchase price typically does not exceed one-third of a household's income. The process of promoting, leasing, or selling these units is managed by “marketing agents” who are hired by developers and must be approved by the relevant agency - either HPD or HDC.

HPD requires that all HPD-financed newly constructed multi-family buildings comply with the HPD Design Guidelines for New Construction. These Guidelines reference the minimal standards for accessible and adaptive features per Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act, and the New York City Building Code. In some cases, programs intended to house targeted populations, such as senior housing, exceed these minimum standards. Recent years have had unprecedented numbers of new affordable housing units. **In fiscal year 2024, HPD financed 14,706 units, which is more new construction affordable housing than any other year on record for New York City.**

NYC Housing Connect

HPD is committed to ensuring not only the homes that go through the housing lottery are accessible, but that the housing lottery itself - [NYC Housing Connect](#) - is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. Since the launch of the updated Housing Connect 2.0 platform in 2020, HPD and MOPD have worked together to ensure it is compatible for screen reader users.

In addition, in early 2022, HPD created and published two informational videos on how to use the new version of the housing lottery in American Sign Language (ASL), one is the [Affordable Housing Guide for Applicants with Disabilities](#), and the other is a 2D animation video which provides an overview of the new [NYC Housing Connect](#) portal with ASL Picture-in-Picture.

Disability Set-aside Units

The affordable housing new construction projects financed by HPD and HDC are mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to set aside 7% of units for applicants with disabilities.

These set-asides are broken down as follows:

- 5% for mobility – a mobility set-aside unit means that the floor plan is designed to be accessible to someone with a mobility disability. This could include removable under-counter cabinets, certain heights for kitchen appliances and counters, amongst other features.
- 2% for vision and hearing – A vision or hearing set-aside unit can include alarm systems that use loud tones, flashing lights or vibrations, or smart appliances with communication technology.

Since January 2022, nearly 2,000 newly constructed or newly renovated units have been made available to people with disabilities as a result of the 7% disability set-aside requirement.

People with these or other disabilities can also apply for affordable housing in the general affordable housing lottery and can request reasonable accommodations from the building owner if alterations to the unit are required.

HPD Affordable Housing Guide for Applicants with Disabilities

Released in January 2022, the [Affordable Housing Guide for Applicants with Disabilities](#) provides an overview of affordable housing and particular considerations for people with disabilities in New York City. Topics covered include an explanation of affordable housing, set-aside units for people with disabilities, the HPD housing lottery application process through NYC Housing Connect, Mitchell-Lama units and frequently asked questions. [The guide is available in American sign language and 11 other languages.](#)

Housing Ambassador Program

HPD continues to partner with more than 45 non-profit organizations in all five boroughs to help constituents with the Housing Connect application process, in-person and over the phone. Some Housing Ambassador organizations specialize in serving people with disabilities. To find a Housing Ambassador, go to [Housing Ambassadors - HPD](#) where you can find a community-based service provider that meets your language, accessibility, and location needs.

Expanded Disability Certification

The latest [Marketing Handbook](#) published in April 2025, makes it easier to qualify for an accessible unit by expanding the list of acceptable documents households can provide to prove their disability. Previously, the only way to establish eligibility for a disability set-aside unit was to submit a certification by a licensed medical professional. Now, HPD will accept certifications by licensed healthcare professionals including physical therapists as well as supervisors of community-based organizations who are familiar with the prospective candidate or member of their household with disabilities and the type of services provided to them, as well as certain other documents.

Wheelchair Lifts Added to the J-51 Certified Reasonable Cost List

In early 2025, interior vertical wheelchair lifts and exterior vertical wheelchair lifts were added to the J-51 certified reasonable cost list of approved preservation costs. Owners of eligible existing buildings, including low-rent stabilized properties and select condos and coops, can now use this tax abatement to offset the cost of building new accessibility improvements. More information is at the [J-51 Reform page](#).

Where We Live NYC

Where We Live NYC (WWL NYC) is an inclusive and collaborative process, led by HPD, for planning how to fight housing discrimination, confront segregation, and advance opportunity for all. The first plan, WWL NYC 2020 identified goals, strategies, and actions that the City of New York has been undertaking to advance fair housing through 2025. Among its six fair housing goals identified, Goal 5 was to create more independent living options for people with disabilities.

As reported in the recent Where We Live NYC Progress Report, six of the seven action items pertaining to Goal 5 are completed or in-progress. Housing needs of people with disabilities also feature prominently among the new set of goals and action items in WWL NYC 2025, with Goal 5 focusing on expanding and improve housing options and accommodations for people with disabilities.

Aging in Place

Aging in Place is an HPD initiative to help older adults age safely in place through building-wide and apartment renovations. The Aging in Place initiative applies to buildings that receive financial assistance through an HPD Preservation Finance program. As part of developing the scope of renovations, residents receive a survey in which they can select in-unit modifications. These modification options were identified to assist older adults and people with disabilities to maintain independent, safe and comfortable lives. Although the in-unit modifications were specifically developed to address fall prevention and other mobility issues for older adults, all tenants are offered the opportunity to select the in-unit renovations. HPD also offers the opportunity for a homeowner to elect modifications for 1-4 family homes through its HomeFix program.

HPD Community Engagement

In July and August 2025, HPD presented four MOPD-hosted sessions focused on Housing Connect and the Housing Lottery and on Tenant Rights and Responsibilities: two for the general disability community and two as part of MOPD Deaf Town Halls.

HPD's community outreach team brings information and services directly to tenants and homeowners across the five boroughs. To bring HPD's community outreach team to your organization, contact hpdoutreach@hpd.nyc.gov.

Department of Finance Programs

The Disabled Homeowners' Exemption

The Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE) offers a property tax reduction for disabled New Yorkers who own one-, two-, or three-family homes, condominiums, or cooperative apartments with a combined annual income of \$58,399 or less. The benefit offers eligible disabled homeowners up to a 50% reduction in their home's assessed value. The property must be the applicant's primary residence, with a potential exception if you are receiving in-patient care at a residential healthcare facility. Applicants need to submit documentation of their disability, such as a disability award letter from the Social Security Administration, an award letter from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board or U.S. Postal Service, a certificate from the New York State Commission for the Blind, or a Veterans' Administration letter stating that they are entitled to a Veterans' Disability Pension. All the owners must be people with disabilities, unless the home is owned by spouses or siblings, in which case only one homeowner must have a disability.

Disability Rent Increase Exemption

Eligible tenants who have a disability and live in an eligible apartment in New York City may be able to freeze their rent and prevent future rent increases with the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). Upon qualification for DRIE, the Department of Finance will "freeze" a tenant's rent and issue a tax abatement credit to the landlord for most future rental increases, protecting the tenant from paying higher amounts.

To qualify for DRIE, you must be at least 18 years old, the combined income of everyone living in the apartment must be \$50,000 or less, and you must spend more than one-third of your monthly combined household income on rent. You must live in and be on the lease of a rent-controlled, rent-regulated, or rent-stabilized apartment, or an apartment located in a building whose mortgage was federally insured under Section 213 of the National Housing Act and is owned by a Mitchell-Lama development, limited dividend housing company, redevelopment company, Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) incorporated under New York State's Private Housing Finance Law, Battery Park City or certain former Mitchell-Lama developments.

You must also have been awarded one of the following: Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI); Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs disability pension or disability compensation; United States Postal Service disability pension or disability compensation; or Disability-related Medicaid if the applicant has received either SSI or SSDI in the past.

Disabled Crime Victim / Good Samaritan Exemption Tax Benefits

The Disabled Crime Victim's Exemption provides a tax exemption for a victim of a crime who became physically disabled because of the crime. This benefit is also for someone who becomes disabled by trying to stop a person who has committed a crime; trying to prevent a crime from happening; or trying to help a law enforcement officer make an arrest. To qualify, the crime victim or Good Samaritan must be the property owner, a resident of the property or a member of the property owner's household. Additionally, as per the statute establishing the benefit, the physical disability caused by the crime must include "a permanent physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of such individual's major life activities."

Disabled Veterans' Tax Benefits

The **Alternative Veterans' Exemption** is available on a veteran's primary residence and allows an additional reduction in the property's assessed value to veterans who incur service-connected disabilities, equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings (regardless of whether such veterans served in combat zones). An applicant will need to submit U.S. Veterans' Administration documents for service-connected disability rating to receive the disability benefits portion of the exemption.

The **Eligible Funds Veterans' Exemption** reduces the assessed value of a property purchased by a veteran with eligible funds. There is a further exemption that permits veterans who qualify for grants to purchase or to modify specially adapted houses to accommodate their serious disabilities, or the homes of their widowed spouses.

Multi-Agency Efforts to Ease Administrative Barriers to Accessing Housing

Supportive Housing

One way to improve access to housing for people with disabilities is to reduce administrative barriers to access supportive housing. Supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective approach to addressing the needs of people who have a mental illness, substance-use disorders, or have other barriers to independence. By providing tenants with permanent, rent-stabilized housing with access to social services, supportive housing reduces the need for placement in higher-cost homeless shelters, hospitals, mental-health institutions, jails, and prisons.

As of June of 2025, there are over 38,000 units of supportive housing tracked in the Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS) (see section about CAPS immediately below). These units include NYC 15/15, a mayoral initiative to create 15,000 units of supportive housing over 15 years, as well as the state's supportive housing program, Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI), which will create 20,000 units statewide.

In order to reduce administrative barriers in accessing supportive housing, DSS and NYC Health + Hospitals are working to share administrative data for supportive housing eligibility. Data sharing helps to streamline the process of housing placement. NYC released the Low Barrier Admission Policy, in collaboration with DSS, HPD and the NYC Health Department, which outlines the supportive housing application and referral process and offers guidance for housing providers on accepting supportive housing clients into their program. The guidance can be found on the [NYC CoC website](#).

Coordinated Assessment and Placement System

Coordinated Entry is a requirement for all Continuums of Care (CoC) nationwide to streamline the way people move from homelessness into permanent housing, ensuring the most vulnerable are prioritized for scarce resources. It requires each CoC to look at their system as a whole, rather than program by program.

In NYC, the CoC developed the Coordinated Assessment and Placement System, or CAPS. Launched in October 2020, CAPS is a web-based system accessible to both mainstream and homeless service providers across all five boroughs. CAPS includes a coordinated assessment survey to pre-identify people with disabilities for permanent supportive housing, local and state rental subsidies and federal subsidies and housing. CAPS has regular enhancements to improve the application, determination, referral and placement processes for supportive housing in NYC. Most recently, CAPS is working to identify HPD disability set-aside units within the supportive portfolio, to make sure they are available for those clients who need them the most.

The Coordinated Entry/CAPS Committee, a committee of the CoC, is comprised of key stakeholders across NYC's homeless and housing services. They meet regularly to review, evaluate, and refine CAPS development and expansion.

Department of Social Services Programs

Homebase

Homebase is a homelessness prevention network with 26 locations across New York City. The program works with clients experiencing an immediate housing crisis such as an eviction or who are facing housing instability. Services include support with rental assistance assessment and application, assistance with public benefits, financial counseling, referral for legal representation and other supports based on specific needs. More information on Homebase can be found at nyc.gov/homebase. To find a convenient location, use the [Homebase Locator](#).

Office of Civil Justice

The Office of Civil Justice (OCJ) oversees and monitors City-supported legal representation, advice and other legal assistance to New York City tenants facing eviction, harassment, disrepair and other housing-related issues. Through partnerships with contracted nonprofit legal services organizations, OCJ is implementing the City's Universal Access to Counsel law, providing access to free legal help for tenants facing eviction cases in New York City Housing Court and NYCHA administrative proceedings.

In addition to providing free eviction defense legal services, OCJ's programs provide access to free legal assistance for tenants in a range of housing-related cases. These programs provide access to legal representation and advice to New York City tenants in individual and group collective litigation to help maintain and preserve their housing and protect against harassment, disrepair or other misconduct by unscrupulous landlords. OCJ's legal services are free and available in every ZIP code. For help, call 311 and ask for the City's Tenant Helpline.

DSS Housing Resource Guide

DSS has produced a housing resource guide entitled Housing Resources for People Who Are Aging or Have Disabilities to support efforts to identify appropriate housing opportunities for individuals in need. The Guide offers information for staff on eligibility requirements, the application process, and contact information for several specialized subsidies and direct placements. This tool also includes a listing of organizations that provide home modifications, as well as some important housing-related legal resources.

Rental Assistance

Special One-Time Assistance Program

The Special One-Time Assistance (SOTA) program pays one year of rent for eligible Department of Homeless Services (DHS) clients to move within New York City, to other New York State counties, or to another state, Puerto Rico, or Washington, D.C. SOTA can be accessed by households with recurring income from employment, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability (SSD) benefits and a rent that does not exceed 40% of the household's current or projected income. DHS or provider staff conduct walkthroughs using a comprehensive apartment review checklist for all units within New York City and in nearby counties. Once in the program, participants can call a SOTA Hotline if they are having issues that could affect their ability to remain permanently housed or need guidance on services available in their community.

CityFHEPS

CityFHEPS is a program that provides rental assistance to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It is available to, among others, eligible individuals and families who reside in a DHS shelter and include a household member who receives federal disability benefits or is in receipt of Cash Assistance and has been determined to be potentially eligible for federal disability benefits based on having a documented disability. Subject to the availability of funding, the assistance is available for as long as a household continues to receive federal disability benefits and complies with program requirements such as an annual renewal, total household income not to exceed 80% AMI, etc. This program also includes a comprehensive apartment review for moves from shelter or within the community.

The CityFHEPS rent levels, which had previously been lower than Section 8 levels, are now in line with the payment standards adopted by the New York City Housing Authority as a percentage of the federally established Fair Market Rent levels.

Public Engagement Unit

Rent Freeze Team

The Public Engagement Unit (PEU) plays a crucial role in advocating for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs. PEU's "Rent Freeze" team performs targeted outreach to seniors and individuals with disabilities, aiming to identify eligible New Yorkers who are not yet enrolled in the programs. Additionally, the team supports homeowners in applying for the Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption (SCHE) and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE), and has expanded its efforts in 2025 to provide focused support to homeowners with properties listed for lien sale. This includes screening, application assistance, and submission for eligible individuals. Applying for a tax exemption allows for the removal of their property from the lien sale list.

PEU remains dedicated to assisting potentially eligible individuals in applying for the programs, frequently providing step-by-step guidance throughout the process. PEU collaborates closely with its partners at the Department of Finance to ensure that applications are submitted correctly, thoroughly vetted, and approved. PEU is collaborating with the offices of elected officials, and community organizations to organize SCRIE/DRIE clinics aimed at educating community staff and community members at large on the application process, enabling them to guide others in the community on how to apply for these programs.

Tenant Helpline

In April 2020, the City launched the Tenant Helpline to serve as a one-stop shop to inform New York City tenants about their rights and connect them to housing-related resources, including free legal services.

The Helpline provides:

- Information and education on tenant rights
- Referrals for enforcement
- Landlord/tenant mediation
- Referrals to cash assistance, SNAP, Homebase
- Other resources to help tenants feel safe and secure in their homes

The Tenant Helpline is staffed by housing Specialists from PEU's Tenant Support Unit (TSU) who can triage a wide variety of calls and immediately determine whether a client will need comprehensive case management or a simple referral (to another agency or CBO). To accurately identify a client's needs and provide them with the personalized care necessary to address sensitive cases requires extensive training, and the Specialists are uniquely equipped with the skills required for these conversations.

Transportation

This section outlines the major accessibility improvements made across New York City's transportation network, including subways, buses, paratransit, ferries, and taxis. It summarizes how agencies have worked to enhance physical access, expand service options, modernize technology, and improve the travel experience for riders with disabilities.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Network

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), through its various agencies, operates New York City's subways, buses, Access-A-Ride, the Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road, and nine bridge and tunnel crossings. The MTA is governed by a 23-member Board. Voting members are nominated by the Governor, including four recommended by New York City's Mayor. New York State law now requires that the Board include at least one voting member who is a "transit-dependent individual" with a permanent disability.

In 2021, the MTA appointed its first Chief Accessibility Officer who is responsible for overseeing accessibility work at all the MTA's agencies. The appointment has advanced the MTA's commitment to increasing access and ensuring that the system meets the needs of all riders, including those with disabilities.

Subways

Progress on Accessible Stations

An accessible subway system benefits all New Yorkers. It increases transportation options, which among other things increases employment opportunities and community interaction, helping the city remain a vibrant place to live and work. As New York City's population grows and as more New Yorkers seek to age in place, the need for an accessible subway system is also growing. A fully accessible subway system welcomes not just riders with disabilities, but older adults, those traveling with bicycles or luggage, caregivers with strollers, and anyone who may need some extra assistance getting around.

In 2022, the MTA made a historic commitment to accessibility, with a mandate to have 95% of subway stations accessible by 2055 and many milestones to ensure the MTA reaches that goal. In the next three decades, the MTA has committed to retrofitting nearly 350 stations— equivalent to the total number of stations in systems across the world like London, Paris, or Seoul. The MTA met the first milestone of the agreement at the end of 2024, and continues to award stations on pace to meet this target.

With the enacted Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget, both houses of the state legislature and the Governor have reaffirmed their commitment to the future success of the MTA. The budget includes full funding for the MTA's 2025-2029 Capital Plan, which will allow the MTA to stay on track to meet the accessibility goals laid out in the 2022 commitment. The 2025-2029 Capital Plan includes funding for at least 60 accessibility projects, including Smith-9 St F/G and Norwood-205 St D, as well as a host of other improvements to keep the system in a state of good repair. Improvements beyond station projects include new subway, bus, and rail cars, upgraded audio/visual public information systems, and modern fare gates. The \$68.4 billion plan is a crucial investment in the future of New York. For more information about the plan, visit future.mta.info/capitalplan.

In 2016, 105 subway stations were fully accessible by a ramp or an elevator. Through the end of 2025, 155 of the city's 493 subway and Staten Island Railway stations, serving more than half of all subway trips, have vertical access via ramp or elevator. This marks more than a 45% increase in just nine years. Of the 155 ADA accessible stations, 61 are in Manhattan, 42 in Brooklyn, 26 in Queens, 20 in the Bronx, and 6 in Staten Island. For an up-to-date list of accessible stations visit mta.info/accessibility.

Since the last AccesibleNYC report in 2021, the 100 Key Station program first mandated by state and federal law in 1994 has been completed with the opening of 68 St-Hunter College 6 in 2024.

The MTA continues to increase the pace of the design and construction of additional ADA station projects, completing ADA projects four times faster than before. A majority of the stations from the 2020-2024 Capital Plan are either completed or in construction with 38 currently in construction, including Steinway St MR and Classon Av G. Visit mta.info/project/station-accessibility-upgrades for a full list of stations completed and in progress.

Elevator Reliability

Both the 2020-2024 and 2025-2029 Capital Plans include funding for full replacement and modernization projects for dozens of elevators that are nearing the end of their useful life. These elevator replacement projects help keep elevators reliable and provide a smoother ride. MTA elevators run 24/7, which means there is no designated time to take them out of service for repairs or preventative maintenance.

The MTA has worked persistently over the last few years to ensure subway elevators meet a high standard of availability with a specific focus on machines that are privately owned and not maintained by the MTA. Through November 30, elevators (both NYC Transit-owned and privately-owned) had a 97.6% availability rate. This means that on average elevators were only unavailable 2.4% of the time, including any planned maintenance.¹ For the latest numbers, visit the MTA's open data platform at data.ny.gov.

Zoning for Accessibility

In close partnership with MOPD and the Department of City Planning (DCP), the MTA successfully advanced Zoning for Accessibility (ZFA). Zoning for Accessibility incentivizes more developers to invest in subway accessibility directly or provide easements to enable elevator installation at more stations. Since the passage of ZFA at the end of 2021, the MTA has obtained 11 easements and opened the first ZFA bonus project improvement at Queensboro Plaza N/W/7. At Queensboro Plaza, a private developer, Grubb Properties, financed and constructed a new accessible entrance on the north side of the station, which includes a 10-foot-wide staircase and a new, large elevator that accommodates many customers with strollers, carrying bikes, or using mobility devices. This investment supplements the MTA's own continued capital investments in station accessibility, and helps achieve systemwide accessibility on a quicker timeline.

¹ Elevator availability rates do not include elevators out for planned replacements

New Technology Tools

Subway accessibility is about much more than elevators and ramps. In 2019, the MTA ran the “Accessible Station Lab” project at the Jay St – MetroTech station in Brooklyn. At this station, the MTA tested 15 new accessibility tools including several wayfinding apps. Since then, the MTA has expanded the most successful tools including the NaviLens smartphone app, which provides real-time audio/visual wayfinding information in dozens of languages. In partnership with the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), the MTA recently concluded a pilot of NaviLens to better understand the app’s ability to provide intermodal journeys for all users. NaviLens can now be used in 48 subway stations and along three bus corridors in Manhattan and The Bronx. NaviLens can also be found on all subway cars on the 6 line and all Bx12 SBS buses.

After a successful proof of concept with the Transit Tech Lab (TTL) in early 2025, the MTA is piloting the Convo Access tool. Convo connects customers who use American Sign Language (ASL) with a live interpreter on their smartphone to interpret conversations with an MTA employee. The MTA launched an expanded pilot in February 2025.

The service is free for customers and available at select Customer Service Centers, Mobile Sales Vans, and certain LIRR and Metro-North stations. These locations have green QR codes on display for riders to scan to use Convo. Through October 2025, over 400 calls were successfully made across the system. For more information on where Convo is located, please visit mta.info/accessibility/innovations/convo. The MTA continues to leverage new technology to better serve riders with disabilities.

New, Accessible Modern Fare Gates

Ensuring that all customers can safely and independently enter the subway continues to be a focus of the MTA. As part of the 2025-2029 Capital Plan, the MTA will invest over \$1 billion into new, modern fare gates at 150 of the highest ridership stations. These gates will be replacing turnstiles and AutoGates, increasing capacity, ensuring fare compliance, and enhancing accessibility. Currently, the MTA is evaluating three different vendors and their gates, with a public test that launched in December 2025 at six MTA stations as of publication. The MTA is on pace to have new gates at 20 stations in early 2026 and by the end of the 2025-2029 Capital Plan, 150 stations will have new gates installed.

OMNY

Since the last report in 2021, the MTA significantly expanded access to the tap and go convenience of OMNY. The MTA mailed more than 1 million Reduced Fare customers OMNY Cards since the end of 2024. Customers have been quick to adopt OMNY for trips on the subway and bus, with two-thirds of Reduced Fare trips using OMNY in April 2025. OMNY allows customers to automatically load value on their card online, replicating the functionality of the EasyPay program. OMNY also gives Reduced Fare customers a new option to refill their cards without entering the subway system, with thousands of retail locations across the city able to refill Reduced Fare cards including Walgreens, Duane Reade, 7-11, and more. Additionally, OMNY continues to roll out for Fair Fares and Paratransit customers—discussed more in the Access-A-Ride section. With MetroCard sales ceasing at the end of 2025, the MTA continues to educate customers to ensure all riders are ready to use the tap and go benefits of OMNY.

Customer Communication

Customer access to information, digital or physical, is critical to the mission of the MTA. Whenever there are planned service changes, short or long term, MTA creates and distributes online and print resources to navigate the subway system, compliant with WCAG 2.2 standards. The MTA works every day to provide additional information regarding elevator outages and alternate route information in real-time on the MTA website and mobile app, via email and text alerts, and on in-station screens. Customers can verify an elevator’s status or sign up for Real Time E&E Service E-Alerts on the MTA website. In 2024, the MTA revamped its mobile application, the MTA App, which provides easy access real-time elevator information. All subway elevators also have “Alternative Accessible Travel Information” signs, that can help customers navigate around any unexpected outages.

The MTA continues to build on its commitment to an accessible subway system through new and modernized elevators, as well as continuing to expand new technologies and tools to make the system as accessible as possible.

Buses

The MTA's fleet of 5,800 buses has been fully wheelchair accessible for decades by front-door ramp (local and Select Bus routes) or lift (for coach-style buses on express routes). Given the history of accessibility on the bus system, buses continue to serve a higher proportion of older adults and New Yorkers with disabilities than the subway.

While the bus fleet is entirely wheelchair accessible, MTA has been continuing to improve the customer experience while riding. Since 2021, all new MTA local and SBS buses have been equipped with new Digital Information Screens and automated audio announcements. Together these communication tools help ensure customers with hearing or vision disabilities, and all customers, have easy access to real-time service information.

The buses also feature a new, more flexible seating configuration designed with accessibility in mind. The buses feature three additional flexible seats – beyond the priority seating area – that customers can flip up to stow and sit within arm's reach of a folded walker, mobility device, or luggage cart while moving these devices out of the aisle and maximizing the available space for all customers. The new buses also feature wider doors and ramps to make it easier to enter and exit the bus.

For parents and caregivers, traveling with a child in a stroller on the bus has traditionally meant folding the stroller prior to boarding, which can slow down bus service for all customers. In 2022 the MTA launched the Bus Open Stroller Program, which creates a dedicated space on the bus for someone to board with an open stroller, eliminating the headache of folding a stroller on those buses. This dedicated space is separate from the priority seating for people with disabilities. The pilot launched in 2022, with approximately 175 buses across seven routes retrofitted with this space. In 2023, with the support of the disability community, the MTA expanded the pilot to 57 routes, retrofitting over 1,050 buses across the system. The MTA has received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the program, with over 80% of customers supporting this change based on data from MTA customer feedback tools. The MTA continues to review the future of the program, and further expansion. To learn more about the program, please visit mta.info/stroller.

Access-A-Ride

Access-A-Ride (AAR) is the largest paratransit service in the country, with over 40,000 trips scheduled on peak days and 10 million trips completed in 2025. The shared-ride service operates 24/7 throughout the five boroughs of NYC, and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of NYC Transit fixed route services into Westchester and Nassau Counties. AAR service has rebounded strongly from the Covid-19 pandemic, with ridership exceeding pre-Covid levels by 40% in 2025.

AAR has approximately 195,000 eligible registrants as of December 2025. Approximately 15% of customers use wheelchairs, and approximately 75% are over the age of 65. Throughout years of program growth and a global pandemic, the AAR program has continued to provide ADA compliant service to all eligible customers, invest in new vehicles and technologies to improve customer experience and operational efficiency, and test ways to provide more self-service and flexible options for customers to manage their trips.

Areas of improvement and growth over the past several years have included the following:

- **Increased Reliability**
2025 was a record year for paratransit service reliability. No shows have been reduced and are consistently less than 1 in 1000 trips. On-time performance (OTP) consistently exceeds 95% of trips picked up within 30 minutes of the scheduled pickup time, despite higher ridership. The MTA now measures paratransit OTP to a more stringent 20-minute standard, with a goal of 94% of trips picked up within 20 minutes.
- **Expansion of OMNY "Tap and Go" Fare Payment System to AAR**
The new OMNY "tap and go" fare payment system began rolling out to AAR customers in 2024. OMNY creates a simpler fare payment option for AAR customers who choose to use it, and OMNY accounts will help customers track their trips. The AAR OMNY card will serve customers as their ID to show drivers on their paratransit trips, and for tap and go on subways and buses, offering a seamless travel experience regardless of travel mode. AAR customers have continued to receive their cards throughout 2025, providing an alternative to cash payment, although cash will remain an option for any customer who prefers. AAR customers using OMNY have the fare deducted from their OMNY account, as AAR vehicles do not have OMNY readers to tap.

- **Growth of My AAR App**

The MY AAR app continues to grow, making it easier for customers to schedule and manage their paratransit trips. As of December 2025, more than 20% of all trips were booked through the app; a significant milestone in improving convenience and access for riders.

- **Improved and Expanded Broker Program**

One notable growth area in recent years has been the use of broker services, which allows customers to travel by taxi or for-hire vehicle. In 2019, AAR launched its enhanced broker service, through which tens of thousands of customers now travel by taxi or for-hire vehicle (FHV) each day when they book a trip with AAR. The expanded broker program allows AAR to use taxis and FHV's for door-to-door service, has increased capacity to serve customers who use wheelchairs, gives customers the ability to track trips on the MY AAR app. In 2025, approximately two-thirds of AAR trips were completed through the broker program. Even with the expansion of broker service, AAR continues to invest in the dedicated carrier fleet (the traditional blue and white or blue and gold van), to provide a clean, safe, and smooth ride for the thousands of customers who use this service each day.

- **The AAR Fleet**

AAR uses approximately 1,150 dedicated vehicles to serve customers who need a lift for their trip. In 2023 and 2024 AAR replaced 360 vehicles that were reaching the end of their useful life. AAR is currently piloting the Ford E-Transit, the first electric vehicle to be put into customer service for paratransit.

- **Improvements to the Application Process**

AAR continues to update policies and processes and invest in digital tools to improve the customer experience. Since the last report, AAR updated its eligibility policies to simplify the process and made more customers eligible for continual service, to reduce the need for re-assessments. In 2024, AAR launched a new digital inquiry form to make it easier for customers to start the eligibility application process and opened a new AAR assessment center at 3 Stone Street in lower Manhattan, ensuring that each borough has least one assessment center. The expansion helped AAR accommodate nearly 5,000 monthly customers and applicants who require in-person assessments.

- **Coordination with City Agencies**

AAR continues to work closely with the NYC DOT to manage service issues on the streets and currently has 130 dedicated Access-A-Ride pick-up and drop-off stops throughout the city. AAR staff regularly visits every stop and works with NYC DOT to address stop placement and signage issues as they arise. The MTA is also partnering with NYC DOT and DOF on the implementation of ACE, the MTA's automated bus lane enforcement program, which also benefits paratransit vehicles and customers using bus lanes for their trips.

- **E-Hail On-Demand Pilot Program**

In 2017, AAR began working with taxi and FHV companies to provide "on-demand" service to 1200 customers as part of a same-day service pilot program. In 2023, the MTA expanded the E-Hail On-Demand pilot to additional customers, introducing a revised program structure and additional vendor partners. Based on nine months of results from the second pilot phase, the MTA increased both the number and length of trips that the MTA subsidizes for each customer in the program in 2024. The MTA continues to analyze trip patterns and review customer feedback on the on-demand pilot program.

- **Fair Fares for AAR**

In 2020, the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) expanded its Fair Fares NYC transit discount program to AAR, enabling low-income individuals under age 65 to ride AAR for half the regular fare. AAR customers can apply directly online for the discount at [nyc.gov/accessfairfares](https://www.nyc.gov/accessfairfares).

Access-A-Ride has improved significantly since the pandemic, as reflected by the growing ridership numbers and more positive customer feedback. MOPD continues to work with the MTA to further improve Access-A-Ride service for customers across the city.

Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) is well on its way to full station accessibility, with 114 accessible stations out of 126 total stations. Most recently, LIRR completed accessibility projects at Valley Stream, Copiague, Amityville, Lindenhurst, and Massapequa Park and opened two entirely new stations, at Elmont-UBS Arena and a historic new terminal in Manhattan at Grand Central Madison.

In January 2023, the MTA opened Grand Central Madison, connecting LIRR customers directly to the East Side of Manhattan for the first time. The station provides an additional option for customers and allowed LIRR to boost train service by 40%. The new, accessible terminal provides new transit connections and step-free paths of travel from the LIRR to the subway and Metro-North. Additionally, each connection between levels at Grand Central Madison features multiple elevator options, providing customers with reliable access even if one machine is taken out of service.

Customer assistance is a key element of LIRR's approach to accessibility. LIRR employees are trained on accessibility and disability best practices as part of their Train Crew biannual training. The LIRR Care Program provides additional assistance for customers with mobility disabilities who may need help to board and exit trains. Customers can call a dedicated phone number ahead of their trip or visit ticket offices at major stations to request assistance. In 2025, LIRR Care provided 5,800 customers with assistance.

Metro-North Railroad

Seventy of 85 Metro-North Railroad (MNR) stations in the seven-county New York State service area are currently accessible for people with mobility disabilities. All New York State stations have tactile signage, and most stations have tactile warning strips at the platform edge. Recently, MNR completed accessibility improvements at the Scarsdale, Hartsdale, and Purdys stations, and currently there are elevator projects underway in the Bronx at Botanical Garden, Woodlawn, and Williams Bridge.

All Metro-North conductors receive accessibility-focused classroom and field training so they can best assist customers with disabilities. Through the MNR Care Program, Metro-North offers assistance to customers with mobility disabilities. Customers can call 511 up to an hour before their trip to arrange assistance to safely board the train at any station. At Grand Central and other major stations, Station Ambassadors can help customers with mobility devices navigate the platform and provide sighted guidance for customers who are blind or have low vision. In 2025, Metro-North employees assisted approximately 2000 customers in Grand Central Terminal and outlying stations through the MNR Care program.

With the opening of Grand Central Madison and both railroads in the same complex for the first time, the MTA created a new joint railroad map to encourage customers to take trips across the New York region using both systems. As part of this process, the MTA developed a new accessibility icon to show railroad stations that might have step-free access, but lack all features of an accessible station like tactile warning strips or audio/visual signage. As part of this effort, an additional 20 railroad stations gained accessibility icons, providing customer information about trip options that might not have been considered before. The MTA also developed new webpages for each of the 250 railroad stations with more detailed information about the accessibility features available for customers to more easily plan their trips.

Central Business District Tolling

After years of outreach, analysis, and litigation, on January 5, 2025, the nation's first ever Congestion Relief Zone Toll went into effect in Manhattan's Central Business District. Administered by the MTA's Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) the program has proven extremely successful. By charging passenger vehicles to enter the Congestion Relief Zone (CRZ), the program has succeeded in reducing gridlock in what had been one of the most congested districts in the nation, Manhattan below 60 St. Transit ridership has increased; streets are calmer; and drivers, bus riders, and paratransit customers are all benefiting from faster trips.

As part of the Congestion Relief Zone Tolling Program, the MTA and project partners set up a few discrete exemption plans, including the Individual Disability Exemption Plan (IDEP) and the Organizational Disability Exemption Plan (ODEP). These allow individuals with disabilities or medical conditions who cannot use the bus or subway, as well as organizational vehicles serving this population, to avoid paying the toll when traveling into the Congestion Relief Zone. Individuals achieve eligibility in the IDEP program through an in-person physical and/or psychological assessment or by already being enrolled in Access-A-Ride.

Revenue generated by the Congestion Relief Zone toll is being reinvested into the transit system, where millions of daily transit riders will benefit from more accessible stations, modern signal systems, new trains, electric buses, and other critical improvements that keep the MTA system in good working condition and make taking mass transit more comfortable.

Taxi and Limousine Commission

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), created in 1971, is the agency responsible for licensing and regulating New York City's yellow medallion taxis, green cabs, for-hire vehicles (community-based liveries, luxury limousines, and black cars, including those dispatched by apps like Lyft, Uber, and Via), commuter vans, and some paratransit vehicles. The Commission's Board consists of nine members, including the Commissioner who is the agency head and is appointed by the mayor.

For-Hire Vehicles, Yellow and Green Taxis

Accessible Dispatch provides access to wheelchair accessible taxis on demand. Customers can contact the Accessible Dispatch call center to request a taxi to pick them up anywhere in the city at no extra cost. While many customers prefer to use the call center to request a trip, customers can also contact 311 (NY Relay: 711), book online at accessibledispatch.com, or use the Accessible Dispatch NYC smartphone app. Accessible Dispatch continues to be a dependable way to get a wheelchair accessible taxi. In 2024, there were over 66,000 completed trips or 5,500 per month. Although the wait time for an accessible taxi has improved, going down to 11 minutes from 13 minutes in 2022, the number of Accessible Dispatch trips has steadily declined. This is in large part due to the increased options that are available across other TLC-licensed rideshare companies, such as Uber and Lyft.

As of Summer 2025, customers can call the Accessible Dispatch number (646-599-9999) and choose from multiple providers to request a wheelchair accessible taxi. If customers prefer to use an app to get an accessible taxi, they can request one from a licensed e-hail company directly, such as Arro, Curb, or Myle. Moving towards a multi-provider model will expand the options available while retaining the option to call to book a trip, as many customers prefer to do today.

Since 2022, the For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) sector (Uber and Lyft) has steadily increased the number of vehicles on the road. The FHV sector has also completed trips allowing passengers, including those who are in need of a WAV, to call a vehicle with ease and with relative speed. Currently, there are over 7,500 FHV WAVs on the road that completed over 635,000 trips in

2024. This number has soared since 2022 in which 272,068 FHV WAV trips were completed. Not only does this percentage represent a 57% increase from calendar years 2022–2024, but it also represents a strong and healthy recovery from the pandemic.

The TLC has enacted rules that govern wait times for those requesting a WAV in order to ensure that those requesting to get one wait under 10 minutes. The new wait time standard will be evaluated annually, at the end of each calendar year. TLC’s minimum wait time rules ensure that FHV WAV service is consistent and reliable for the many New Yorkers who depend on an accessible vehicle to get around.

The TLC created the Taxi Improvement Fund (TIF) to support medallion owners and drivers who are putting accessible vehicles on the road ensuring that all customers have equitable access to taxi transportation services. Between July 2022 and May 2025, owners and drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles received approximately 80 million dollars in incentive payments

As of June 5, 2025, more than 50% of the TLC’s active yellow taxi fleet is wheelchair accessible. This milestone means over 5,100 yellow cabs can now accommodate passengers using wheelchairs, making it the most accessible taxi fleet in the nation.

TLC Driver Education and Passenger Engagement

New applicants continue to take the Passenger Assistance and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Training course to obtain a TLC Driver License. Between 2022 and 2024, more than 61,000 applicants completed the course. The topics covered include driver responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, disability etiquette, using person-first language, and an in-vehicle wheelchair securement assessment.

TLC created an educational decal in 2023 to reinforce with drivers how to safely secure passengers who use wheelchairs. TLC applied the decals in the vehicles of the drivers, as part of outreach to licensees at the agency's vehicle inspection facility, the airport taxi holds lots, and at the Taxi Club House. Education staff members were often paired with TLC staff from other parts of the agency for outreach, including the agency's Office of Inclusion and Uniformed Services Bureau, and Accessible Dispatch staff.

In April 2024, the TLC launched an enhanced TLC Driver License Renewal Course with interactive new content on providing excellent customer service to passengers with disabilities, as well as new anti-discrimination curriculum. The content included new videos focusing on enhanced technology for serving passengers who are blind or have low vision or are D/deaf or hard of hearing, preventing service refusals, and tips for direct communication with passengers.

Since the enhanced renewal course launched, more than 20,000 TLC-licensed drivers have completed it and have had the opportunity to benefit from the new curriculum on best practices on serving people with disabilities.

In March 2025, TLC also created the Vision Zero and Accessibility Course in close coordination with the Vision Zero Task Force. The course is available for licensees with accessibility-related violations in March 2025. The curriculum includes an in-vehicle wheelchair securement assessment and Vision Zero-focused topics. The material includes instruction on how to provide safe trips to passengers with disabilities, assisting passengers with entering and exiting the vehicle safely, and securing the passenger before the start of the trip. Drivers who receive violations from complaints from the public can take this remedial course to improve their skills serving passengers with disabilities, as well as become a safer driver.

TLC Office of Inclusion

The TLC Office of Inclusion (OOI) was created pursuant to Local Law 219 of 2018 to ensure the riding public receives equal and courteous service from taxis and for-hire vehicles. The OOI's mission is to reduce and ultimately eliminate service refusals and to ensure that no person is discriminated against by a TLC-licensed driver. The OOI recognizes that New York City's greatest strength is its diversity of residents and visitors alike.

OOI provides training to TLC staff on disability etiquette and awareness to foster a better understanding of inclusive communication and considerations for persons with disabilities. This focus furthers TLC's mission to create sensitivity and facilitate positive interactions and inclusivity in the workplace.

TLC's OOI also actively engages with a variety of disability advocacy groups in order to share information and listen to issues related to accessibility. Since it is important for drivers to participate in these efforts, OOI also conducts outreach to drivers to keep them updated on initiatives related to accessibility and the benefits of driving a WAV.

NYC Ferry

NYC Ferry is New York City's passenger ferry system connecting all five of NYC's boroughs via 6 different routes and 25 landings. Since its inception, NYC Ferry has served over 45 million riders, including an all-time high of 7.4 million riders in 2024.

The system is overseen by New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and privately operated. In order to advance equity and affordability, Mayor Eric Adams unveiled a new chapter for NYC Ferry through the NYC Ferry Forward plan, which aims to make NYC Ferry more equitable, accessible and fiscally sustainable.

A key pillar of this plan was introducing a new, progressive fare structure:

- NYC Ferry raised the cost of one-way tickets for leisure riders while keeping fares affordable for commuters through a ten-trip pack that offers one-way tickets for \$2.90, the same price as a subway ride.
- NYC Ferry launched an expanded NYC Ferry Discount Program that offers reduced fare one-way tickets priced at \$1.45 for seniors, people with disabilities, participants in Fair Fares NYC – a program supporting low-income New Yorkers – and, as of the 2024-2025 school year, all New York City high school students.

Riders can purchase NYC Ferry tickets in the NYC Ferry App or at ticket vending machines located at all landings.

Accessible Vessels and Landings

Vessels: NYC Ferry's fleet includes 150 and 350-passenger vessels. Each vessel features upper deck outdoor seating as well as a climate-controlled cabin with over 100 seats, wheelchair tie-downs, and an accessible bathroom.

Landings: All NYC Ferry landings are equipped with a digital information display, ticket vending machines, and schedule and map signage.

Other upgrades across NYC Ferry vessels and landings include:

- Updated passenger transfer ramps on landings that better serve riders using wheelchairs, canes, or other mobility devices.
- Designated priority seating onboard vessels for seniors and passengers with disabilities.

Improved Access to Service Information

A number of system-wide technological upgrades have been implemented to make NYC Ferry service information more accessible to passengers.

These include:

- Installed onboard Wi-Fi across the fleet to support connectivity and real-time information access.
- Launched land-side audio announcements to inform travelers who are blind or have low vision of ferry arrival times.
- Introduced onboard visual and audio stop announcements to assist passengers with who are D/deaf or hard of hearing or are blind or have low vision.
- Enabled real-time schedule updates via SMS and phone.

Staten Island Ferry

The Staten Island Ferry, which is operated by NYC DOT, provides a free, accessible travel option between the St. George Ferry Terminal in Staten Island and the Whitehall Ferry Terminal in Lower Manhattan.

Both terminals have escalators and elevators and are ADA-compliant. Passengers who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices may board on the lower level. The lower-level waiting area is not climate controlled but has seating and is protected on three sides from wind and precipitation. Due to the restricted nature of the lower-level area, any individual who is granted access for lower-level boarding is subject to search by security personnel and/or the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

The NYC DOT Ferry Division works closely with the local community to ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of its service. As one example, the Division meets with the Staten Island Center for Independent Living to offer sensitivity training to ferry employees. Ferry schedules and other information are offered in Braille.

New York City Department of Transportation

A number of NYC DOT initiatives are described below. You can read about additional NYC DOT initiatives to promote safe and accessible sidewalks, plazas and streets in the Built Environment and Public Realm section of this report.

Bus Stop Accessibility Improvements

Accessible Bus Stops

The vast majority of the City's 14,000+ bus stops are fully physically accessible and allow for wheelchair access to buses via a vehicle ramp. However, there remain over 1,500 stops that do not meet ADA requirements, either because there is not enough room for a wheelchair ramp to deploy and a wheelchair user to maneuver, or because an accessible path to the bus stop is lacking. NYC DOT is actively working to address those stops, and has met its annual goal of bringing at least 25 stops into compliance since 2022. This work includes enhancements that go beyond the minimum ADA requirements where possible by creating more bus stop space for all users.

Bus Bulbs, Bus Boarders, and Bus Boarding Islands

There are certain locations where the existing sidewalk is not adequate to provide pedestrian circulation **and** a comfortable and spacious waiting area for bus riders. In these cases, NYC DOT may create a dedicated area for bus riders to wait for and get on and off the bus. This can take the form of building a concrete island with a travel lane in between the bus stop and the sidewalk (bus boarding island), or extending the sidewalk further out into the street, either as a permanent concrete extension (bus bulb) or by using a plastic modular product (bus boarder) for temporary applications. NYC DOT typically implements bus boarding islands and bus boarders as part of in-house bus priority projects, while bus bulbs typically require a capital project.

Bus Stops Under the EI Program

Bus stops under elevated subway structures can be particularly problematic from an accessibility and safety perspective. At these locations, the elevated structure's supports often prevent buses from accessing the sidewalk and force bus riders to wait for, board and alight the bus in the roadbed. To remedy this, the Bus Stops Under the EI program constructs bus boarding islands or bus bulbs to create safe and accessible stops. These improvements are constructed with both in-house resources and, when necessary, through larger capital projects.

Parking

Parking Permits

The New York City Department of Transportation's Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (NYC PPPD) Unit issues two types of parking permits for people with disabilities. The **NYC PPPD (placard)** allows eligible permit holders to park on NYC streets, contrary to many posted parking regulations. The **NY State Permit (hangtag)** allows the driver to park in publicly accessible spaces marked by the International Symbol of Access as long as the permit holder is traveling in the car. In New York City, these spaces are all off-street, such as in parking lots for shopping centers/malls, office/apartment buildings, and college campuses, and include all NYC DOT municipal parking garages.

Permit applications are currently being accepted by mail only. For more information on the PPPD program visit: nyc.gov/pppdinfo.

Municipal Parking Garages

NYC DOT manages 30 municipal parking fields and 8 municipal parking garages, providing a total of 298 accessible parking spaces. All NYC DOT municipal parking facilities provide accessible parking spaces, including van-accessible parking spaces with access aisles.

NYC DOT also recently installed ADA-accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging spaces at Delancey-Essex Municipal Garage, Court Square Municipal Garage, Borough Hall Municipal Garage, and White Plains Municipal Lot, providing 6 accessible EV charging spaces. These accessible EV charging spaces are designated under a "use last" model, consistent with guidelines issued by the US Access Board in 2024.

For more information on NYC DOT's parking garages and lots visit: nyc.gov/municipalparking.

Shared E-Scooter Program

E-scooters are electric-powered vehicles with handlebars, a seat or floorboard, and have a maximum speed of 15 miles per hour. Shared e-scooter systems have become popular in many American cities over the past few years, allowing millions to rent publicly accessible e-scooters for short trips. These systems operate similarly to dockless bike share. Riders find and un-lock shared e-scooters within a designated service area using a smartphone app. Many shared e-scooter systems use designated parking corals to organize vehicles, reduce sidewalk clutter, and ensure a clear pedestrian right-of-way.

NYC DOT launched its first e-scooter pilot in the East Bronx in August of 2021. The pilot, which was mandated by City Council legislation, ran for two years. The pilot was succeeded by a permanent program, which has continued service in the East Bronx and expanded to eastern Queens. One of NYC DOT's main priorities for the program is to prevent parked e-scooters from blocking sidewalks, corner pedestrian ramps, building entrances, and bus stops, so that all sidewalk users, including people with disabilities, have a clear path of travel. The participating companies—Bird, Lime, and Veo—are also offering accessible e-scooter options. For more information on the Shared E-Scooter Program visit: nycdotscootershare.info/home.

Access to Independence Program

In 2025, the Mobility Management team at the NYC DOT revived a program called Access to Independence. The program helps people with disabilities and older adults learn about ways to get around the city more easily. It does this through dynamic events that share important information about accessible transportation. The program also brings together City agencies and transit providers to discuss how to make travel better for these groups.

Access to Independence includes both in-person and online events, as well as guides and resources. Between 2025 and 2026, NYC DOT aims to host six events as part of this program. These may include info sessions, site visits and tours, app tutorials, and more. To learn more, visit dotmobility.nyc.

Transportation for Older New Yorkers

In addition to existing public service transportation options, including MTA's Access-A-Ride, the NYC Department for the Aging (NYC Aging) partners with community-based organizations to provide transportation services for essential medical and social service appointments, for residents age 60 and older, who lack access to transportation or cannot use public transportation.

Group transportation is also available for trips to a recreational event, Broadway show or museum, or shopping at the supermarket. These trips must have a minimum of five older adults.

Many older adult centers also provide group transportation to and from their locations, shopping trips, and recreational and cultural outings for their members.

You can use NYC Aging's Service Finder to contact a local transportation provider, or call Aging Connect at 212-AGING-NYC (212-244-6469) for more information.

The Built Environment and the Public Realm

This section provides an overview of some of New York City's efforts to make the built environment safer, more inclusive, and more accessible for all residents and visitors. It highlights key initiatives across multiple City agencies, demonstrating how design, construction, and public realm-related programs are improving the daily experiences of people with disabilities.

Department of Design and Construction

The New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC), established in 1996, serves as the City's primary capital construction project manager. With a mission rooted in public service, DDC delivers high-quality design and professional project management services to over 20 City agencies and non-profit organizations that receive City funding. The agency is responsible for shaping the public realm through essential projects that touch nearly every aspect of urban life, from libraries and cultural institutions to sewers and sidewalks.

DDC is committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers, including those with disabilities, can safely and independently access the public buildings and spaces it creates. As a testament to this commitment, DDC established an ADA Compliance Unit in 2019 to serve as a specialized team dedicated to ensuring that projects exceed the standards set forth by the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Chapter 11 of the NYC Building Code, and apply universal and inclusive design principles. This Unit conducts detailed accessibility plan reviews, leads field inspections, provides consultations, and supports project teams in making informed, inclusive design decisions. The ADA Compliance Unit was also responsible for DDC's implementation of Local Law 12 of 2023, which requires City agencies to assess and report on physical barriers within City-owned buildings, which included conducting facility surveys, coordinating data collection, and collaborating with partner agencies to build a citywide inventory of accessibility issues. This work is critical to developing long-term, equitable improvement plans that not only meet legal requirements but also promote universal design principles. Additionally, the ADA Compliance Unit plays an integral role in shaping future policy through its involvement in the 2023 NYC Building Code Revision Committee.

DDC, partnered with its client agencies, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), is tasked with upgrading old infrastructure systems and building new, while also taking care of step streets, retaining walls, pedestrian bridges and plazas. In 2018, DDC's Infrastructure Division created a Pedestrian Ramp Construction Unit, which is tasked with providing pedestrian (curb) ramps citywide that meet applicable accessibility laws and guidelines. In 2024, DDC administered a capital program consisting of approximately 32 active construction projects, which resulted in the upgrade of over 4,800 sidewalk corners, which is 9,600 pedestrian ramps, that exceed the ADA requirements.

DDC's accessibility mission also extends to the City's large-scale resilience and justice initiatives. As part of the City's response to climate change, DDC is leading the design and implementation of key Coastal Resiliency projects, which aims to safeguard neighborhoods from flooding while enhancing access to waterfronts and public open spaces. Ensuring these areas are universally accessible, with barrier-free pathways, inclusive recreational areas, and resilient public infrastructure, as a guiding design principle. Similarly, DDC is playing a central role in the Borough-Based Jails program — the City's initiative to close Rikers Island and build modern, community-centered jail facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. These new facilities are being designed with a strong emphasis on accessibility, dignity, and wellness. From barrier-free entries and inclusive interior layouts to dedicated health, educational, and therapeutic spaces, the program reflects the City's commitment to more humane and equitable justice infrastructure.

DDC is also delivering critical public infrastructure through Alternative Delivery (formerly Design-Build), a project delivery method that was authorized under the New York City Public Works Investment Act in 2019. This approach allows a single team to design and construct a project under one contract, fostering greater coordination, efficiency, and accountability. Each project executed through this model emphasizes conformance with accessibility standards, public safety, and long-term operational performance, ensuring that inclusivity and sustainability are built into the design from day one.

To support design professionals and enhance coordination across all projects, DDC continues to evolve its internal systems and guidance tools. Among these is the 2025 Design Consultant Guideline (DCG), an essential resource for firms working on public building projects. The DCG communicates DDC's expectations, processes, and technical requirements with clarity, helping consultants better align with City goals and streamline their project workflows. It reflects DDC's broader push toward more efficient, consistent, and responsive project delivery, while reinforcing the importance of sustainable, and resilient civic architecture, and to establish higher accessibility standards and design principles.

These ongoing efforts are part of DDC's larger transformation, one that prioritizes inclusive design, timely delivery, and community-centered outcomes. Through enhanced collaboration, data-driven improvements, and a commitment to innovation, the agency is modernizing how capital projects are conceived, built, and sustained across New York City. Looking to the future, DDC remains grounded in its mission to deliver public spaces that are accessible, enduring, and responsive to the needs of all New Yorkers. DDC's work is made possible by the dedication of City staff, the expertise of its design and construction partners, and the vision of the communities DDC serves. Together, DDC and its partners and stakeholders are shaping a built environment that supports civic life, strengthens neighborhoods, and expands opportunity — one project at a time.

Department of Citywide and Administrative Services

The Department of Citywide Court Administration (DCAS) manages, operates, and maintains around 55 City-owned buildings across the five boroughs with varying levels of accessibility. The entire DCAS portfolio of buildings totals over 15 million square feet, with more than 50% of the portfolio occupied by City agencies. The Office of Court Administration occupies the portfolio's remaining seven million square feet.

To view the portfolio of buildings managed by DCAS, please visit the [DCAS Managed Public Buildings page](#).

DCAS also leases multiple sites to support operations for both DCAS and the Office of Court Administration. As a landlord, DCAS is committed to providing safe, clean, and energy-efficient spaces for its tenants and is responsible for the maintenance of the common areas in each building, including entrances, building lobbies, elevators, common hallways, stairwells, common area bathrooms, and means of egress.

In support of its commitment to accessibility, DCAS ensures that all new construction and renovations meet accessibility standards in accordance with the New York City Building Codes, 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the 1991 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, and any additional state and local requirements that may apply. At the same time, where feasible, DCAS strives to remove existing accessibility barriers to current programs, services, and activities, as the ADA requires, to allow equal access to people with disabilities.

In 2019, architectural accessibility surveys were conducted on 29 court buildings by Ronnette Riley Architects to identify barriers to accessibility. The primary focus of the surveys was public-facing services, and standard review methods were applied to each service, including entrances and interior routes, courtrooms, juror areas, amenities, public services, restrooms, elevators and lifts, doors, parking, and signage. Additionally, areas not on the standard public route, such as offices, and egress routes, were also evaluated to provide a global view of the accessibility of the building.

The City of New York retained Ronnette Riley Architects to complete the architectural surveys of the remaining court buildings and Steven B. Jacobs Group, PC, to perform this work for the non-court buildings. As of March 2025, 100% of building accessibility surveys at DCAS-managed court and non-court buildings and identified related projects were completed at an estimated cost of \$223 million.

Most barriers that have been identified require long-term plans that involve engineering and design consultation as well as the receipt of additional funding to address required accessibility improvements. However, based on approved funding to date, several construction projects are planned and in progress over the next five years that will include accessibility upgrades to DCAS facilities, including wheelchair lift replacements, restroom upgrades, elevator upgrades, and other building renovations that will make its spaces ADA-compliant.

DCAS also uses expense funds to implement smaller ADA projects, such as signage, automatic doors, and the installation of temporary lifts or ramps when needed, to provide accessibility for disabled employees and visitors.

The NYC Economic Development Corporation and Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) is a design philosophy focused on creating environments, products, and services that are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. It goes beyond ADA compliance by striving not only to meet minimum legal standards but to foster inclusive, intuitive, and welcoming experiences for everyone.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) is incorporating principles of Universal Design across construction projects at the early design & procurement stage, to promote equity, accessibility, and usability throughout New York City's built environment.

Key initiatives include:

- **Inclusive Procurement:** NYCEDC has incorporated Universal Design principles into certain Design Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to advance inclusive design beyond minimum accessibility requirements from the outset of those projects.
- **Brooklyn Army Terminal Pilot:** As part of NYCEDC's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, the Brooklyn Army Terminal (BAT) is serving as a pilot site for the integration of Universal Design. This pilot is testing inclusive strategies in collaboration with architectural consultants, and the insights gained are helping to inform the development of new Universal Design standards that will be applied more broadly across future projects.
- **Family-Friendly Pilot at MADE:** At the MADE campus in Sunset Park, NYCEDC is piloting a bathroom installation incorporating Universal Design principles, to support a diverse range of users, including families, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities. The design is intended to reflect real-world inclusivity, incorporating features such as step stools to help children wash their hands, full-length mirrors, accessible hardware, and hooks.

- **The Offshore Wind Learning Center “WindScape Brooklyn”:**
Equinor’s Offshore Wind Learning Center “WindScape Brooklyn”, to be located at Industry City overlooking the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal in Sunset Park, aims to include elements of Universal Design. Every exhibit in WindScape Brooklyn has undergone a thorough evaluation by the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access at the University of Buffalo, ensuring a welcoming experience for all. Exhibitions will feature multilingual text, engaging interactive displays including tactile panels and audio, benches and oversized circulation paths for ease of movement for people with disabilities, high contrast text and ample illumination, and diverse actors included in video and audio clips. This approach seeks to ensure that everyone can engage in multiple ways with the content presented. WindScape Brooklyn will be seeking UD certification from the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access after completing construction.

Through these and other efforts, including contributions to the Family Friendly Design Guidelines (discussed immediately below), NYCEDC is advancing a vision of Universal Design that fosters equitable, intuitive, and welcoming spaces — setting a leadership example for accessibility and inclusion in urban development.

Family-Friendly Design Guidelines

In March 2025, the Mayor and the NYC Public Design Commission released the [Building a Family-Friendly City: Design Guidelines for a Safer, More Livable, Public Realm](#) to promote safe, accessible, and inclusive spaces for children, parents, caregivers, and older adults. These guidelines provide best practices spanning planning, design, and ongoing maintenance, supported by case studies from across New York City.

MOPD and multiple other City agencies supported the development of the guidelines.

Promoting Safe and Accessible Sidewalks, Plazas, and Streets

Public Seating

NYC DOT installs and maintains benches and leaning bars on sidewalks and plazas. The benches and leaning bars may be used by all NYC residents, workers, and visitors. With places to rest, people can take longer journeys, empowering bus riders, seniors, and people with disabilities. As of November 2025, NYC DOT has permanently installed over 2,900 benches and leaning bars. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/seating.

Pedestrian Plazas

NYC DOT partners with community organizations to create plazas and prioritize neighborhoods that lack open space, amongst other criteria. Plazas may include amenities such as chairs, tables, umbrellas, greenery, public art, lighting, and may also offer public programming, markets, and other events for community members to enjoy throughout the year. You can find more information by visiting nyc.gov/plazas.

Pedestrian Ramps

Pedestrian ramps provide access on and off our streets and sidewalks and are essential tools for pedestrians, especially people with disabilities and aging New Yorkers, as well as people pushing strollers, carts, and other wheeled objects.

Since July 2017, the City (through its Department of Design and Construction and Department of Transportation) has installed more than 4,500 new pedestrian ramps where they did not previously exist and have upgraded approximately 57,800 existing pedestrian ramps. All new and upgraded pedestrian ramps include a detectable warning surface to help guide individuals who are blind or have low vision.

For more information on pedestrian ramps visit nycpedramps.info.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)

NYC DOT's Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are devices affixed to pedestrian signal poles to assist pedestrians who are blind or have low vision in crossing the street. APSs are wired to a pedestrian signal and send audible and vibrotactile indications when pedestrians push a button installed at the crosswalk.

NYC DOT has installed accessible pedestrian signals in all five boroughs by collaborating with the disability community on identifying priority intersections. As of April 30, 2025, there were APS units installed at 13,861 signalized intersections citywide. A full list of APS locations is available at nyc.gov/accessibilepedsignals.

Safe Streets for Seniors

NYC DOT evaluates pedestrian conditions in priority neighborhoods from a senior's perspective and implements safety improvements. Such improvements include extending pedestrian crossing times at crosswalks to accommodate slower walking speeds, constructing pedestrian safety islands, widening curbs and medians, narrowing roadways, and installing new stop controls and signals. NYC DOT frequently applies for and has received numerous federal grants to construct these safety improvements and bring targeted benefits to the City's most vulnerable population. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/SafeStreetsforSeniors.

Leading Pedestrian Signals

Leading pedestrian signals give pedestrians a walk sign before showing a green light to car traffic. This gives pedestrians a chance to begin crossing the street before cars make turns across the crosswalk. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/dotaccessibility.

Ur In Luck

In June 2024, Mayor Adams launched "*Ur In Luck*," a new effort to expand New Yorkers' access to public restrooms across all five boroughs, including the installation of 46 new restrooms and the renovation of 36 existing restrooms by NYC Parks. All new restrooms will be fully accessible and the 36 restrooms being renovated will receive improvements ranging from additional stalls to accessibility upgrades as well as energy efficient features.

At the same time, the city has made wayfinding to the city's public restrooms better by introducing a new [public restrooms Google Maps layer](#) that New Yorkers can activate on their phones to easily find the location of every public restroom operated by a wide-range of agencies and civic institutions citywide. The google maps layer includes accessibility information for all 1,000+ restrooms on the map.

Parks

NYC Parks, which is the steward of more than 30,000 acres of land (14% of New York City) continues as a world leader in the planning, design and construction of universally accessible parks and playgrounds. During the Adams administration, Parks has incorporated accessibility upgrades into all eligible capital projects, ensuring greater access for all New Yorkers and visitors throughout the year.

Parks has also continued to offer adaptive fitness, sports, and arts programs in its parks and recreation centers. While many NYC Parks programs are accessible, these programs are geared specifically towards people with physical disabilities. In 2016, the Parks Department instituted a reduced annual membership fee for its recreation centers of \$25 for people with self-disclosed disabilities. In the most recent fiscal year (FY25), 2,548 individuals with disabilities held recreation center memberships.

Recent initiatives geared towards assisting people with disabilities include the following:

- **Accessibility Information included in New Playgrounds Directory**

In March 2023, Parks launched a completely revamped playgrounds directory on its website. The project introduced detailed pages for each NYC Parks playground featuring accessibility information, along with a citywide playground map to complement the existing list view.

- **"Disability Advocacy" Category Included in Let's Green NYC Volunteer Directory**

In June 2023, Parks initiated the Let's Green NYC Volunteer Directory which, for the first time, published the details of hundreds of volunteer groups in one place online, allowing NYC residents to connect with others dedicated to their local parks and outdoor spaces. Groups were categorized in the directory, making it easy to find individuals engaged in interests such as "Disability Advocacy" and "Senior Focused."

- **Introduction of the Beach Wheelchair Request Form**

In June 2025, Parks introduced the Beach Wheelchair Request form on its website, enabling easy and free online reservations of beach wheelchairs for use with NYC Parks' beach mats, allowing mobility device users to traverse the beach right up to the water's edge.

To find an adaptive hub or other recreation facilities, visit [Accessible Facilities: NYC Parks](#). You can also learn more about Parks in general by visiting nycgovparks.org.

Adaptive Cycling Program

Citi Bike is the city's bike share system that is run through a public-private partnership between New York City (via the City's Department of Transportation) and Lyft. In Fall 2021, Citi Bike launched an adaptive cycling pilot program with Achilles International. Currently, the program offers 25 vehicles, including handcycles and tandems, for free usage at several locations in city parks between late May and early November. Vehicles can be reserved for recreational use and cannot be used for commuting elsewhere. Achilles staff and volunteer guides are on-site to answer any questions and help train new riders.

Dining Out NYC

New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) manages one of the largest outdoor dining programs in the country. Dining Out NYC is already more than two and half times the size of the pre-COVID sidewalk cafe program and applications remain open year-round at nyc.gov/DiningOut. Currently there are over 3,000 outdoor dining cafes operating in either the roadway or on the sidewalk.

As established by the City Council, establishments can operate sidewalk setups year-round, while roadway dining operates seasonally, from April 1 to November 29. Restaurants must provide a clear path of travel on the sidewalk for pedestrians, accessible tables, and an accessible route to on-street seating via ramp or decking. Restaurants are required to maintain a clear path of travel as indicated in the [Dining Out NYC Rules](#).

The requirements are as follows:

- Global Corridors – 12 Feet
- Regional Corridors - 10 Feet
- Neighborhood Corridors – 8 Feet
- Community Corridors – 8 Feet
- Baseline Corridors – 8 Feet

NYC DOT created a [Dining Out NYC Marketplace](#) that serves as a directory for businesses that sell or rent compliant outdoor dining set-ups and services. Rentals are available for prices as low as just over \$1,000 a month, or \$33 a day, to provide affordable set-up options that do not require restaurants to find storage when the roadway outdoor dining season ends. The website also features detailed set guides, making the rules and regulations easier to follow for establishment owners thus removing the need to hire architects and engineers which is a huge cost savings.

Opening Doors: An Innovation Challenge for Accessibility in Housing and Small Businesses

In September 2025, the Department of Buildings (DOB) and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) announced the launch of the first-ever Accessibility Innovation Challenge. This open call invites creative ideas aimed at promoting equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the built environment. As part of their shared mission to build a more inclusive City, DOB and HPD invited architects, engineers, developers, advocates, accessibility experts, and members of the public to submit forward-thinking ideas to improve access, inclusion, and universal design in New York City residential buildings and small businesses.

The challenge specifically sought ideas on:

- enhancing mobility and accessibility in multifamily buildings and storefronts
- designing for neurodiversity, sensory accessibility, and cognitive inclusion
- integrating emerging technologies to assist people with disabilities

- retrofitting older buildings for greater accessibility
- modernizing design standards, practices; and
- rethinking vertical access solutions (elevators, ramps, lifts, etc.).

A panel of judges drawn from government agencies and industry experts will review the submissions and pick the best ideas as challenge winners. The winners of this innovation challenge may receive DOB technical support and assistance in introducing their ideas to the building and construction industry, and those ideas potentially could lead to changes to the city's construction codes.

Database of Assistive Listening Systems in City Buildings

Local Law 51 of 2017 requires the installation of induction loop systems for certain capital projects paid for in whole or in part by City funds and that the City publish a list, to be updated annually, of locations owned or operated by the City with assistive listening devices, including the type of device. The list is available on MOPD's website at nyc.gov/LL51List.

LinkNYC

LinkNYC is a first-of-its-kind communications network that has replaced pay phones across the five boroughs. Each LinkNYC structure provides super-fast, free public Wi-Fi, phone calls, device charging, and a tablet for access to city services, maps, and directions. LinkNYC kiosks offer a range of accessibility features, including Speech to Speech (STS) Relay Services and Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) for users with speech or hearing disabilities, and Purple Video Relay for ASL users. Each kiosk includes a hearing loop for T-coil hearing aids, braille-marked controls, and Android's Talkback screen reader. The Accessibility tile on the home screen provides quick access to tools like zoom, color inversion, and relay services. All kiosks meet ADA standards.

Health

This section highlights City initiatives that aim to improve equitable access to healthcare and public health services for people with disabilities. It provides an overview of efforts by the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation, the City's health department and MOPD to strengthen physical and communication accessibility, expand staff training, and address systemic health disparities.

NYC Health and Hospitals

NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) is the largest public health care system in the United States, providing essential inpatient, outpatient, and home-based services to more than one million New Yorkers every year in more than 70 locations across the city's five boroughs.

NYC Health + Hospitals is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to quality health care services without exception. To ensure it meets the highest standard of quality care for its patients, H+H optimizes health care delivery through ongoing quality improvement projects that strengthen access to equitable care for people with disabilities. These efforts, which are informed by partnerships and collaborations with MOPD and organizations like the Lighthouse Guild, Helen Keller National Center, The Future Works Institute, and Disability Unite, include investing in physical infrastructure and auxiliary aids and services to serve its patients with disabilities.

Highlights include:

- **Capital improvement projects** ensure that all Health + Hospitals facilities have hallways that are large enough and do not restrict travel with wheelchairs, that hallways have handrails to assist people that need more stability when walking, and that bathrooms have accommodations such as wider stalls, heightened toilets, and insulated piping below sinks. Additionally, Health + Hospitals facilities make accommodations for people with additional needs that are not addressed by building code such as ergonomic furniture, lighting upgrades, and automatic doors.

- The expanded availability of **auxiliary aids and services**. For the D/deaf and hard of hearing population, these include CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) services, assistive listening devices, notification systems, and captioning devices and services. For individuals who are blind and have low vision, H+H has created an Accessible Format Directory, which includes 45 consent forms in large print, Braille, and audio files in English and the top five languages. In Spring 2025, H+H deployed a communication board prototype to be used in outpatient and inpatient areas, where it displays 77 images of the four top communication needs of nonverbal patients.
- **Training and resources**, including best practice guidelines to support services for individuals who are blind or have low vision, job aids and other resources on the types of auxiliary aids available to support communication accessibility, webinars and trainings to increase staff knowledge about the policies and best practices for communication accessibility, and an online resource portal for employees to access information to support accessibility. In Spring 2025, H+H piloted the Blind and Low Vision Patient Experience Simulation Training at Queens Hospital, where staff learned about auxiliary aids, and engaged in simulation activities such as blindfolded exercises. Following the simulation, there was a debriefing session to understand the blind and low vision patient's experience in a clinical setting.

NYC Department of Health

The New York City 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 leadership in the field. Every day, the NYC Health Department protects and promotes the health of more than 8 million New Yorkers.

The Health Department is committed to addressing health inequities across communities, working to ensure equitable access to services and extending life expectancy for all New Yorkers. As part of this commitment, the Department works to address bias and mitigate 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.

To advance its work in this area, the Department hired as its first full-time Director of Accessibility / Disability Service Facilitator, someone with a strong background in disability justice.

A few examples of recent efforts to improve access and inclusion for people with disabilities are described below. Other initiatives of the Health Department are described in the Employment and Dining sections of this report.

Relationship Building at the Bureau of Environmental Surveillance and Policy

The Department's Bureau of Environmental Surveillance and Policy (BESP) collects and uses local data sources to inform environmental health policy, conducts health research, and tracks and reports on environmental conditions, exposures, and related health effects in NYC. In collaboration with multiple city agencies, BESP also develop interventions to prevent or minimize weather-related health impacts in vulnerable communities through targeted outreach and the advancement of climate change health adaptation strategies.

The Bureau has been intentional in its outreach and relationship building with disability-focused organizations and added several organizations into the Climate Resilience Advisory Network (CRAN). Two disability-centered organizations were active members of CRAN in 2024 — Bronx Independent Living Services (BILS) and Queer Disability Aid.

The Bureau of Environmental Surveillance and Policy is also conducting a research and policy project that includes four different focus groups with community-based organizations. One of the focus group sessions was hosted by BILS. This was the first time the bureau centered a focus group on people with disabilities and placed emphasis on accessibility best practices.

The Bureau's Environment and Health Data Portal team published a key topic focused on accessibility, which aims to be an interactive avenue to learn about the strengths and gaps in the ways NYC infrastructure meets the needs of people with disabilities throughout the City. In addition to making accessibility a key topic on the data portal, the Environment and Health Data Portal team will publish an article on making data visualizations more accessible to people using screen readers.

Physical Accessibility Enhancements at Bushwick Health Center

The Bushwick Health Center coordinates and hosts a variety of programs and activities focused on the health and wellness of Bushwick residents. The Center's partners also offer both primary care and social services, such as assistance with WIC and SNAP.

The Health Department recently enhanced the accessibility of the Bushwick Health Center by renovating the accessible ramp and installing a push-button to automatically open the main entry doors. The Health Department also designated accessible parking spaces.

Agency-Wide Efforts to Tag PDFs

Since 2022, the Health Department has made between 500 and 600 PDFs accessible by tagging. Tagging PDFs makes them easy for everyone to use, especially people with vision disabilities or low literacy. When a PDF is tagged, screen readers know the right order to read things in and what each part means. Tagging also helps PDFs look better on different devices, like phones or tablets, and makes it easier to search inside them.

One way the Health Department enhanced and further developed how it tags PDFs is by using PDF Accessibility Checker (PAC). PAC is a free software tool used to check if a PDF document is accessible. It scans PDFs against accessibility standards like PDF/UA (Universal Accessibility) and WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), identifying issues such as missing tags, absent image descriptions, or incorrect reading order. PAC provides reports and a "Screen Reader Preview" to show how assistive technologies interpret the document, making it a valuable tool for ensuring PDFs are usable by everyone. While PAC is excellent for automated checks, the Health Department combines this with manual testing for a complete accessibility review.

MOPD Health-Related Initiatives and Collaborations, 2022-2025

During the Adams administration, MOPD participated in a number of health-related events and initiatives.

These included the following:

- **MOPD Grand Rounds Presentation to Department of Rehabilitation, Columbia University Medical Center**

In October 2025, MOPD Commissioner Curry presented to medical staff of the Department of Rehabilitation at Columbia University Medical Center on "Disability and Medical Professionals: Medical Model vs Cultural Model". Her presentation focused on understanding ableism, enhancing communication (including person-first language), and creating accessible environments.

- **Health Equity Series for Weil Cornell Internal Medicine Residency Program**

In 2023, 2024 and 2025, Commissioner Curry and staff met with medical residents on the primary care track in the New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medicine Internal Medicine Residency Program to discuss how primary care doctors can better communicate with patients and be more supportive to individuals with disabilities. Another session is planned for March 2026.

- **March 2025 Event with NYU Langone's Initiative for Women with Disabilities**

In March 2025, MOPD partnered with NYU Langone's Initiative for Women with Disabilities to bring together healthcare leaders and community voices to discuss critical barriers to healthcare access for women with disabilities. Attendees heard from distinguished panelists, followed by personal stories from community members that highlight challenges and inspire actionable solutions. This event aimed to foster a deeper understanding of improving physical, communication, and attitudinal access to healthcare, promoting a more inclusive and equitable health system for all.

- **Distribution of 10,000 Accessible COVID Test Kits**

In October 2022, MOPD, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and H+H coordinated the distribution of 10,000 COVID-19 at-home test kits that are more accessible to New Yorkers that are blind or have low vision. The at-home test kits — manufactured by Ellume and sent to New York City by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — use easier-to-use test components for those who are blind or have low vision and communicate with a user’s smartphone to give an electronic text readout of their result. The more accessible test kits were made available through MOPD and a host of additional partner organizations.

Facilitated Enrollment in Free and Low-Cost Health Insurance

The Facilitated Enrollment for the Aged, Blind and Disabled Program is a New York State Department of Health-sponsored initiative that connects older adults and people with disabilities to free and low-cost health insurance. Facilitated enrollers provide free, in-person assistance to individuals who are age 65 or older, those who are blind or low vision, and those who have other disabilities. Individuals receive help to enroll in Medicaid and a Medicare Savings Program to help pay Medicare costs. Assistance is available at selected senior centers, health centers and other community settings across New York City in multiple languages. To get assistance call 311, 347-396-4705, or visit nyc.gov/abdprogram.

Medicaid Buy-In Program

The Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD) offers coverage to people with disabilities who are working and earning more than what is allowed in traditional Medicaid. You can learn more about [the requirements and how to enroll on HRA’s website](#).

Employment and Financial Empowerment

This section provides an overview of the City’s efforts to expand employment opportunities and strengthen financial empowerment for people with disabilities. It highlights key programs, partnerships, and workforce initiatives that support career development, inclusive hiring, and personal financial literacy and wellness.

The Plan to Advance Career Success for People with Disabilities

In July 2023, Mayor Eric Adams announced a new, two-part plan to support career advancement for people with disabilities and expand access to internships, jobs, and careers. The City’s plan dedicates City funding for innovative direct services, including for the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities’ (MOPD) NYC: ATWORK program, which provides employment services to help people with disabilities prepare for and connect to jobs and careers and was previously privately funded.

Other aspects of the plan include:

- The goal of connecting at least 2,500 New Yorkers with disabilities to jobs by July 2026. As of June 30, 2025, the City had connected more than 1,350 individuals to jobs, with a year left to reach this milestone.
- The launch of a new Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion (CWAI), housed within the NYC Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent), which works to address the structural challenges many people with disabilities face when pursuing a career.
- A significant expansion of services for people with disabilities across SBS’ Workforce1 Career Centers through an investment by New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL). NYSDOL provides funds for program staff for the New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) program dedicated to making the Workforce1 Career Centers more accessible.

- Allocation of \$6 million in funding spread across multiple fiscal years by NYC Talent and the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) to a “Co-Design” Request for Proposals (RFP). This RFP, “Co-Designing and Delivering Inclusive Employment Programs with and for People with Disabilities,” released in March 2025 by the Workforce Development Corporation in partnership with MOPD and NYC Small Business Services, provides funding for awardees to co-design and implement new training and employment programs for people with disabilities and services to help employers make their workplaces more accessible. Awardees will co-design programs in collaboration with New Yorkers with disabilities to leverage the expertise of those with lived experience and in recognition of human-centered design best practices, then pilot the co-designed program models. Awardees are expected to be chosen by the end of 2025, with project design launching in 2026.

Total investments in the Plan to Advance Career Success for People with Disabilities surpassed \$10 million in City funds over a six-year period from Fiscal Year 2024 through Fiscal Year 2029, reaffirming the City’s historic commitment to increasing employment among New Yorkers with disabilities.

NYC: ATWORK

Launched in 2017, NYC: ATWORK is an employment program administered by MOPD that recruits, pre-screens, and connects New Yorkers with disabilities to jobs and internships with established business partners in both the public and private sectors.

As part of the Plan to Advance Career Success for People with Disabilities, NYC: ATWORK has been able to embed services in the NYC Small Business Services’ Workforce Career Center system, relaunching in-person services in 2023 at the Workforce1 Career Center in Downtown Brooklyn.

Participation in NYC: ATWORK is voluntary, and more importantly, self-driven. The program offers guidance and support to improve hiring chances and expand professional networks and opportunities, internships, and access to additional resources.

NYC: ATWORK in-person and virtual services for job seekers include:

- Guidance on conducting an effective job search and navigating the hiring process, including requesting reasonable accommodations
- Tips to tailor and strengthen resumes and cover letters
- Mock interviews
- Access to the program's job board and consideration for invitation-only hiring events
- Workshops such as "Preparing for a Job Fair" and "55-b/c Information Session"
- Information on using the 55-a program for City government jobs (see section on the 55-a program below)
- Retention support for up to one year after securing employment.
- Benefits counseling

Through the partnership with SBS and Workforce1, NYC: ATWORK supports the delivery of integrated workforce development services with trainings and ongoing technical assistance for staff and collaborative service delivery, such as mock interviews, workshops, and hiring events. This collaboration has resulted in:

- Increased access to jobs, financial counseling, skills training, and other services
- Facilitated processes for supportive and "warm" handoffs between NYC: ATWORK and Workforce1
- FastTrack hiring sessions
- More efficient access to ASL interpretation services

For the business community, NYC: ATWORK offers a centralized talent pool of candidates with disabilities to recruit from; trainings, including disability etiquette and awareness trainings; and technical assistance, including guidance on providing reasonable accommodations and retention support. NYC: ATWORK also meets employers' hiring needs through specialized hiring events, such as career fairs, industry-specific recruitments, and career explorations with public and private sector employers. These events consistently result in multiple hires and expanded employer relationships; one jobseeker hired by the Frick Collection was featured in [AbleNews](#). Since 2021, NYC: ATWORK has conducted over 15 such hiring events.

To ensure that all New Yorkers with disabilities can access employment services, NYC: ATWORK regularly engages with community-based organizations, direct service providers, City and New York State agencies, colleges, and high schools. NYC: ATWORK regularly attends hiring halls, community events, and conducts program information sessions.

Additionally, partners refer their participants for job opportunities and recruitment events. Notably, NYC: ATWORK collaborates with NYC Talent, AHRC's Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII), and Goodwill NY/NJ's GoodTemps programs to expand career pathways into City government. For example, a former PII fellow at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) who was referred by PII to NYC: ATWORK for a DCAS hiring event was recently hired as a DCAS Staff Analyst through the 55-a program. He describes this experience as "a dream come true because I'm working in human capital. I always wanted to be a staff analyst."

The Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion

In July 2023, as part of the launch of the Plan to Advance Career Success for People with Disabilities, Mayor Eric Adams announced the creation of the Center for Workforce Accessibility and Inclusion (CWAII), which implements elements of the Plan. CWAII, which is part of the NYC Office of Talent and Workforce Development ([NYC Talent](#)), aims to eliminate barriers and increase employment for New Yorkers with disabilities by collaborating with government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. CWAII works to achieve this mission by supporting employers and workforce providers in making their workplaces and programs more accessible and inclusive; evaluating new service delivery models; expanding relevant data collection and analysis; and engaging closely with key State and City agencies to help improve the workforce ecosystem's ability to serve people with disabilities. In addition to their role in helping to launch the City's Digital Accessibility Training (described in the Other MOPD Initiatives section of this report), the Partnership for Inclusive Internships, and Co-Design RFP discussed elsewhere in this report, CWAII also hosted or participated in 50 events to raise awareness among employers, government agencies, and nonprofit partners about advancing career success for people with disabilities across 2024 and 2025.

The Partnership for Inclusive Internships

In 2019, the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS), AHRC New York City (AHRC NYC), and additional workforce development partners, with support from private funders, launched the Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII). To build on that successful pilot, the Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion (CWAI) initiated a demonstration project to support PII with City funding in March 2024 to continue the internship program with a much stronger emphasis on job placement. PII continues to be operated by AHRC NYC and is supported by the New York State Education Department's Adult Continuing Education and Career Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) and the New York Office for Children and Family Services' New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB). The program design was informed by [research from Cornell University](#) that found that employers offering internships for people with disabilities are 5.7 times more likely to hire them into a permanent role. PII internship opportunities are available primarily within City agencies, as the overarching purpose of the program is to connect jobseekers with disabilities into permanent City jobs. The PII program has connected more than 100 individuals with disabilities to paid internships and connected 50 to jobs between March 2024 and September 2025.

Workforce1 Career Centers

The NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) offers free services at its network of Workforce1 Career Centers to prepare and help New Yorkers to find jobs. Job seekers can prep for their next interview, update their résumé, and connect with employers, or find the right training they need to succeed at these centers.

The Workforce1 Career Center system is committed to expanding opportunity, strengthening public services, and supporting New Yorkers in finding meaningful employment. Through strong partnership, dedicated staff, and a system-wide focus on equity, SBS's Citywide Workforce Opportunities (CWO) Division has continued to build a more inclusive, accessible, and effective workforce development ecosystem.

In partnership with MOPD, NYC Talent, and the New York City Workforce Development Board, CWO has implemented the NYC Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (SCION). The mission of NYC SCION is simple yet powerful: to increase the participation and success of individuals with disabilities—including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities—in the workforce through a sustainable, job-driven, inclusive model that aligns workforce and business needs.

A cornerstone of this work has been strengthening the capacity of workforce development staff across the city. Through extensive training, weekly sessions, and ongoing office hours, CWO and SCION have provided staff with tools to better support individuals with disabilities across every stage of service delivery. These trainings span outreach and engagement, accessibility practices, career services, job matching, employer recruitment, and large-scale connection to job opportunities. The focus has been both practical and strategic: ensuring staff feel equipped to provide high-quality services, and ensuring the system as a whole becomes more equitable and responsive.

In 2024, guided by the principles of the law and best practices, the SCION team developed a comprehensive accessibility checklist and conducted walkthroughs of all physical and programmatic services across every Workforce1 Career Center. These reviews, conducted alongside SBS CWO, EEO, and Workforce1 vendor partners, provided a valuable snapshot of accessibility strengths and areas for improvement across four key domains.

These domains include:

- **Physical Access:** Workforce1 Career Center programs are accessible and reachable via public transit, and several operate in remote areas to ensure services are available to local communities.
- **Digital Access:** The SCION team continues to review all collateral and is working closely with SBS Communications to embed accessibility standards into all marketing materials and vendor templates.
- **Effective Communication:** Teams across SBS are collaborating to ensure full alignment with MOPD guidelines across printed, digital, and social media platforms.

- **Workplace Inclusion:** Through service on the SBS IDEA Council and delivery of disability-focused trainings—including digital accessibility, disability etiquette, and awareness—the SCION team is advancing a culture of inclusion. The team has also modeled this commitment by hiring qualified individuals with disabilities into roles across the system.

To expand outreach and engagement, CWO and Workforce1 Centers have strengthened their connection to New Yorkers with disabilities through:

- Fast Track Recruitment events with key community partners
- Revised orientation content that now includes disability services
- Clear guidance and consistent training on providing Reasonable Accommodations (RA), reinforced through EEO-led refreshers and Workforce1 operating guide updates
- Ongoing integration of accessibility and inclusion into Workforce1 policies and procedures

Moving forward, CWO and the SCION initiative remain committed to expanding inclusive service delivery and strengthening employment pathways for individuals with disabilities across New York City. Building on the progress made, there are significant opportunities to deepen systemwide impact by aligning with federal, state, and local initiatives that promote equitable access, workforce participation, and long-term economic mobility.

Priorities for the Coming Year

Priorities for the coming year include:

- **Enhancing Service Delivery Across the Workforce1 System**
CWO and SCION will continue to review and refine workforce development practices to ensure full accessibility and inclusion—from outreach and engagement to training, placement, and retention services. This includes applying findings from accessibility reviews and integrating best practices into ongoing staff training, policy updates, and vendor guidance.

- Strengthening Connections to Employment**

Expanding partnerships with employers, industry networks, and training providers will remain central to improving job outcomes. CWO and SCION will prioritize strategies that support competitive, integrated employment and advance career pathways that align with employer demand across health care, technology, retail, and other growing sectors.
- Aligning With Federal, State, and City Policies and Initiatives**

The team will continue monitoring and incorporating guidance from key disability and workforce frameworks—including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 188, federal Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) initiatives, and state and local inclusive hiring and accessibility efforts. This alignment ensures that Workforce1 Career Centers remain responsive to evolving policy landscapes and national best practices.
- Strengthening Vendor Accountability and Standards**

Program standards, policies, and assessment tools will be reviewed and updated to clearly articulate vendor obligations related to ADA compliance, WIOA Section 188, reasonable accommodations, and inclusive service delivery. This reinforces a systemwide expectation of equity and consistent customer experience across all sites.'
- Expanding Services to Support Discussions on Disability Benefits**

CWO and SCION will explore opportunities to expand services that help jobseekers understand disability benefits, work incentives, and the impact of employment on various benefit programs. This includes strengthening referral pathways, offering staff training on benefits navigation, and partnering with agencies and experts who specialize in Social Security, Medicaid, and related supports to ensure jobseekers can make informed decisions about employment.

55-a Program

New York State Civil Service Law Section 55-a authorizes the City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to identify a maximum of 700 positions with duties that can be performed by "physically or mentally disabled persons" who are qualified to perform such duties.

People who wish to enter City government and have expressed an interest in being considered for the 55-a Program may apply for competitive positions otherwise filled through exams and, if qualified to perform the duties of the position, may be interviewed.

If offered the position, they must apply to be certified by ACCES-VR or the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) as having a mental or physical disability and may be appointed to the position without taking a Civil Service exam.

NYC: ATWORK and DCAS work together to assist City agencies in using the 55-a Program to fill their recruitment needs and diversify the City's workforce by hiring qualified persons with disabilities who may have encountered barriers to City employment.

On July 17, 2025, in celebration of Disability Pride Month, DCAS collaborated with MOPD, the Office of Talent and Workforce Development, and the Department of Health to host their yearly Citywide 55-a Diversity Career Fair. A total of 15 City agencies participated, including five agencies that conducted on-the-spot interviews. As a result of the event, 13 candidates have received conditional offers, with additional candidates pending final interview decisions at the time of this submission.

In addition to the career fair, DCAS partnered with MOPD and ACCES-VR to educate hiring managers and supervisors about the 55-a Program. DCAS delivered two training sessions on diversity hiring using the 55-a Program, reaching approximately 170 participants.

As of November 2025, there are 363 employees participating in the City's Diversity and Inclusion 55-a Program, serving in titles such Clerical Associate, City Planner, and Computer Specialist, across 34 different agencies.

Top 5 Agencies using 55-a Program in 2025:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. DSS/HRA – 60 positions | 3. DOE - 33 positions |
| 2. NYPD - 34 positions | 4. DOHMH - 29 positions |
| | 5. DOC - 26 positions |

New Hires in 2025

Based on City start date, there were 20 new hires in 2025. The total number of new hires continue to increase through agencies' participation in diversity fairs as well as agency-specific hiring initiatives.

New Hires in 2025 by Agency:

- DCAS - 6
- DSS/HRA - 5
- DOHMH - 3
- DOT - 3
- DOE - 1
- DOF - 1
- NYCHA - 1

Department of Youth and Community Development Programs

Workforce Connect Programs

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is the nation's largest youth employment program, connecting NYC youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with career exploration opportunities and paid work experience each summer. Through SYEP, participants can explore different interests and career pathways, develop productive workplace habits, and engage in learning experiences that strengthen their social, civic, and leadership skills

Work, Learn & Grow Employment (WLG) offers young people ages 16 to 21 an opportunity to strengthen work readiness skills, explore careers, and receive academic support, including guidance on postsecondary education and the potential to earn college credit. This program is open to participants of a targeted SYEP contract the summer immediately preceding

Both programs work with NYCPS District 75 through several contracts designed to serve youth at different stages of development. Youth served through D75 contract, have highly specialized needs that are able to be met while introducing the students to their first workforce experiences. The NYCPS Transition and College Access Center (TCAC) students with IEPs are offered specialized SYEP experiences designed to help transition them from school to adult life.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Funded Programs

Learn & Earn is a career exploration and academic support program for high school juniors and seniors. The program provides participants with academic support, college application assistance, work readiness training, service learning and leadership activities, as well as a paid six-week summer internship. Learn & Earn is for high school juniors and seniors who attend Learn & Earn designated high schools and meet certain socioeconomic eligibility requirements.

Train & Earn is a career pathways program that provides comprehensive job training and employment services, along with support services needed by participants to find a permanent job, obtain their high school equivalency if applicable, and access postsecondary education and training. Train & Earn is for youth and young adults aged 16–24, who are not working and not in school, and meet certain socioeconomic eligibility requirements.

All organizations operating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded programs are asked to proactively make participants with disabilities aware of ACCES-VR services and provide assistance with the referral and application process if they indicate interest. Participants accept or decline via signature this assistance and providers are asked to keep copies of these forms.

Advance and Earn

Advance & Earn is an innovative training and employment program for young adults between the ages of 16-24. It provides a continuum of education and employment services - from literacy instruction through advanced training and job placement or college enrollment - for opportunity youth (young people who are not in school or not working). Through the program's three tracks, Pre-HSE, HSE Prep and Advanced Training, it provides HSE test preparation, employer-recognized training, credentials and certifications, and paid internships. Program participants have access to comprehensive support services tailored to their individual needs, designed to help keep young people on track towards career success. Placement is based on the participant's individual needs. ACCES-VR services are available to participants as needed.

Community Resources for Employment & Development NYC

Community Resources for Employment & Development (CRED) NYC is a new program model that offers work readiness training, occupational training, and internships to 18- to 40-year-old NYC residents who are involved in the criminal justice system and/or impacted by community violence. Participants will have access to social support services and mental health counseling. ACCES-VR services are available to participants as needed.

Agency Employee Resource Groups for People with Disabilities

The City's increased focus on workplace inclusion and accessibility over the past several years has resulted in more agencies who have or are in the process of forming employee resource groups (ERGs) for staff with disabilities and allies.

One such group is **Disability Resources, Empowerment, Access, and Movement (DREAM)**, the NYC Health Department's ERG with a mission to promote disability justice by building community and engaging in advocacy and awareness initiatives within the agency. It was launched in January 2024 to support the liberation and well-being of disabled people throughout the Health Department and foster an environment of inclusion, unity, and empowerment in the workplace.

Since its inception, DREAM has grown to 135 members who have participated in and facilitated awareness and community-building activities like film screenings, lessons in American Sign Language (ASL), and marching in the 2024 Disability Pride Parade. DREAM successfully advocated for implementing Allergen-Reduced Zones at the agency's Long Island City office, so employees with airborne food allergies can have a safer eating experience. Members of DREAM will continue building an inclusive, intersectional, and equitable workplace where Health Department employees of all abilities and identities can thrive, celebrate diversity, and advocate for change within the agency.

Training of Department of Consumer and Worker Protection's Office of Financial Empowerment Staff to Better Serve People with Disabilities

The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) offers a suite of free and confidential services.

These include:

- One-on-one financial counseling through the City's network of Financial Empowerment Centers. These services are vital for helping individuals with disabilities navigate complex benefits systems, manage their finances, and build long-term financial stability.
- NYC Free Tax Prep services, which increase accessibility to the tax system for low-income New Yorkers and people with disabilities by providing free, professional, and reliable tax preparation.
- Programs like Ready to Rent, which provides financial counseling to help New Yorkers prepare successful housing applications, a process that can present significant barriers.

Building on the successful Empowered NYC pilot from the previous administration, in Fall 2024, DCWP partnered with the National Disability Institute (NDI) to develop and deliver a comprehensive training program for its financial counselors so that they can tailor their services to the needs of people with disabilities. The training increases counselors' knowledge of Social Security benefits, ABLE accounts, and disability-inclusive communication best practices, enhancing their ability to provide accurate guidance without risking clients' benefits.

The first cohort of 39 staff has completed the training, and a second training cohort is planned for Winter 2025-Spring 2026. The goal is to eventually have all financial counseling staff receive this training.

Education

This section summarizes programs and initiatives of New York City Public Schools and the City University of New York designed to support students with disabilities across the educational continuum. It highlights efforts to enhance accessibility, expand services, and ensure that learners of all ages have the resources they need to participate fully in school settings and related programs.

New York City Public Schools

The mission of New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) is to ensure that each student graduates on a pathway to a rewarding career and long-term economic security, equipped to be a positive force for change. With a total student population of approximately 900,000, NYCPS is the largest school system in the country. Promoting student success requires collaboration across intra-agency divisions and offices to support more than 1,800 schools and programs.

Boldly Reimagining Special Education – the Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning

In December 2022, former Chancellor David Banks announced plans to form a Special Education Advisory Council to help reimagine special education in New York City. Launched in early 2023, the council serves in an ongoing advisory capacity, developing recommendations for upcoming initiatives to improve special education and collecting information to inform planning. The first year of the council’s work culminated in the release of a [report](#) identifying key objectives for improving special education, including prioritizing investments in public school programs close to students’ homes that promote inclusion and result in strong student outcomes such as by investing in [specialized programs](#) designed to serve students with autism, dyslexia, and emotional disabilities.

In 2023, New York City Local Law 18 was passed with the goal of supporting students with disabilities as they transition from high school to higher education. The law mandates the city to work with relevant agencies to create and implement a system that enables the electronic sharing of information about students' special education services between NYCPS and higher education institutions, such as colleges and universities. Its aim is to help students with disabilities access the support and accommodations they need to succeed in higher education. In collaboration with MOPD, NYCPS launched a program that facilitates the sharing of educational documents required to determine eligibility for disability support at institutions of higher education. For more information, please visit the [Local Law 18 Annual Reports](#).

In 2024, NYCPS announced the creation of the Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning (DIAL), which is led by Deputy Chancellor Christina Foti and oversees the Special Education Office and the Office of Multilingual Learners. This new division builds holistic educational experiences for students who are multilingual learners and/or students with disabilities. DIAL embodies NYCPS's commitment to recognizing, uplifting, and supporting the diverse needs of all students, ensuring their full access to instruction, learning, and school communities.

Also in 2024, DIAL created *InclusiveSchoolsNYC*, an initiative active in over 90 schools citywide that offers community events, programming, resources, including a network of Disability Affinity, Disability Pride, and Inclusion Clubs to celebrate the identities of students with disabilities and support a culture of belonging in schools. For example, in partnership with the [Neurodiversity Alliance](#), this initiative provides neurodivergent students access to advising, leadership development, and peer support through the Neurodiversity Alliance's innovative club model.

InclusiveSchoolsNYC also organizes the annual Disability Pride Visual Arts Contest, which celebrates people with disabilities in their fight for equity and equal access, opportunity, and inclusion through student artwork, and the annual Disability Inclusion Summit where students with and without disabilities celebrate diverse disability identities, learn the history of the disability rights movement and the future of adaptive and universal design, build inclusive school communities, and learn from one another.

To advance disability inclusion and awareness through the power of film, DIAL formed a partnership with the ReelAbilities Film Festival, the largest festival in the United States dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with disabilities. This collaboration is designed to integrate disability-related content into the educational experience of students across all grade levels (Kindergarten through 12). Through this partnership, every NYCPS educator will have unlimited access to a wide array of films created by and for individuals with disabilities.

DIAL also expanded NYCPS's partnership with Special Olympics New York, ensuring access to sports programming at all District 75 schools, giving more than 1,700 students with disabilities access to participate in track and field, volleyball, and basketball during their school day, as well as after-school unified (students with and without disabilities) basketball and bocce leagues.

Led by a former NYCPS student who communicates using American Sign Language (ASL), DIAL hosted two free Deaf Community family engagement workshops during the 2024-2025 school year for families of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing as they navigate their children's individualized education programs (IEPs), and provided practical strategies, resources, and tools to support language access and communication in the home, including live webinars with ASL interpretation that are posted on YouTube.

The City University of New York

The City University of New York (CUNY) is a public higher educational complex that spans the five boroughs and encompasses 11 senior colleges, seven community colleges, the William E. Macaulay Honors College, the CUNY School of Medicine, the Graduate School and University Center, the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, the CUNY School of Law, the CUNY School of Professional Studies, the CUNY School of Public Health and Health Policy, and the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies. The CUNY Board is composed of 17 Trustees; ten appointed by the Governor of the State of New York and five by the New York City Mayor, both with State Senate advice and consent. One ex-officio Trustee is the chair of the University Student Senate. One ex-officio, non-voting Trustee is the chair of the University Faculty Senate. The Chair and the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

CUNY is committed to creating a world-class academic environment that is inclusive and accessible to all students. This commitment is regulated by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, and grounded in Universal Design principles, which emphasize the removal of barriers and the creation of a supportive educational experience. With nearly 11,700 students registered with Disabilities Services Offices (DSOs) across CUNY's 26 campuses, it is essential to address the diverse needs of this underrepresented population.

CUNY has implemented several key university-wide initiatives designed to improve support for students with disabilities by facilitating access, fostering inclusion and increasing awareness through outreach, programming, and capacity building.

Promoting Access to College and Beyond

CUNY emphasizes strong collaboration with local high schools to support students with disabilities. This includes organizing campus tours to introduce students to available resources and guiding them through the accommodation process for a smoother transition into college life. CUNY also collaborates internally with its existing high school mentorship office, K-16 Initiatives.

Programming for Students

Programming for students includes the following:

- ***Project REACH*** focuses on supporting students with autism. Key Areas include educating faculty and staff on the unique challenges faced by students with autism, as well as creating an inclusive environment for academic and social success. Project REACH campuses currently include: Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC); Brooklyn College; College of Staten Island (CSI); Hunter College, and Kingsborough Community College (KCC).
- ***CUNY Unlimited*** is a non-credit credential initiative aimed at expanding access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities. Components include engagement in courses alongside peers, employment skills development through internships, and self-advocacy training. CUNY Unlimited campuses currently include BMCC, CSI, Hostos Community College, KCC, Queens College, and Queensborough Community College (QCC).

- **CUNY LEADS** (Linking Employment, Academics and Disability Services) is a program aimed at preparing undergraduate students with disabilities for academic and career success. Resources include career guidance and academic support, resume building and interview preparation, internship and job placement opportunities. The program aspires to become a national model for improving employment outcomes.

Promoting Student Engagement, Socially and Civically

Initiatives that promote student engagement include the following:

- **Adaptive Sports**
CUNY's Adaptive Sports initiative aims to create equal opportunities for all athletes. The university launched a wheelchair basketball team in 2022 and plans to expand its offerings to include tennis, swimming, and track & field, thereby fostering a diverse athletic community.
- **CUNY Votes**
All CUNY campus disability services offices serve as nonpartisan voter registration locations for CUNY Votes. Members of the CUNY community can obtain and complete New York voter registration forms at these offices. Additionally, all CUNY students with disabilities can acquire a voter registration form during their respective campus disability student orientations.

The university-wide student group, the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD), actively participates in nonpartisan voter registration and education activities. In September 2024, CCSD helped organize a National Disability Voting Rights Week ceremony featuring New York State Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, who was then Chair of the State Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities.

CUNY System Capacity Building

Some ways in which CUNY has increased its capacity to serve students with disabilities include the following:

- **CUNY Disability Services Apprenticeship Program (DSAP)**
CUNY Disability Services Apprenticeship Program (DSAP) is a two-semester initiative, launched in Spring 2025, designed to build a strong talent pipeline of future Disability Services Professionals across CUNY campuses. Created in response to campus-identified staffing gaps and the need for more formalized training, DSAP selects passionate individuals, primarily students and alumni, interested in pursuing careers in Disability Services and positions them on host campuses for hands-on experience. Trainees engage in a mix of in-person activities, including intake shadowing, exam proctoring, and front desk support, as well as virtual learning through weekly classes and a structured curriculum. The program culminates in each trainee developing a final project aimed at enhancing service delivery and student inclusion.
- **Staffing Enhancements**
In 2025, CUNY appointed two Accessibility Technology Managers to lead initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility services across the university. Their roles include addressing accessibility challenges, ensuring compliance with standards, evaluating IT platforms, and training faculty and staff.
- **Assistive Technology Training and Device Distribution Program**
CUNY continues to expand access to students, faculty, and staff by piloting and purchasing assistive technology and devices, along with virtual and in-person training. Assistive devices and technology for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and individuals with disabilities promote student independence and equitable options to access academic and vocational services, as well as campus and CUNY-wide events. Some piloted and purchased programs include SignGlasses, UbiDuo, Phonak, Vispero (JAWS/ZoomText/Fusion) for distribution throughout the campuses, Glean, Grammarly, Otter.ai, and 3D printers, as well as CCTVs with magnification and screen-reading capabilities. CUNY continues to demonstrate a commitment to enhancing access for students with disabilities across multiple modalities.

CUNY Systems and Process Improvements

Relevant CUNY systems and process improvements include:

- **Implementation of CUNY Accommodate**
Launched in spring 2025, CUNY Accommodate is an innovative platform that streamlines the accommodation process across all campuses. Features include: user-friendly, mobile-friendly interface for accommodation requests; appointment scheduling with DSO staff; and access to essential resources, including extended exam times and assistive technology. This platform ensures accommodation plans are transferable between campuses, enhancing student mobility.
- **Accessibility Concern Portal Redesigned**
The newly redesigned Student Concern Portal serves as a centralized platform for students to report concerns related to digital accessibility. Managed by the Accessibility Review & Response Team (ARRT), it facilitates prompt resolution of issues in collaboration with campus personnel.

Promoting Disability Culture at CUNY and in the City

CUNY hosts various annual events and collaborates with partners to raise disability awareness and foster inclusion. Examples include:

- CUNY Neurodiversity Conference
- CUNY Accessibility Conference
- CUNY ADA BBQ
- CUNY Student Disability Leadership Retreat
- CUNY Assistive Technology Council Lunch & Learn
- CUNY Disability Programs Deaf and Hard of Hearing Workshop Series
- CUNY LEADS: Empowering Inclusion: Employers on Disability Workforce Success
- CUNY Disability Programs and CUNY Coalition of Students with Disabilities (CCSD) collaboration with MTA Accessibility Projects
- NYC Disability Pride Parade

These events promote knowledge sharing and community building among students, staff, and advocates.

Arts, Culture, Dining, and Tourism

This section provides an overview of how New York City agencies and partners are expanding access to cultural institutions, recreational spaces, and dining environments. It highlights initiatives that promote inclusive participation, improve physical and communication access, and ensure that cultural and social experiences are available to people with disabilities.

Department of Cultural Affairs

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City’s vibrant cultural life based on the conviction that arts and culture is for everyone. The agency uses its planning, funding, advocacy, technical assistance, and practices to help make participation in NYC’s cultural life—as artists, cultural workers, or audience members— increasingly accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

Ensuring there is public funding for nonprofit cultural organizations of all sizes and throughout the five boroughs is one of DCLA’s core goals. DCLA is the largest municipal funder of arts and culture in the country. The agency provides support to over 1,000 non-profit cultural organizations. In addition, DCLA provides general operating support for the Cultural Institutions Group, 39 cultural institutions located on City property, as well as energy expenses for a larger group of sites under DCLA’s jurisdiction. DCLA administers funds for hundreds of capital projects at arts and culture organizations, addressing a range of structural and equipment needs, including improvements to increase venue accessibility. Other initiatives administered by Cultural Affairs include Materials for the Arts, which annually redistributes materials to more than 2,000 non-profit organizations, public schools, and agencies throughout the five boroughs; and Percent for Art, which brings permanent art installations to public spaces around the city.

DCLA focuses on collaborating with the city’s cultural sector to foster a more accessible and inclusive cultural sector in a number of significant ways, including the Disability Forward Fund and capital access projects, both described below.

The Disability Forward Fund

The Disability Forward Fund, administered as part of DCLA’s annual Cultural Development Fund (CDF) program, the DFF provides funding to non-profit arts organizations to support programs that deepen engagement of people with disabilities, including artists, cultural workers, and audience members; to support new work created by people with disabilities; to help connect people with disabilities to jobs in the cultural sector; and to promote successful models for engaging the disability community through cultural programming . In FY25, 42 organizations received \$10,000 each as part of the DFF.

Capital Access Projects

Each year, DCLA distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in city support for construction, equipment, and renovation projects at dozens of organizations across the city. This helps maintain world-class cultural facilities that serve communities in all five boroughs, and makes the city a partner in creating more accessible cultural spaces for all New Yorkers, especially people with disabilities.

Three recently completed DCLA capital projects with a strong focus on access are described below.

Pioneer Works

In February 2025, DCLA joined with partners to announce the completion of a major renovation project at Brooklyn’s renowned Pioneer Works cultural center. Supported with \$3.4 million in city funding from the Office of the Mayor, Brooklyn Borough President, and City Council, the project includes a new elevator, a new wheelchair-accessible pathway in the garden, and an HVAC upgrade, transforming the 150-year-old, former ironworks factory and its adjoining 20,000-square-foot garden a fully accessible, year round destination for artists and audiences.

New York Botanical Garden

In May, DCLA joined the New York Botanical Garden to celebrate the reopening of the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden. The \$8.5 million renovation project — which included \$4 million in city support — is the first update to the beloved 12-acre space since it was created in 1998.

Started in 2023, the project upgraded both the indoor and outdoor areas to align with current science education practices, particularly in STEM and environmental education. With these enhancements, the project ensures the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden can continue to accommodate large audiences — over 175,000 children and adults who visit each year — including 18,000 Pre-K through 5th grade students who participate in school field trips.

The upgrade project includes a new feature enabling children with disabilities to use the garden’s popular Tree Canopy Walk; two, fully accessible non-gendered bathrooms; and fully accessible outdoor pathways through the 12-acre site.

The Public Theater

In July 2025, DCLA helped cut the ribbon on the revitalized Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the home of The Public Theater’s beloved Free Shakespeare in the Park.

The City of New York was proud to invest over \$42 million for this much-needed revitalization project, the first meaningful capital upgrade to The Delacorte since 1999. The project ensures the longevity of the theater, ensuring that it will continue to be a home for audiences and artists for generations to come. The upgrade project included façade renovation, replaced and restructured audience seating, waterproofing of interior spaces, new HVAC and electrical systems, new lighting towers, structural audio systems support, as well as major accessibility improvements. These improvements included new ramps for audiences, as well as accessible box office and concessions booths. The number of ADA-compliant seats has more than doubled, and expanded hallways and new ramps, lifts, and an elevator to the control booth make the revamped theater accessible for artists and crews with disabilities.

These are just a few recently-completed examples of DCLA’s ongoing commitment to working with cultural institutions to create a more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive cultural sector that is open to all New Yorkers.

Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment

The mission of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) is to support and strengthen New York City's creative economy and make it accessible to all. MOME comprises four divisions: the Film Office, which coordinates film and television production throughout the five boroughs; NYC Media, the largest municipal television and radio broadcasting entity in the country with a reach of 18 million viewers within a 50-mile radius; Creative Sector Programs, which supports economic and workforce development in film, television, theatre, music, publishing, advertising and digital content; and the Press Credentials Office, which issues press cards.

Some examples of recent MOME initiatives include:

- MOME sponsored the [ReelAbilities Industry Summit](#) on April 7 and 8, 2025 where industry professionals discussed "topics of accessibility, inclusion, and representation in all aspects of the film and performing arts industries." MOME provided funding and covered a portion of the costs of ASL/CART and advertising.
- MOME sponsored [The Wavy Awards](#) (a music industry awards show) on September 14, 2024, including covering the cost of ASL/CART. The Wavys, founded in 2021, celebrates historically excluded and marginalized talent including women, non-binary individuals, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and artists with disabilities.
- At the NY Music Month Conference on June 5, 2024, MOME included a speaker (Lachi Music) on "Neurodivergence, Disability, and Mental Health" and a speaker on mental health in the music community (Jennifer Leff, MusiCares).
- MOME hired a contractor to revamp its [NY Music Month website](#), with accessibility as a central goal and was unveiled in spring 2025.
- MOME helped organize the [Seats on the Spectrum](#) pilot with a goal to "welcome even more audience members on the autism spectrum to Broadway and Off-Broadway performances" by providing accommodations, training, aeducation measures, and advocacy.
- MOME has produced shows for NYCTV that address people with disabilities. For example, [an episode of The NYC Field Guide: New York Apartment Living, which included tips for people with disabilities on finding \(or keeping\) an apartment and an episode of Inform NYC, focusing on MOPD's NYC: ATWORK initiative.](#)

- MOME, in consultation with MOPD, created a graphic for use by theaters to explain that people with disabilities may use cellphones in the theater for accessibility.
- On September 22, 2023, MOME co-hosted a screening of Jade Bryan's *The Shattered Mind* with MOPD and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.
- On June 9, 2022, as part of NY Music Month, MOME sponsored a panel called, "Celebrating and Elevating Creators with Disabilities" presented by RAMPD. The webinar's goal was to "educate D/deaf and Disabled musicians and music professionals on how to become more established and competitive in the music industry."

Open Captions at the Movies

Since May 2022, as a result of Local Law 37 of 2021, movie theaters in NYC have been required to provide open captioned screenings. Open captioning is a service for moviegoers who are D/deaf and hard of hearing. In addition to moviegoers who are D/deaf and hard of hearing, captions benefit almost everyone, especially people watching movies in their non-native language, and children and adults learning to read.

Following passage of the law, MOME, in consultation with MOPD and the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), which enforces the open captions law, developed a campaign to educate the public about the requirement, including a plain language guide and a public service announcement. Materials and more information are available at nyc.gov/captions.

If a movie theater is not providing the required open-captioned showings, you can file a complaint by calling 311 and saying, "open captions," or going to nyc.gov/311 and searching for "Movie Theater Complaint." In 2025, DCWP issued summonses to four movie theaters for violating the Open Captions Law. All four movie theaters entered into settlement agreements with DCWP and agreed to pay a fine and bring its theatre into compliance. DCWP also sent a Cease-and-Desist letter to a fifth theater and, as of October 2025, is reviewing the theater's compliance with the law.

Dining

There are more than 15,000 restaurants in New York City, popular with busy New Yorkers and tourists alike. The Dining Out NYC Program is described in The Built Environment and Public Realm section of this report.

Some other dining-related items of particular interest to the disability community include the following:

- **Wheelchair-Friendly Restaurant Finder**

The NYC Health Department features restaurants that self-report they are wheelchair friendly on a [digital map](#). During the permitting process, restaurants are asked three accessibility-related questions. If they respond “Yes” to all three questions, the Health Department mails a decal for restaurants to display to indicate that they are wheelchair friendly. The criteria for receiving this designation are that the main entrance is flush with the sidewalk or that there is a ramp, lift, or other wheelchair-usable entrance; the entrance has an opening of 32 inches or larger; and there is space for wheelchairs distributed and level throughout the seating area. The tool does not currently include information about the accessibility of the restaurants’ restrooms or other accessibility features, but is still a useful tool for New Yorkers.

- **Exceptions to Plastic Straw Ban**

Local Law 64 of 2021 restricts food service establishments from providing single-use plastic straws, stirrers and splash sticks to customers. However, thanks to input from the disability community, the law requires food service establishments to make plastic straws available if a customer requests one for any reason and must post signage to that effect. For more information, visit nyc.gov/straws.

Tourism

New York City Tourism + Conventions, the official destination marketing organization for the five boroughs, maintains [Accessible NYC](#), a digital hub to help visitors and New Yorkers enjoy exploring the City. Resources include original editorial content created by members of the community as well as an interactive filter to help visitors find hotels, attractions and restaurants that provide the accessibility amenities they need.

Other MOPD Initiatives

This section describes additional work to advance accessibility and inclusion across City systems, in most instances led or coordinated by the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. It includes cross-sector partnerships, community engagement efforts, and programmatic initiatives that address emerging needs and strengthen disability inclusion citywide.

Disability Service Facilitators

Local Law 27 of 2016 requires every City agency to designate a Disability Service Facilitator (DSF). Disability Service Facilitators serve as an easy access point for the public to obtain information, services and assistance concerning access within the agency for people with disabilities.

MOPD convenes regular meetings of the DSFs to share information and provide training and also organizes field trips to enrich the DSFs’ understanding of disability issues, culture and history. Recent field trips have included tours of the PS 47 museum, focusing on the history of the City’s first public school for the Deaf, and of the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library.

A full list of DSFs can be found on the MOPD website at nyc.gov/dsf. The page also includes a new “Meet a DSF” section, which features profiles of individual DSFs.

Local Law 12 Five-Year Accessibility Plans

Local Law 12 of 2023 requires every agency to have a five-year accessibility plan, outlining current and planned initiatives in the areas of digital accessibility, workplace inclusion, effective communication, physical accessibility and programmatic access. Each agency has been responsible for developing its own plan. However, MOPD has provided training and guidance to agencies, including through the Disability Service Facilitator program (see section immediately above this one) as they have developed and implemented their plans. MOPD also supported the public comment process. Agency plans and annual progress reports are posted on individual agency websites and are also available at nyc.gov/accessibilityplans.

Digital Accessibility

Local Law 26 of 2016 requires the City to adopt a website accessibility standard and to publish a report on the accessibility of City websites every two years. In December 2025, OTI and MOPD issued the City's fifth biennial Digital Accessibility Report, in which they announced the adoption of WCAG 2.2 Level AA as the accessibility standard for websites and mobile apps maintained by or on behalf of the City. Some highlights from the report are described below.

NYC.gov Redesign

New York City's Digital Service team at the Office of Technology & Innovation (OTI) is modernizing how the City builds digital user experiences with a new citywide design system and technology stack. Through user research and analytics, the new design system was built to be accessible, usable, and sustainable to meet the evolving needs of New Yorkers.

The City's Digital Accessibility Coordinator, housed at MOPD, has been consulted from the beginning, advising on accessibility best practices. OTI has also engaged a partner to conduct accessibility audits throughout the development process, ensuring accessibility at launch and beyond. The redesigned nyc.gov "main" site launched in the Fall of 2025. There is a roadmap to transition all NYC agency websites (dependent on funding) over the next couple of years.

Digital Inclusion Officer Program

In Summer 2024, MOPD launched an agency Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO) program. Acting as an accessibility advocate within their agency, the DIO serves as the main point person within an agency on digital accessibility and as the liaison with the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) and MOPD on digital accessibility issues. DIOs are expected to complete the full suite of digital accessibility trainings that MOPD provides to ensure they have the knowledge to effectively fulfill their role. As of November 1, 2025, 41 agencies have designated DIOs, most of whom have completed the training suite offered by MOPD. MOPD currently convenes monthly meetings with the DIOs and holds weekly office hours for the group.

Citywide Digital Accessibility Training Efforts

In March 2025, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), MOPD, and NYC Talent’s Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion (CWAI), in partnership with Microsoft, launched a new digital accessibility training for City of New York employees. This training is available to all 300,000+ City employees, enabling the City to serve as a model employer with respect to workplace accessibility and inclusion, and provides instruction on how to use existing tools in Microsoft products and apply best practices to create accessible content. It emphasizes the principles and guidelines of accessibility, recognizes common barriers, and provides solutions for successfully creating fully accessible digital content so that City services can be better accessed by people with disabilities. The launch of the digital accessibility training is the culmination of a nearly two-year effort between the DCAS, MOPD, CWAI, and Microsoft, inspired in part by the City Council’s Local Law 12 of 2023, which mandated City agencies create five-year accessibility plans in consultation with MOPD.

Additionally, the City’s Digital Accessibility Coordinator, housed at MOPD, has continued to provide live trainings for City agency employees upon request. Over the last two years, more than 30 trainings have taken place—covering topics such as Creating Accessible Communications, Accessible Videos and Social Media, and Creating Accessible PDFs and PDF Forms.

Citywide Digital Accessibility Standard and Policy

As noted above, the City has adopted WCAG 2.2 Level AA as the accessibility standard for its websites and mobile apps. The development and implementation of a comprehensive Citywide Digital Accessibility Standard and Policy that will cover all of the City’s information and communication technology – including hardware, like computers and copy machines, and software -- will ensure all agencies are working under the same expectations. Creating this standard and policy and establishing a roadmap for implementation is a major priority of the NYC Digital Accessibility Coordinator over the next couple of years.

Deaf Access

During the Adams administration, the City has engaged in a number of continued and new initiatives that have increased access for the Deaf community and raised awareness and understanding of the Deaf community within the larger population. Notably, Mayor Adams appointed the City's first Deaf Commissioner, MOPD Commissioner Christina Curry, in August 2022.

ASL Direct

In 2018, MOPD, in partnership with the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT, now OTI), launched ASL Direct, a video conferencing line where constituents who communicate in American Sign Language can be connected directly to an information specialist fluent in ASL. The program originally was housed solely at MOPD, but expanded to HRA in 2019.

In December 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a public notice entitled [Direct Video Calling Can Enhance Accessibility of Consumer Call Centers](#), highlighting how government agencies, businesses, and others can use Direct Video Calling (DVC) to enhance access to customer service and other consumer-facing call centers for people with disabilities. We hope to see many more examples of ASL Direct-type program in the years to come.

To be connected to MOPD's ASL Direct video conferencing line, call 646-396-5830. To be connected to HRA's ASL Direct video conferencing line, call 347-474-4231.

Emergency Services: Text-to-911

Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message to reach 911 emergency call takers from a mobile phone or device. It is useful for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, as well as those who may not be able to make a voice 911 call for safety reasons. New York City successfully launched Text-to-911 in June 2020. Text-to-911 is an ongoing collaboration of the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI), NYPD, and FDNY, with more than 202,641 text sessions initiated as of June 2025.

Department of Social Services Initiatives

The City's Department of Social Services (DSS) includes both the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). In order to continue to promote the ASL Direct service at the agency, DSS designed palm cards for public distribution. Currently all open Job and SNAP Centers have these cards available for clients who are D/deaf or hard of hearing to take home with them. The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Information Specialist at DSS's ASL Direct assists videophone callers using ASL with access to information regarding both HRA and DHS, navigating the ACCESS HRA website and app, and assists with navigating the scheduling of ASL interpretation at DSS sites.

To further facilitate communication between DHS and HRA staff and sign language users, DSS uses an ASL Options Card, which informs ASL-users of their options in obtaining sign language interpretation at HRA and DHS locations. The tool denotes the availability of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) (available immediately), in-person interpretation (available within 2 hours), and scheduling an appointment for a later date and time.

For more information about ASL resources at HRA and DHS, visit [ASL Services for HRA and DHS Clients](#) or call via video phone at 347-474-4231.

Deaf Town Halls

In September 2024, MOPD revived the Deaf Town Halls, which had been held during the COVID-19 pandemic. These events are an opportunity for City agencies, and occasionally other entities, to provide information to the Deaf community about their programs and services and to receive feedback. Typically, one or more agencies present on a particular topic for the first part of the event, followed by open Q and A. The events are designed to foster dialogue between the Deaf community and City and other agencies, providing a platform for addressing concerns and sharing insights.

Deaf Town Halls are needed because many Deaf New Yorkers face systemic communication barriers in traditional public forums, where access is often limited due to interpreters not being provided, inaccessible formats, or delayed information. MOPD's ASL-centered Deaf Town Halls ensure information is delivered in the community's primary language ensuring it is fully accessible and culturally appropriate, allowing Deaf New Yorkers to engage with city agencies, learn about city resources, raise concerns, and provide feedback in real time.

Recent Deaf Town Halls have featured:

- the NYC Police Department (NYPD) (September 2024);
- the NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB) and the NYC Board of Elections (NYC BOE) (October 2024 and October 2025);
- MOPD's NYC: ATWORK program (November 2024);
- the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) (February 2025);
- the New York State Deaf DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Office (April 2025); and
- the Department of Housing and Preservation and Development (HPD) (July and September 2025).

ASL Mini-Courses for Agency Staff

In 2024, DSS, in partnership with MOPD, started providing ASL courses for DSS staff, focusing on frontline staff who interact with clients. Since January 2024, seven groups of DSS staff, totaling 126 individuals, have participated in these mini-courses, which have been held over the course of 5-6 weeks.

MOPD's Deaf Etiquette and Awareness Training

MOPD's ASL Direct Supervisor is a member of the team that provides live Disability Etiquette and Awareness Training to City agency staff and external partners (described later in this section). More recently, he has developed a training that focuses specifically on how to interact with members of the Deaf community.

Deaf-specific etiquette and awareness trainings are essential to reducing communication breakdowns, eliminating barriers, and improving cultural competence by strengthening staff across city agencies in their understanding of Deaf culture, language, and communication norms. These trainings build practical capacity and improve interactions with Deaf constituents, ensuring agencies provide programs and services that are respectful, effective, and equitable.

The training has so far been delivered to, among others, City agency Disability Service Facilitators and staff of the New York State Attorney General's Office, the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment and the Bureau of Children, Youth Families and Developmental Disabilities of the City Health Department's Division of Mental Hygiene.

Local Law 19 of 2025

Local Law 19 of 2025 requires the City to provide public service announcements in ASL on certain City advertising structures (currently, LINKNYC kiosks) beginning in May 2026. Ahead of the law taking effect, as of November 2025, the Mayor's Office of Ethnic and Community Media in partnership with MOPD has already released three videos in ASL on LINKNYC kiosks, with an additional six scheduled for release.

You can read more about LINKNYC kiosks in the Built Environment and Public Realm section of this report.

Additional Initiatives

MOPD has undertaken additional initiatives since 2022 to make the City more Deaf-friendly and increase awareness of Deaf history and culture.

These include the following:

- **Deaf Awareness Month Webpage**

In September 2023, MOPD launched a Deaf Awareness Month webpage at nyc.gov/DeafAwareness. Each September, MOPD updates the page and amplifies it over social media.

- **Public Events**

MOPD has hosted or co-hosted the following public events showcasing Deaf individuals:

- a talk in April 2022 by Claudia Gordon, a Deaf attorney who served as a key advisor on disability policy during the Obama administration;
- a screening of the *Shattered Mind*, a feature-length film about a Black Deaf family in New York City by Deaf filmmaker Jade Bryan, at the Museum of the Moving Image in September 2022 (co-hosted with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment);
- *My Deaf Family*, a virtual discussion, held over two evenings in 2022 and 2023, hosted by MOPD’s ASL Direct supervisor, with members of his family, one of the largest Black Deaf families in the United States.

- **City Content in ASL**

MOPD is compiling video content provided by the City in ASL and will make these available on MOPD’s website during the first quarter of 2026. Additional videos will be added as they become available.

Accessible Event Planning

In May 2025, MOPD published a Guide to Planning Accessible Events. The guide, available on MOPD’s website at nyc.gov/AccessibleEventPlanning, includes step by step information on how to plan and execute an event that is accessible and inclusive of people with various disabilities.

We encourage those involved in planning events to use the guide and send any feedback to us at DSF@cityhall.nyc.gov. MOPD is also available to train City agencies and City agency partners on accessible event planning. Agencies that have been trained so far include the NYC Economic Development Corporation and the Office of the Queens District Attorney.

Disability Etiquette and Awareness Trainings

In 2022, DCAS deployed an online disability etiquette training that many City agencies began requiring for their staff as part of their 5-Year Accessibility Plans.

MOPD has also continued to offer live Disability Etiquette and Awareness training for City agencies and others. All of the presenters are employees of MOPD and have lived experience as people with disabilities. Since January 2024, MOPD has presented live trainings to more than 800 people, including City staff, employers in the private and nonprofit sectors who work with MOPD's NYC: ATWORK program, workforce providers, and other community partners, including at all five Workforce1 hubs. For City agencies, this live training supplements DCAS's online training.

Additionally, some City agencies, including the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health, have developed their own disability etiquette and awareness trainings tailored to their own agencies and staff.

35 Years Forward: ADA x NYC

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, MOPD was proud to lead 35 Years Forward: ADA x NYC, a month-long series of events highlighting the progress, resilience, and ongoing efforts of the disability community.

MOPD created a citywide ADA35 calendar at nyc.gov/ada35 and created a social media toolkit for all City agencies and partners to help amplify the milestone. The toolkit included sample posts and suggested hashtags.

MOPD Quarterly Community Calls

MOPD continues to host the community calls that were started during the COVID-19 pandemic. The calls are a forum for City, State and federal agencies to provide updates to the local disability community. Calls are currently held quarterly over zoom. You can [register for the Zoom Webinar](#) and receive notices of upcoming meetings.

Other Agency Initiatives

This section highlights accessibility-related projects and programs led by City agencies outside the major thematic categories of this report. It offers a snapshot of broader efforts across government to remove barriers, improve service delivery, and embed accessibility into everyday operations.

City Commission on Human Rights

The New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) works every day to uphold the City's Human Rights Law through enforcement, education, and outreach. The Commission's goal is to address both historic and current inequities and to help create a city where everyone can live, work, and thrive free from discrimination.

Through trainings, educational programs, and policy initiatives, the Commission works to root out discriminatory practices. The Commission proactively identifies patterns of discrimination by testing employers, housing providers, and places of public accommodation. It also relies on investigations, litigation, and other enforcement tools to address allegations when they arise.

Anyone who believes they are experiencing disability discrimination-or who is not being provided a reasonable accommodation in the workplace, in housing, or in public accommodations-can contact CCHR by visiting nyc.gov/humanrights or calling (212) 416-0197.

The Commission educates the public about disability rights through workshops and community programming. It offers a dedicated training on the NYC Human Rights Law and protections for people with disabilities and regularly highlights disability rights in general human rights presentations.

CCHR continues to maintain and update guidance on disability discrimination, including clarifying discriminatory policies and practices, explaining how to engage in a cooperative dialogue as required by the NYC Human Rights Law, outlining best practices for assessing and providing reasonable accommodations, and offering examples of accommodations. The guidance also explains that the NYC Human Rights Law defines disability discrimination more broadly than state or federal law and outlines how the Commission interprets and enforces those protections.

The core principles of the City's protections against disability discrimination include:

- Housing providers, employers, and business owners must offer modifications or accommodations in their policies or physical spaces to ensure people with disabilities have equal access and rights.
- These entities are generally responsible for covering the cost of modifications or accommodations.
- Even if someone already complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, they must still meet NYC Human Rights Law requirements and provide accommodations tailored to an individual's needs, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship under the law.
- Service animals, which are trained to perform specific tasks for people with disabilities, must be allowed in any area open to the public. They do not need to wear special vests, carry licenses, or otherwise visually identify themselves as service animals.
- Housing providers, employers, and business owners are required to engage in a cooperative dialogue—an individualized, good-faith conversation—with a person with a disability to determine what accommodations can be provided.

Access to accommodations in housing can be a life-or-death matter for many New Yorkers with disabilities. That is why CCHR intervenes as early as possible when it learns of alleged discriminatory conduct. Through Project Equal Access, the Commission provides pre-complaint intervention and works with housing providers and places of public accommodation make their facilities accessible. This work includes identifying where ramps should be installed, determining needed bathroom renovations, adding electronic doors, grab bars and handrails, and training staff on how to accommodate people with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 2025, CCHR secured 61 accessibility modifications without needing to file a formal complaint.

CCHR investigates discrimination claims filed by the public and can secure accommodations, monetary damages, and other forms of relief. In Fiscal Year 2025, disability discrimination was the most common type of claim filed with the Commission, totaling 131 claims (67 in employment, 46 in housing, 16 in public accommodations, and 2 involving discriminatory harassment).

The Commission has the authority to impose fines and obtain monetary damages for individuals harmed by violations of the Human Rights Law. It can also negotiate additional remedies, including reasonable accommodations, policy changes, training, rehiring, and accessibility modifications.

Under Commissioner Palma's leadership, CCHR continues to advance disability rights through strong partnerships with the Bronx Borough President's Disability Advisory Council, Disability Unite, and Centers for Independent Living. The Commission hosts multilingual trainings and co-sponsors the annual Disability Unite Festival in Central Park. Together, these efforts help ensure that people with disabilities can access protections and city resources in inclusive and welcoming spaces.

Department of Sanitation

The NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) keeps New York City clean, safe, and healthy by collecting, recycling, and disposing of waste; cleaning streets; and clearing snow and ice. Since 2022, DSNY has implemented numerous initiatives to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers, including mandating new waste set-out times and waste containerization for residences with one to nine units. DSNY has also mandated that all residents separate compostable materials from their other waste. Throughout this period, DSNY has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that its services are accessible to persons with disabilities, by continuing and expanding its accessibility initiatives.

Since 2022, DSNY has continued to accept requests for assistance with disposal of large or hazardous objects. DSNY has likewise continued to assign Emergency Snow Shovelers and/or Sanitation Workers to clear bus stops and pedestrian ramps when necessary, after a snow event. DSNY also clears pathways to accessible pedestrian signals to ensure that pedestrians who are blind or have low vision can safely cross the street.

The Residential Waste Containerization program became effective on November 12, 2024, and requires that all properties with one to nine units place waste materials for collection in bins with secure lids. Since April 1, 2025, all residents must also separate compostable materials from their trash.

DSNY released the NYC Bin for purchase beginning in the Fall of 2024. The NYC Bin is the official bin for properties with up to nine residential units to set out their trash. The NYC Bin was designed with accessibility in mind, featuring wheels, and is available in various sizes. To further assist residents with disabilities, DSNY developed and released a 25-gallon NYC Bin in Spring 2025, which can be used by residents who cannot physically move a larger bin on their own and do not have other assistance.

Following the implementation of the new containerization and compost requirements, DSNY has also assisted people with disabilities by approving numerous requests from residents to place waste, recycling, and compost materials at the curb before the mandated 6:00 PM set-out time. These set-out time modifications provide additional time for residents to get assistance from others with placing out their materials. To make a request for a waste set-out time modification, a resident can fill out the online form found at nyc.gov/assets/dsny/forms/disability-services. Residents can also contact 311 or call DSNY's Customer Service Unit, who will forward the request to DSNY's Disability Services Facilitator.

DSNY has engaged in targeted outreach to inform NYC residents about its accessibility initiatives. In 2024 and 2025 alone, DSNY presented at community board meetings in all 59 NYC districts, canvassed and had door-to-door conversations at over 62,000 different buildings regarding the new rules and waste set-out time options; and conducted over 30 online information sessions with more than 2,000 attendees.

Police Department

AccessibleNYPD outlines the concrete steps the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has undertaken and will continue to implement, to ensure that its services, programs, and activities are fully accessible. The NYPD and its personnel affirm that ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities is fundamental to exemplary customer service, enhancing the quality of life for all New Yorkers, and promoting effective governance. A dedicated inter-bureau working group within the NYPD convenes regularly to oversee the remedial measures and proactive strategies outlined in this plan.

New York City's five boroughs are organized into eight NYPD patrol boroughs:

- Patrol Borough Brooklyn North
- Patrol Borough Brooklyn South
- Patrol Borough Bronx
- Patrol Borough Manhattan North
- Patrol Borough Manhattan South
- Patrol Borough Queens North
- Patrol Borough Queens South
- Patrol Borough Staten Island

Within these patrol boroughs, the NYPD maintains and operates 78 precinct stationhouses.

The AccessibleNYPD plan is informed by a thorough review of the NYPD's programs and services. This includes internal surveys of precinct stationhouses and detailed architectural accessibility assessments of numerous facilities conducted by two independent architectural firms. Two newly constructed stationhouses are fully ADA-compliant: the 116th Precinct stationhouse, which opened to the public on December 18, 2024, and the 40th Precinct stationhouse, which opened on November 20, 2024, incorporate essential accessibility features, including elevators, ramps, and accessible travel routes, ensuring equitable access for all individuals.

Remediation efforts are currently focused on a total of 16 strategically identified designated hub sites distributed throughout the five boroughs, which the NYPD aims to make fully accessible for public interaction and arrest processing. Full accessibility for these hub sites is projected for completion by 2029. During the transitional period, these hub sites will serve as crucial accessible resources while the remaining stationhouses undergo upgrades to achieve full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In instances where officers from non-compliant stationhouses encounter individuals requiring accessibility accommodations for services, programs, or arrest processing, these designated hub locations will provide the necessary accessible facilities.

Below are the 16 hub sites:

- Bronx – 48th & 50th Precincts
- Brooklyn North – 83rd & 90th Precincts
- Brooklyn South – 61th & 67st Precincts
- Manhattan North – 25th, 30th, & Central Park Precincts
- Manhattan South – 7th & 13th Precincts
- Queens North – 112th & 114th Precincts
- Queens South – 105th & 107th Precincts
- Staten Island – 121st Precinct

The New York City Police Department is resolute in its commitment to ensuring equitable and seamless access to all its services, programs, and activities for every member of the public. Guided by the principles of inclusivity, the NYPD established AccessibleNYPD to proactively address and eliminate barriers within its facilities citywide. The NYPD has instituted robust internal mechanisms for the continuous monitoring and strategic remediation of existing infrastructure. This is complemented by the development of progressive policies and the provision of comprehensive training for all personnel on disability rights and accessibility obligations.

Its revised use-of-force policy now explicitly directs officers to ask themselves whether a person’s apparent noncompliance might be caused by a medical issue, mental-health condition, developmental disability, or physical limitation. At the Police Academy, recruits receive training on interacting with people with disabilities, including people with autism as required by Local Law 53 of 2023.

NYPD employees receive training through multiple methods, including, but not limited to, roll call trainings, command level trainings, promotional trainings, publications distributed by email and/or Department intranet, and videos. Through these comprehensive initiatives and steadfast dedication to accessibility, the NYPD remains committed to serving all New Yorkers with dignity and respect, ensuring that every interaction upholds the NYPD’s promise of equal protection and service for all communities.

Emergency Management

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

Below are a few of the many ways the City has expanded its emergency preparedness and response capabilities in recent years to better serve people with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies. These efforts are led by NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) (formerly the Office of Emergency Management), with MOPD playing a critical advisory and supportive role.

Emergency Communications

NYCEM continues to use its Accessible Communication Policy at Hurricane Evacuation Centers and its other accessible shelters and Service Centers. The policy outlines clear procedures for staff at these locations to accommodate the communications needs of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision. The policy has been paired with an Accessible Communication Protocol regarding its implementation during all shelter and service center operations in support of the City's commitment to equitable and effective communication in its public-facing programs during emergencies.

NYCEM continues to use Nixle, a communication platform that enables public safety agencies to share timely and relevant information with New York City residents and other stakeholders. Nixle has provided a useful additional platform for supporting outreach to the public regarding evolving emergencies across the five boroughs of New York City.

Moreover, NYCEM has expanded Nixle functionality to provide a more localized and targeted communication down to the precinct and community board levels with real time updates on such items as localized disruptions to roadways and public transportation as well as activity involving the New York City Fire Department (FDNY), and New York City Police Department (NYPD). The goal of this initiative is to improve the geographic precision and relevance of alerts to members of the communities within the affected areas.

NYCEM continues to improve its emergency communication and preparedness initiatives. It provided comments on the development of the federally managed Multilingual Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system, a federal managed program which operated in conjunction with localities, to deliver geographically targeted alerts to mobile devices. The system will expand nation-wide by mid-2027 to support the 13 most spoken languages in the United States, including Arabic, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), French, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. In addition, American Sign Language ASL is made available through form-filled video templates to provide accessibility for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Additionally, NYCEM continues to use its Advance Warning System (AWS) website and grew the list of subscribers to approximately 6000. AWS alerts are being updated to provide enhanced guidance for DAFN service providers. Alerts will include a clear call to action tailored to the service provider audience, along with hazard-specific action items, conversation templates for client outreach, and reminders for clients who may need extra support (such as, those with service animals or pets, people on dialysis, or those receiving home meal deliveries).

Digital Accessibility

In alignment with the city-wide goals of equity, inclusion and accessibility, NYCEM has appointed a Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO) to oversee the accessibility of both internally and externally facing documents. The agency DIO is responsible for identifying relevant digital assets and has developed a three-year strategic plan to make those assets accessible. The Digital Inclusion Officer will work to ensure that NYCEM digital communications are inclusive, accessible and user-friendly to all New Yorkers, especially individuals with communication-related disabilities who may have limited access to websites and other digitized documents.

NYCEM Language Access & Notify NYC

Notify NYC, the city's emergency alert system, currently provides notifications in all 13 WEA Languages, in addition to American Sign Language.

In 2024, NYCEM launched its first citywide multilingual mailer campaign, encouraging residents to sign up for Notify NYC alerts in their preferred language. This campaign aims to broaden inclusivity as it fosters a culture of preparedness among diverse New York City residents, irrespective of language or background, to increase access to essential information, so residents can make decisions and respond effectively during emergencies.

Community Engagement

NYCEM's Community Engagement Unit initiatives include a program called Strengthening Communities, which engages emergency preparedness organizations operating at the community level. Participating groups have been trained and provided various forms of assistance. They made notable progress in addressing a comprehensive range of community needs, in tandem with Community Engagement staff.

Through Strengthening Communities and other initiatives, NYCEM has increased its focus on promoting grant opportunities to expand community-based organizations' access to funding opportunities. From its inception, NYCEM has recruited organizations that directly serve individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into Strengthening Communities, ensuring that disability inclusion, and inclusion of others with access and functional needs, reflecting NYCEM's continuing commitment to inclusive emergency preparedness and deeper collaboration with organizations that support individuals with disabilities, accessibility and functional needs.

Ready NY Program

NYCEM's Ready NY Program is designed to help all New Yorkers, including individuals with disabilities, accessibility and functional needs, by providing guidance on effective emergency planning and preparedness, including specific guidance on gathering supplies and creating Go Bags to have ready in the event of an emergency.

NYCEM as the coordinating agency for citywide emergency response continues to prioritize inclusive preparedness by incorporating Disability, Accessibility and Functional Needs (DAFN) considerations into its exercises.

NYCEM leads regular functional and tabletop exercises across Emergency Support Functions to test key components of the Coastal Storm Plan, including evacuation procedures, sheltering operations, and communication strategies. Recent activities included a no-notice drill simulating a building collapse, which tested rapid mobilization and interagency coordination while incorporating DAFN considerations such as accessible emergency alerts, evacuation support, and onsite services. A dedicated exercise for Language Access Coordinators, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, focused on equitable communication during emergencies, ensuring DAFN language access through accessible formats. The Recovery Working Group held an interagency exercise centered on post-disaster recovery, addressing long-term housing, social services, and accessible rebuilding with DAFN needs integrated into planning efforts. In addition, the City Hall Functional Exercise Series facilitated three interagency exercises aimed at enhancing citywide learning and testing high-level decision-making, with a strong emphasis on inclusive governance and continuity of operations that support DAFN communities.

Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency

NYCEM continues to advance its commitment to embedding equitable considerations into its short, medium- and long-term recovery operations and has enhanced its suite of analytical recovery tools to support city agencies and the public when identifying risks and understanding the greater challenges impacting underserved communities.

NYCEM continues to advance inclusive planning and equitable delivery of services to communities that are at high risk from climate related hazards and other emergencies situations.

Recent updates include the following:

- **Targeted Climate Outreach:** NYCEM conducted targeted outreach to climate-vulnerable communities to help support residents during extreme heat events, aligning with the City's broader climate resistance goals.

- **Hazard Mitigation & Risk Communications:** NYCEM leads the design of the NYC Risk Landscape, Reduce Your Risk guide, and the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. Collectively, these efforts aim to identify hazards and develop strategies for long term mitigation. All materials are developed with built-in accessibility, which is guided by an inclusive design process beginning at the Request for Proposal stage, and continuing with developments of Scope of Work, and implementation stages of mitigation efforts.
- **DAFN Integration:** The Hazard Mitigation Plan formally includes Disability, Accessibility and Functional Needs (DAFN) into its practice to ensure a full understanding of New York City social and physical aspects to identify key risk factors and support responsive mitigation planning.
- **Inclusive Engagement Methods:** NYCEM regularly engages with agency representatives and diverse stakeholders, including those with disabilities, for input into its plan development and execution, via a variety of means, including Teams, email and in-person meetings, educational sessions and site-visits. NYCEM is committed to continuously testing and adopting tools that improve coordination and accessibility.

Disaster Law Symposium

In November 2025, NYCEM hosted a Disaster Law Symposium, which convened legal and policy professionals to examine legal frameworks, ethical questions, and interagency coordination challenges that arise during crises. The symposium featured opening remarks by MOPD Commissioner Curry and a session entitled Invisible Disabilities and Disaster Law that featured Howard Rosenblum, Founder and CEO of Deaf Equality Now and New York State Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon as panelists.

Campaign Finance Board

The New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB) continues to make advancements in the accessibility of services and information across all aspects of city elections. As the agency works toward a more inclusive experience, the CFB receives valuable guidance from the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, as well as from members of the public who attend agency events and use agency services.

From 2022 through 2025, the CFB has expanded accessibility efforts beyond public hearings. Requests for American Sign Language Interpretation and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services have increased significantly, so the agency's Language Access and Accessibility teams work to provide these services to as many events as possible. Given the importance of offering voter materials in accessible formats, the CFB has contracted a print vendor to produce and print its voter guides and materials in large print and braille formats.

In 2023, the CFB launched a fully accessible voter-facing website, allowing voters to access essential voter information and accessible ballot instructions. Another key development in accessible information sharing is the agency's plan to include captions and audio descriptions on all videos related to the Matching Funds Program starting in 2026.

The CFB is expanding the accessibility of the agency's Language Access offerings. The Language Access team provides all public-facing materials in 13 languages, as well as in large print and braille, so all New Yorkers can have access to print or digital materials in their preferred language. The team follows the Language Access Implementation Plan (LAIP), developed in consultation with the agency's Strategy, Policy and Innovation division; the LAIP outlines a clear structure, vision, and goals for current and future language access services. The LAIP is posted publicly on [CFB's Accessibility and Language Access page](#).

The CFB maintains that representation, lived experience, and proper expertise are of critical importance. In 2022, the agency hired a Disability Outreach coordinator to communicate directly with the disability community, establish trust, and deliver accessible voter education. In 2024, the agency hired an Accessibility Specialist to lead and carry out a 5-Year Accessibility Plan, provide expertise for implementing accessibility practices, and equip employees with the tools and knowledge needed to learn about, innovate, and maintain accessibility. Through these staff additions, the agency has seen marked growth in both representation and feedback from the disability community.

Ongoing Work and Future Goals

While the CFB has made great strides over the last four years, there is still important work to do. The agency's Candidate and Committee Services team has initiated the process of making all candidate campaign materials more accessible. This entails an audit of the language and accessibility of all documentation required for campaigns, as well as the need for information committees to be compliant with accessibility standards and reach a wider audience. The CFB's main website requires accessibility improvements, which will be addressed via the commission of a digital accessibility audit to be completed by next year.

Finally, the creation and implementation of the CFB's 5-Year Accessibility Plan will guide the agency's future efforts. This process was developed through a cross-collaborative process commissioned by MOPD and allowed the identification of areas needed to improve accessibility at the CFB and within the NYC Votes Program. The plan is divided into five sections, defined by the access need: Digital, Physical, Programmatic, Effective Communication, and Workplace Inclusion. The plan was opened for public review and received important feedback and suggestions which will help the agency strengthen the plan and align it with best practices. To read the 5-Year Accessibility Plan and annual updates on implementation goals, please visit [CFB's Accessibility and Language Access page](#).

Department of Youth and Community Development

Education for Human Services Providers

The New York Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty. DYCD contracts with CBOs to provide a wide range of programs, including afterschool, workforce, and community development programs. DYCD recognizes the important contribution that these organizations make to the wellbeing of NYC's communities. DYCD provides capacity building to these organizations to foster continuous improvement.

In 2024, DYCD expanded capacity building offerings to enhance approaches to advancing equity. This included providing training on accessibility. DYCD provided training to CBOs on how to make programs accessible; hands-on workshops to enhance plans and strategies to be inclusive of a wide variety of learners. Virtual training was also developed on accessibility and accommodations to design spaces that are inclusive of participants with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities.

Youth Services Division

All DYCD-funded programs serve youth with disabilities. Some of DYCD's programs are funded specifically to serve students with disabilities, and DYCD also funds organizations which specialize in serving youth with disabilities. DYCD created a Disability Resource Guide to help CBO staff, youth and families access support in a range of areas, from education and housing, mental health and professional development. The COMPASS after-school program in NYC has a specific focus on including youth with disabilities. While the general COMPASS program offers after-school care and enrichment activities for all students, there's a growing movement to ensure it is universally accessible and inclusive of all students, including those with disabilities.

For example:

- **Summer Rising:** The major initiative is a collaboration between NYCPS and DYCD to provide free, full-day summer programming for students in grades K-8. It combines academic instructions led by NYCPS staff with enrichment activities facilitated by DYCD-funded community-based organizations (CBOs). It also includes training which facilitates escalation processes; regular meetings to address challenges and opportunities.
- **COMPASS After School:** COMPASS after school does the Section 504 process, which involves identifying students with disabilities who may need accommodation to succeed in school, conducting evaluations to determine eligibility, and developing a 504 plan with appropriate supports.

You can read about other work of DYCD in the Employment and Financial Empowerment section of this report.

Public Benefits

Reasonable Accommodations

Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Human Resources Administration (HRA) applicants and clients with disabilities can request Reasonable Accommodations (RAs) to help them access and maintain their benefits and services. A Reasonable Accommodation is a change or exception to a rule, policy, or practice that removes disability-related barriers to services. These accommodations help ensure access to essential supports, such as Cash Assistance, SNAP, housing placements, and other programs administered by HRA and DHS.

Clients can request a Reasonable Accommodation through any of the following methods:

- By completing and submitting the HRA-102c Request for a Reasonable Accommodation found here: [Disability Access - HRA](#)
- By informing an HRA staff person at their Center
- By contacting the Office of Constituent Services via email or by phone.
 - Email: constituentaffairs@dss.nyc.gov
 - Phone: Call the DSS OneNumber at 718-557-1399. After selecting a language, press “2” to reach then main menu and then press “5” to ask for help with a Reasonable Accommodation request.

Once a request is submitted, it is reviewed based on the type of accommodation being requested. For clients who indicate they are clinically unable to travel, the next step is an evaluation for Home Visit Needed (HVN) status — a specific type of accommodation that enables eligible clients to receive services without visiting an HRA location in person.

HRA’s centralized Home Visit Needed (HVN) Center provides home visits and processes applications and re-certifications for those that are unable to come into a Center due to an illness or disability. Staff provides outreach to eligible HRA applicants and clients, and tracks and monitors cases to ensure that vulnerable populations can access and maintain their benefits. Applicants and clients are able to schedule Home Visit appointments directly through HRA’s Office of Constituent Services by calling 718-557-1399.

Additionally, HRA's Homebound Assessment and Referral Unit (HARU) provides individualized services that are centered on the needs of applicants and participants as needed.

Plain Language

HRA continues to review all of its public-facing notices for Plain Language in order to improve readability for everyone, including people with cognitive and learning disabilities. Additionally, all new notices are developed with a Plain Language lens aimed at ensuring readability and accessibility across all of HRA's public facing notices.

Access HRA

HRA continues to leverage technology to increase access and make it easier for people with disabilities to apply and maintain their public benefits. Through Access HRA, a free, online-accessible portal with a companion mobile app, many people with disabilities have been able to apply for benefits and manage their cases without having to call HRA or come to a Center in person.

With Access HRA, through secure user accounts, clients can apply for a range of benefits including Cash Assistance (with Emergency Assistance), SNAP, Medicaid for older adults and people living with a disability, including those who are blind, HEAP, and Fair Fares NYC. They can also recertify or renew benefits for Cash Assistance, SNAP, Medicaid for individuals who are aging, living with a disability, or blind, as well as Fair Fares and CityFHEPS. Clients have the ability to submit case changes or request case closures for Cash Assistance and SNAP, request child care as part of their Cash Assistance case, read notices online or opt in to paperless delivery, and view payment information, case status, appointments, and other case details. Additionally, they can request budget letters for Cash Assistance or SNAP, request Medicaid coverage letters for older adults and people with disabilities (including blindness), and—via the mobile app—submit child support referrals or enrollments and make child support payments.

They can also instantly download a statement of benefits letter to show proof of receiving HRA benefits, receive SMS notifications of upcoming appointments, and upload documents electronically for all case types — including SNAP, Cash Assistance, Fair Fares NYC, Medicaid, HEAP, and Child Support — by taking a photo or selecting an image from their device’s gallery using the Access HRA mobile app. With a client’s consent, HRA’s Access HRA Provider Portal allows partnering organizations to view real-time case information. Currently, over 300 community-based organizations are using the site to help clients with their cases.

For notices available on Access HRA, clients can use the site’s accessible features to read or listen to their notices. HRA is continuing its robocall program to let people who are blind or have low vision know that their Medicaid renewal or surplus payment is due, inform them that HRA can assist them by reading their recertification over the phone, arrange an appointment at a Medicaid center, or arrange home visits.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Generally, HRA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) On-Demand is a way for clients to complete a SNAP eligibility interview during their recertification or application period. This allows clients to call HRA during business hours for their interview at a time most convenient for them, which gives clients more flexibility while applying or recertifying for SNAP. Additionally, cases where adults in the household are aged 60 and over or have a disability and have no earned income are encouraged to use the SNAP simplified form (which consists of only two pages) when applying or recertifying for benefits. For applicants using this form an interview will still be required, however, for recertifying clients no interview is required unless the participant wishes to have an interview. Lastly, for older adults and people with disabilities who have no earned income and no changes to their household size, they can also recertify by answering questions on a simple, automatic system over the phone, which is faster and easier than any other method of recertification.

SNAP applicants and recipients also benefit from regulations that allow community organizations to serve as an authorized representative on behalf of a client. Clients may authorize a representative to submit applications and communicate with HRA on their behalf.

Through the reasonable accommodation process, clients who have difficulty completing and submitting applications, can be referred to Center 90 staff who will take applications and recertification submissions over the phone.

SNAP recipients can avoid the grocery store and shop from home by ordering groceries online using their EBT card. Participating retailers include Amazon, ShopRite, and Walmart. This program, which was piloted in 2019 but is now a permanent program, helps address the needs of people who are elderly or have disabilities, especially those who are homebound or lack access to convenient transportation. The program is particularly beneficial for those working long and inconvenient hours, those who act as caregivers, or those who live far from a grocery store with fresh produce.

WeCARE

When applying or recertifying for Cash Assistance, clients may be referred to HRA's **Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation, and Employment (WeCARE)** program. WeCARE offers a continuum of services to support clients with medical and/or mental health conditions that affect their ability to work, helping them achieve their maximum level of self-sufficiency.

Upon referral, clients undergo a **comprehensive clinical assessment** to identify medical, mental health, and social factors that may impact employability. Based on the results, WeCARE vendors determine the client's **functional capacity**, and deliver tailored services.

These include:

- Assistance with applying for **Social Security benefits** if the client's condition may meet disability criteria.
- Participation in **Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)**, including job development, placement support, and retention services through 180 days of employment, if the client is capable of working with accommodations.
- Ongoing **Wellness Plan monitoring** for clients with unstable medical or mental health conditions, with the goal of stabilization and future employability.

WeCARE services are now provided through a **hybrid model** which is a combination of in-person and virtual appointments. While some services, such as a medical assessments and select VRS activities, are conducted on-site, most Wellness and post-application SSI services can be delivered virtually, improving accessibility and reducing the need for travel. Virtual service delivery has also proven to be effective in increasing client engagement and flexibility.

WeCARE continues to refine this approach by:

- Maintaining virtual access for services that do not require physical presence.
- Offering in-person support when clinically necessary or preferred by the client.
- Using internal systems to track participation and document progress toward self-sufficiency goals.

WeCARE continues to evolve by combining the strengths of remote access with essential on-site services to better serve clients with complex needs.

Cash Assistance and the Disability Screening Tool

HRA has developed a Disability Screening Interview Tool to assist HRA workers in identifying individuals with disabilities who may need reasonable accommodations to apply for and maintain their Cash Assistance benefits. An electronic version of this tool is available as part of all Cash Assistance application and recertification interviews as of early 2021.

Beginning April 2023, applicants and recipients of cash assistance and/or emergency assistance were able to call the Cash Assistance On Demand phone line to complete their interviews. There no longer is a need for individuals to physically come to any of the Benefit Access Center locations. They can apply online and conduct their interviews over the phone. Benefit Access Centers across the city remain in operation and are available for individuals to visit and apply/recertify, and all reasonable accommodations will be honored as normal.

Beginning August 2024, applicants and recipients of ongoing cash assistance received employment assessments/employment plans as part of their application or recertification interviews. During these assessments, any individuals who identified as having and mental/emotional/physical (including substance use) barrier or limitation, could be referred to the appropriate part of HRA, to address the identified barrier or limitation.

Homeless Services

Based on the settlement of the Butler Lawsuit in 2017, DSS and DHS leadership have:

- Implemented an extensive reasonable accommodations (RA) process so that clients with disabilities may make RA requests to meaningfully access shelter programs and services;
- Hired a Director of Disability Affairs for Homeless Services;
- Created a Disability Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) Unit;
- Engaged an experienced consulting firm to assess shelter accessibility;
- Opened 22 fully ADA accessible sites since 2021, serving a variety of client populations; and
- Completed plans to construct a new, accessible women's intake facility in Brooklyn which is scheduled to open by the end of the year.

DHS provides comprehensive full-day Introduction to Disabilities training for all client-facing DHS and provider agency staff. All other staff receive a half-day version of the training. These trainings promote positive interactions/outcomes, explore the history of the disability rights movement, discuss related legal requirements, outline reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette/culture, and address attitudes that can be barriers to effectively working with people with disabilities. These trainings are being rolled out to all DHS and provider shelters on an ongoing basis and new DHS staff receive this training as part of their onboarding process.

DHS is also continuing to train shelter staff on accommodating people who are deaf or hard of hearing and have produced a guide to support staff in these efforts. Video Remote Interpretation is available at all DHS-run shelters and intake facilities, as well as the Office of the Ombudsman.

DSS/DHS has extended the use of their sign language interpretation contract to all provider agencies who do not have their own contract and who complete a written agreement. The agency has also implemented an *ASL Options Card: A Tool for Staff*, making it easier for employees to communicate interpretation options and time frames to the people they serve. Please see ASL (above) for information on the soft launch of the DSS Communicard that will support people who are deaf in shelter.

Through a generous grant from the Taft Foundation, AHRC NYC has hired a Director of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Complex Needs Initiatives stationed within the DSS Office of Disability Affairs. This individual is managing a 2-year program supporting adults and children with I/DD in shelter.

Local Law 23 of 2023 created an Advisory Board for Accessibility in Shelters, and DHS is committed to serving on this board and supporting its members to further refine and achieve DHS's accessibility goals.

For more information on disability access at DHS and how to request a reasonable accommodation, visit [DHS' webpage on Disability Access](#).

NYCitizenship

NYCitizenship, which was launched in 2016 as a joint initiative of the New York City Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS), but now operating as NYCitizenship at DSS, provides immigrant New Yorkers who receive DSS benefits and meet the program eligibility criteria with free citizenship application assistance.

As part of NYCitizenship, you can:

- Meet with a free, trusted lawyer in your language of choice.
- Apply for citizenship easily and receive assistance with obtaining medical forms that provide for exemptions from taking the citizenship exam for certain applicants.
- Obtain fee waivers that allow you to file your application with the Federal government for free.

Through NYCitizenship at DSS, the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) has reached out to almost 27,000 immigrant clients with disabilities and select older adults receiving benefits who were identified as potentially eligible to become U.S. citizens. As of June 2025, with the help of the program’s legal partner, NYLAG, the program has scheduled nearly 4,300 appointments, filed over 1,600 applications, and naturalized over 1,000 U.S. citizens. Many of those people who successfully naturalized through NYCitizenship have gone on to receive greater benefits through Supplemental Security Income from the Social Security Administration.

IDNYC

The City’s municipal identification card program IDNYC allows NYC residents aged 10 and up with physical or intellectual/ developmental disabilities— regardless of possession of photo identification or proof of residency— to apply for an ID card if accompanied by a caregiver who has a photo ID and who can demonstrate proof of a relationship to the applicant. Visit the Residency and Caretaker Relationship page of the IDNYC website for more information ([How to Apply - IDNYC](#)). To further expand accessibility, “IDNYC” now includes tactile braille on the front of all new IDNYC cards to help cardholders who are blind or have low vision distinguish and use the card. IDNYC is the largest and most successful municipal ID program in the country with over 1.8 million cardholders and is now the first locally-issued ID in the nation to include braille. The City will continue to work with the blind and low vision community to increase accessibility for the cards.

NYC Office of Administrative Trials & Hearings

The NYC Office of Administrative Trials & Hearings (OATH) is the city’s central independent administrative law tribunal. OATH’s mission is to provide fair and impartial hearings, timely decisions, and access to justice for all. In addition to ensuring that OATH’s services are accessible to all New Yorkers — including persons with disabilities — OATH handles cases where an individual’s disability is the core issue.

For example, OATH's Special Education Hearings Division (SEHD) provides fair and neutral impartial hearings to resolve disputes between parents of students with disabilities and the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). SEHD hears cases filed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 (Section 504), which are federal laws. IDEA requires that students with disabilities get appropriate special education services. Section 504 prohibits discrimination against students or parents with disabilities.

SEHD was established in 2021 by Mayoral Executive Order 91 to address the growing backlog and undue delays in the adjudication of special education due process claims. SEHD began operations in March of 2022, and by January 2024, SEHD became the exclusive tribunal for all new due process complaints filed with the NYCPS by parents challenging the NYCPS's determination relating to special education services.

OATH is achieving the city's goal of reducing the time it takes to adjudicate claims filed by parents. Specifically, the backlog of approximately 11,000 cases waiting for assignment to an impartial hearing officer was eliminated and as of July 2025, the average case length was reduced by over 50%. Since March 2022, SEHD has taken on over 48,000 cases and has closed over 42,500 cases.

Department for the Aging

With an overarching vision of an age-inclusive New York City, the Department for the Aging (NYC Aging) offers a host of supports and services that enable older New Yorkers to age-in-place.

You can read about transportation services provided by NYC Aging in the Transportation section of this report.

NYC Aging values public information and community perspectives, and the agency has acquired many key learnings from our transportation program and current network of service providers. Those learnings will inform and influence how the transportation program should evolve to meet the needs of older adults. Furthermore, in 2025, NYC Aging issued a Community Care concept paper that includes three major programs, including transportation, soliciting the critically important perspectives of current providers, potential contractors, and other experts in the field.

In addition, now in its third year under the NYC Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, agencies continue to collaborate to eliminate age-related barriers and inequities in services while advancing cross-agency solutions to challenges faced by older New Yorkers. As part of this multiagency collaborative, the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and NYC Aging partnered on a focused discussion on the intersectionality of aging and disability. The discussion highlighted the unique experiences of older New Yorkers with disabilities and examined critical steps both agencies are taking to address these issues.

Small Business Services

The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) hosts a page, developed with input from MOPD and CCHR, that provides accessibility resources for small businesses: nyc.gov/bizaccessibility.

In October 2025, SBS, MOPD, and CCHR hosted an accessibility training for Business Improvement Districts focusing on physical access, digital accessibility, and workplace inclusion. In December 2025, MOPD presented on physical and digital accessibility to SBS’s NYC Business Express Service Team (NYC BEST).

You can read about other SBS initiatives in the Employment and Financial Empowerment section of this report.