

AccessibleNYC

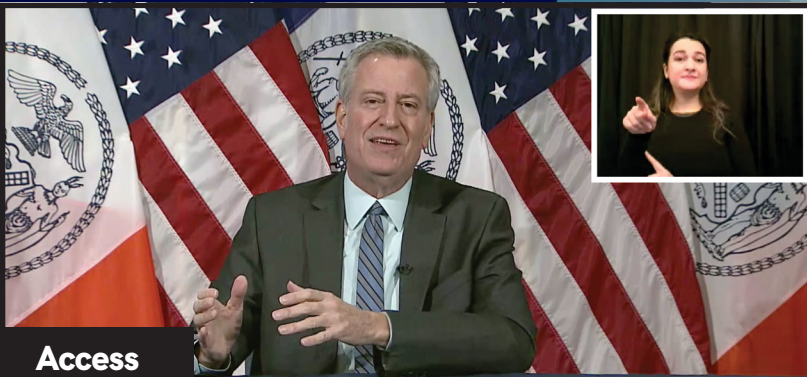
2020 Edition: The City of New York

NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities



Free, Trustworthy Financial Counseling for People with Disabilities

Financial Empowerment

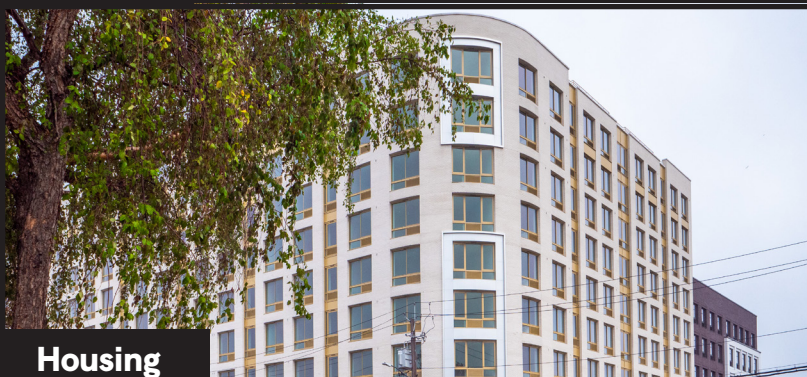


Access



ADA30NYC
Americans with Disabilities Act
1990 - 2020

Education



Housing



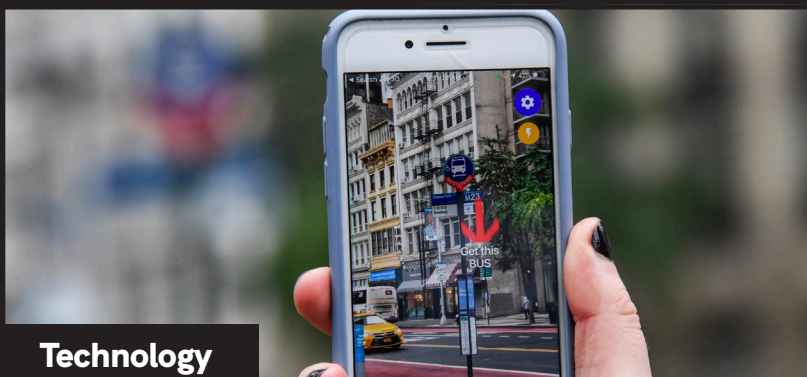
Transportation



Health and Well-being



Employment



Technology



Mayor
Bill de Blasio

J. Phillip Thompson
Deputy Mayor for
Strategic Policy
Initiatives

Victor Calise,
Commissioner
Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities

Layout and Design by Diane Zhou

Cover Photo Credits:

Financial Empowerment: Screenshot from the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities' Virtual EmpoweredNYC presentation.

Access: Photo from one of Mayor Bill de Blasio's Avails during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Education: Photo from "Our History" Virtual gallery in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Original photo provided by the New York Times, photograph by Don Hogan Charles.

Housing: Photo of newly constructed HPD Unit, 911 Erksine Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11239. Credit: Jonathan Patkowski from HPD

Transportation: MOPD Commissioner and MTA Board Member Victor Calise waiting on the Greenpoint Avenue Subway Station platform after its elevators were newly completed on December 10th, 2020. Photo credit: Marc A. Hermann / MTA New York City Transit

Health and Well-being: MOPD Project Open House Coordinator Ramakrishna Kadukuntla (left) stands with Transitional Services for New York (TSINY) CEO Larry Grubler (right) during an MOPD delivery of masks and gloves to TSINY.

Employment: Sean White, a former jobseeker with **NYC: ATWORK**, works at his desk as a Computer Technician for the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

Technology: Photo from a press conference on East 23 St & Broadway announcing the launch of a pilot program that allows blind and low vision bus customers to use the NaviLens app to receive audio navigation to bus stop locations and get information about arrival times and crowding on Mon., October 26, 2020. Photo credit: Marc A. Hermann / MTA New York City Transit

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Letter from Mayor de Blasio



Dear Friends:

As 2020 drew to a close, we looked back on a year that will hopefully be like no other. We continue to mourn the losses of our friends, family, and neighbors, and to adapt to a new way of life that emphasizes health and safety, while also keeping our city moving forward.

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has a simple yet powerful mission—to ensure equal access to everything our city has to offer to New Yorkers and visitors with disabilities. This past year, that meant working hard every day so that no person with a disability was left behind during our pandemic response. We are taking the lessons that we learned and are continuing to adapt to new challenges during this ever-evolving public health crisis.

The 2020 Edition of AccessibleNYC not only discusses how we were able to create an inclusive and accessible pandemic response, but also envisions new possibilities for our current socially distant and increasingly digital realities.

Although the challenges of COVID-19 are still looming in our city, we are moving forward to ensure that we come back stronger than ever thanks to an equitable recovery process that lifts up all communities and voices, including those of individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Letter from Deputy Mayor Thompson



Dear Friends,

This year marks the 30th year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark achievement that paved the way for a more equal and inclusive nation. Three decades later – in the midst of a global pandemic that has taken lives, stolen livelihoods, and challenged us in new ways – our mission to build a fairer, more accessible New York City feels more urgent than ever.

In this edition of AccessibleNYC, you will read about the extraordinary work this Administration and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) have done throughout this difficult year. You will see how we used new technology to make virtual events accessible for all. You will learn how we rapidly delivered tens of thousands of pieces of Personal Protective Equipment to New Yorkers with disabilities – including 25,000 face coverings to public school students with disabilities in District 75, as well as their families, caretakers, and school staff. And you will read about how our team ensured the City of New York's emergency messaging, from live weekly broadcasts to online resources, reached every New Yorker at the right moment.

As our City continues to recover, we cannot and will not stop here. MOPD and this administration will continue to break new ground – collaborating across agencies to build new infrastructure, reimagining our physical spaces, and centering New Yorkers with disabilities in our policy and our work. There is so much more to do. And I urge every New Yorker to help us make our City fair, accessible, and equal for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Phillip Thompson".

Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson

Letter from Commissioner Calise



To all New Yorkers and Visitors:

The year 2020 has certainly been a challenging one for New York City and the world. The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has worked to ensure that the needs and concerns of the disability community have been at the forefront of all City initiatives, including the pandemic response.

COVID-19 has presented new and unprecedented challenges for everyone, and especially for people with disabilities. Social distancing, health and safety regulations, and the digital divide have been an adjustment for all of us.

People with disabilities have always been resilient and quick to adapt to changing circumstances. This has never been truer than during this global health crisis, as the entire community has rallied together to ensure that people get the help and services that they need during this difficult time. MOPD is doing all that we can to address issues and ensure that the City's pandemic response and recovery efforts put accessibility at the forefront, and we thank disability advocates for their continued partnership and leadership.

At the same time, the transition to a virtual environment has expanded opportunities for members of the disability community who faced barriers to previously in-person events. Since we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act this year, the 2020 Edition of our annual AccessibleNYC report focuses on New York City's response to COVID-19, lessons learned, and opportunities for increases in accessibility as part of the ongoing inclusive recovery process. After recovery, our world will be a different place, and it is my sincere hope that people with disabilities will have even greater access in a post-COVID world.

Please continue to remain safe and socially distant during this critical time as we work to stop the spread of the virus, and remember that MOPD is always available as a resource. We hope you enjoy the report.

Ciao,
Victor Calise
Commissioner

Executive Summary & Introduction

Since its creation in 1973, the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has practiced the policies it advocates. The office has employed and been directed by people with disabilities, leading by example and promoting the values of inclusiveness and accessibility.

It is this commitment that provides the foundation for the work and partnerships MOPD creates with other City agencies, businesses and private industries, and community organizations to achieve the goal of making New York City the most accessible city in the world.

This past year has been especially challenging in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the City's overwhelming response to meet the needs of all of its citizens, including New Yorkers with disabilities. MOPD worked with all our City and community partners to address the needs of people with disabilities during this unprecedented time. The agency will continue to work with them throughout the recovery process to set up policies, procedures, and infrastructure to be better prepared to address the next crisis. In fact, many activities embraced by all during the pandemic, such as virtual learning and social activities, opened up the world to people with disabilities, allowing them access to many activities and locations that were not as easily accessed via traditional in-person methods. These virtual activities and venues need to continue even after we begin to reopen the City and the world.

Thus, the 2020 edition of AccessibleNYC focuses on the issues raised by the pandemic, the response by the City and the disability community, and the ongoing recovery process as it relates to the eight sections traditionally addressed in this annual report: (1) Health and Well-being, (2) Technology, (3) Transportation, (4) Employment, (5) Financial Empowerment,

(6) Housing, (7) Access and (8) Education. These sections are closely related and changes in one often have ripple effects in the other areas. As we explore each section, we will refer to programs and services in other sections, so we encourage everyone to read the entire report.

Health and Well-being

Unique health and wellness needs arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and in-home service such as food delivery and telemedicine. The food delivery program set up by New York City Emergency Management included delivery contracts with taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers who have experienced a decline in ridership during the pandemic.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Home Health Care Workers
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Food Availability
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Telehealth
- Parks and Public Health
- NYC Well
- Facilitated Enrollment
- Medicaid During COVID-19

Technology

Technology was a key component to the well-being of the disability community as it provided connectivity, needed

information and services, entertainment, education, and supply chain information.

Key issues discussed:

- Accessible Virtual Communications
- Text-to-911
- Digital Divide

Transportation

During the pandemic, transportation modes saw decreased ridership and increased cleaning protocols. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) took advantage of this decrease in ridership and pushed accessibility construction projects forward. Many people with disabilities traveled less as they were able to work remotely, which helped alleviate transportation barriers they faced in their pre-COVID-19 daily routines. In addition, this section analyzes the strategic ways to invest in infrastructure to make the City more accessible to people with disabilities.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Taxis
- For-Hire Vehicles
- TLC Driver Education and Passenger Engagement
- Buses
- Access-A-Ride
- Fair Fares Expanded to Access-A-Ride Customers
- Subway Accessibility
- Commuter Railroad
- iRideNYC

- Bike Share
- E-scooter Pilot
- Pedestrian Ramps
- Vision Zero
- Connected Vehicle Technology Pilot
- Staten Island Ferry
- NYC Ferry
- Central Business District Tolling
- Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (PPPD)
- Municipal Off-Street Parking Garages and Facilities

Employment

People's employment statuses were strongly impacted by COVID-19 as many lost their jobs or were furloughed for extended periods of time. One positive result of the pandemic was the transition to remote working in many sectors, and the ability of people with disabilities to show that workers in many jobs can be just as productive working remotely. In the past requests to work remotely as a reasonable accommodation for one's disability were often denied or met with skepticism. We will examine the impact of the pandemic on employment and the potential for new opportunities to improve the experience for people with disabilities during the recovery process.

Key topic areas discussed:

- **NYC: ATWORK**
- Remote Work Policies
- Digital Divide in the 21st Century
- Remote Trainings/Events
- 55-a Program

- Internships to Career Pathways
- WeCARE
- The Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII)

Financial Empowerment

Ensuring that people with disabilities understand financial opportunities and tools that are available to them has always been a critical issue, one that was amplified because of the pandemic. Financial empowerment will be at the forefront of the recovery process.

- EmpoweredNYC
- Empowered Cities
- Bank On
- NY ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Accounts

Housing

Housing for people with disabilities includes issues of affordability and access to accessible housing units. While the pandemic resulted in a moratorium on evictions, it did not address overall affordability or access to units. The pandemic did impact many programs and services provided by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Key topic areas discussed:

- DSS Housing Resources
- Housing Connect 2.0
- Where We Live NYC Plan

- Services for People Experiencing Homelessness
- DHS Initiatives During COVID-19
- Project Open House

Access

This section provides a review of the programs, services, policies, and initiatives that increase the disability community's access to their neighborhoods and the five boroughs. Many programs were either created or modified due to the pandemic, including Open Restaurants, Virtual Deaf Town Halls, and other virtual programs.

Key issues discussed:

- ASL Direct
- Deaf Town Halls
- Disability Service Facilitators
- City Commission on Human Rights
- Open Restaurants
- Access HRA
- HRA Services During COVID-19
- Access to IDNYC
- Virtual Access to Arts and Culture

Education

This section provides a review of the process by which collaborative partnerships with other levels of government, academic institutions, and the private sector support people with disabilities, as well as efforts to educate others to better communicate and interact with the disability community.

Key issues discussed:

- Community Engagement
- DOE Remote Learning
- Voting and Civic Engagement
- Discussion on Race and Disabilities
- Participation in Racial Inclusion and Equity Taskforce
- ADA 30th Anniversary Virtual Celebration

Health and Well-being



Ramakrishna Kadukuntla
from MOPD delivering
facemasks and gloves

Unique needs arose during the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disabilities, home health care workers, and service providers. These issues concerned the need for PPE, food delivery, home health care, telemedicine, and mental health well-being.

Home Health Care Workers

Home health care workers consist of home health aides, personal care attendants, and other caregivers. These workers have the responsibility for hands-on assistance with bathing, toileting, dressing, and housekeeping and earn a median wage in the U.S. of \$12 per hourⁱ.

Researchers at Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell Tech and Cornell University published a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Internal Medicine highlighting the inequities faced by an already vulnerable and marginalized workforce.ⁱⁱ The investigators conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with 33 home health care workers in New York City at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in March and April 2020.

The information learned from the participants' answers included that they felt invisible to society even though they were working on the front lines; they felt a heightened risk of exposure and transmission of the virus; and they felt that

their agencies did not provide them adequate information or supplies so they had to rely on alternative sources.

MOPD is committed to identifying and addressing the needs of home health care workers. Throughout the pandemic, individuals with disabilities who rely on home health aides struggled because for a variety of reasons, some workers may not have attended work. In response, MOPD quickly distributed PPE to home health care agencies to reduce the many issues that workers were facing.

MOPD also participated in a City-led interagency and CBO group to discuss the needs for long-term care. In addition, MOPD advocated on behalf of home health care workers by ensuring that they were recognized as essential workers in all City guidance.

Per the Governor's Executive Order 202.6

“Essential Businesses” include:

Home Health Care Workers and Aides

This Includes Personal Care Attendants



Graphic posted on MOPD social media channels in March 2020

In the future, MOPD will meet with people with disabilities who rely on home health care workers, home health agency providers, and New York City government representatives.

MOPD is also working with the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra Northwell, Mt. Sinai, Kessler, and other partners to disseminate a survey on home health care services to individuals with disabilities and provider organizations. The data collected from this survey will be used to inform improvements and possible training programs in the home health care field.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consists of face coverings, gloves, face shields, and disposable gowns. A face covering is a well-secured paper or cloth that covers your nose and mouth. It can be a mask, a scarf, or a bandanna.

At the outset of the pandemic, PPE was in short supply and so healthcare and hospital PPE needs were prioritized. When the supply chain opened up, New York City distributed face coverings to members of the public and community based organizations throughout the city in many places including parks, NYCHA buildings, some Mitchell-Lama buildings, and grocery stores.



October 9th, 2020 - Uniqlo Donates 25,000 AIRISM Facemasks to D75. From Left to Right: UNIQLO COO Yoshihide Shindo, UNIQLO USA CEO Daisuke Tsukagoshi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) Victor Calise, D75 Superintendent Ketler Louissaint, District 75 President Citywide Education Council Shamel Lawrence

For those individuals who could not access these locations, MOPD quickly worked to obtain a supply to distribute to our community partners. We obtained and distributed more than 175,000 masks and 170,000 gloves to 64 organizations, including home health care agencies, and to over 6,500 individuals. We also facilitated a [donation from Uniqlo of 25,000 masks for Department of Education's \(DOE\) District 75](#).



Commissioner Calise models a clear face mask from the latest delivery

As the distribution of face masks spread, we learned that the Deaf and hard of hearing community were having difficulty communicating with individuals wearing masks and that clear face masks were a better option. MOPD worked with the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to purchase 100,000 clear masks. We also distributed 5,000 clear masks to the Deaf community. DOE distributed 95,000 clear masks to Deaf and hard of hearing students with IEP, students requiring speech or psychological therapy as a related service, and to related service providers for D75 personnel.

In addition, MOPD and the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) worked to ensure that businesses understood that some individuals have disabilities that make them unable to medically tolerate a face covering. In those instances, businesses are required to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals. CCHR developed guidance to ensure that the disability community was not discriminated against. [Read NYC Commission on Human Rights COVID-19 Guidance Webpage.](#)

When the City became aware that some individuals were using fraudulent cards that said they were exempt from wearing face coverings, a joint statement was issued by MOPD, NYC Health Department, and CCHR stating that face mask exemption cards are fraudulent and businesses cannot require them or rely on them, and New Yorkers cannot use them. Instead, businesses should provide reasonable accommodations to all individuals with disabilities, including those that cannot medically tolerate face coverings.

[Joint statement from MOPD, NYC Health Department and CCHR on fraudulent face mask exemption cards](#)

Food Availability



NYC Department of Education free meals program. Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office

During the COVID-19 public health crisis, New York City is taking steps to make sure every New Yorker has access to the food they need.

The New York City Department of Education is making free meals available daily for any New Yorker. Any New Yorker can go and get meals, no sign-up or identification required,

at more than 400 DOE sites across the City. This program has steadily distributed over 2 million meals per week.

Meals can be picked up Monday through Friday. For locations, hours for children and families and for adults, accessibility, and food options available (vegetarian and halal at all sites, kosher at select sites), please visit [NYC.gov/GetFood](https://www.nyc.gov/getfood).

For those who cannot access the grab-and-go locations or access food themselves, the City of New York provided emergency food deliveries during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The GetFoodNYC Food Delivery Assistance service is intended for individuals and families who meet all the following criteria:

- No members of the household can go out and get food because they are at increased medical risk or homebound
- No neighbors or family members can go out and get food for you
- You do not receive meal assistance from other providers (incl. Meals on Wheels or God's Love We Deliver); and
- You are unable to afford meal delivery or grocery delivery

Households that qualify may order two food deliveries per week at a time for up to two weeks. Deliveries may include pantry items, shelf stable meals, or fresh meals. New Yorkers can request Kosher, Halal, or Vegetarian food. Specific delivery items vary based on availability.

Visit www.nyc.gov/getfood or call 311 and say "Get Food" to sign up.

Thousands of taxi drivers, short of work due to the pandemic, were paid to deliver free emergency meals. At the height of the pandemic, these drivers were delivering over one million meals per day. As of mid-September, 85 million free meals have been delivered.

For individuals who could get out to shop for groceries, MOPD worked with many stores, including Aldi, Balducci's, Costco, Gristedes, and Trader Joe's, to ensure that people with disabilities were provided dedicated hours to shop without large crowds.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

During the pandemic, HRA secured various time-limited waivers that provided easements for clients as well as for staff. One such waiver permitted the processing of SNAP applications and recertifications without an interview if identity and all eligibility criteria were verified and no conflicting information necessitated clarification. In the instances where information required clarification, HRA telephoned clients to conduct an interview. Another waiver suspended the requirement for clients to submit the 6-month periodic mailer and another suspended SNAP-related work requirements. Waivers also permitted the extension of SNAP recertifications. Additionally, federal funding was secured to issue the maximum benefit allotment for the household size, if the household was not already receiving the maximum benefit amount.

Generally, HRA's 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 for SNAP. However, as mentioned above, if identity and all other eligibility criteria is verified, no interview is currently needed pursuant to COVID-19-related waivers and whenever

information must be clarified, HRA will phone the client-- the client need not call using On Demand. HRA also obtained a signature waiver during COVID-19 enabling clients with disabilities or other hardships, that made applying online difficult, to apply for SNAP over the phone with HRA staff and mail, fax or upload documentation.

SNAP recipients can now 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 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.

[More Information on Shopping Online with SNAP Benefits](#)

During the pandemic, 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. In addition, HRA has partnered with Benefits Data Trust (BDT) to allow certain clients to complete their full SNAP applications over the phone with a Benefits Outreach Specialist. BDT has the capability to record a "vocal signature," which streamlines applications for those clients with disabilities for whom the other options pose a challenge.

Telehealth

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) defines telehealth as a two-way, real-time interactive communication between a patient and a physician or practitioner at a distant site through telecommunications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio and video equipment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued guidance to empower health care providers to serve patients through telehealth during the national public health emergency. Thus, HIPAA-covered health care providers may, in good faith, provide telehealth services to patients using remote communication technologies, such as commonly used apps – including FaceTime, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, Zoom, or Skype – for telehealth services, even if the application does not fully comply with HIPAA rules.

People should not have to choose between medical care and social distancing. Obtaining health care through telehealth protects patients, medical professionals, and others a person may encounter on the way to the medical appointment. As a result, telehealth has become a key component to improve health care services delivery and should continue as a viable alternative after the recovery to provide quicker and more efficient interactions among providers and between providers and patients.

With the increased use of telehealth, we will continue to work with our City agencies to ensure that the platforms it is delivered on are accessible to people with disabilities. We will also work to address the digital divide for those who do not have access to the technology needed to access telemedicine,

the connectivity to engage in a virtual interaction with a medical provider, or the knowledge and training to be able to set up the service. Currently, our **NYC: ATWORK** program is securing funding to secure devices, connectivity, and training to low-income job seekers (“Digital Divide in the 21st Century” on page 75), which will also allow these individuals to be connected to telehealth opportunities.

Parks and Public Health

During the pandemic, people need to keep active while practicing social distancing. NYC Parks provided a resource for outdoor activities that allow people to maintain social distance as well as creating virtual work out sessions people with disabilities can do at home with items they have on hand. [List of Virtual Activities on NYC Parks Website](#) We will work with the Parks Department to continue these virtual activities in the future.



Zumba at the Williamsbridge Oval. Photo courtesy of the Montefiore Adaptive Sports program

MOPD also works closely with NYC Parks to ensure that all their construction projects surpass minimum accessibility requirements.

NYC Well

NYC Well is a free, confidential mental health support service. Individuals can speak to a counselor via phone (888-692-9355), text “well” to 65173, or [chat online with NYC Well](#) anytime. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NYC Well created a list of apps, many with COVID-19-specific content, that are FREE to use during the pandemic. [COVID-19 Digital Mental Health Resources on NYC Well Website](#).

In addition, MOPD created a mental health resource page that provides information about agencies that work with people with disabilities and have resources to assist them in taking care of their mental health.

[Mental Health Resources for People with Disabilities on MOPD Website](#)

Facilitated Enrollment

The Facilitated Enrollment for the Aged, Blind and Disabled Program is a New York State Department of Health-led initiative that connects seniors and people with disabilities to free and low-cost health insurance. Trained staff provide free, in-person assistance to individuals who are age 65 or older, those who are blind, and those who have other disabilities in order to get them enrolled in Medicaid and financial assistance programs for Medicare. Assistance is available at selected senior centers and health centers across New York City in multiple languages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitated enrollers have been able to assist individuals remotely. To find participating partners call 311 or visit nyc.gov/abdprogram.

Medicaid During COVID-19

In New York City, Medicaid (MA) cases administered by HRA, that are due to renew in the months of March through January 2021 will be extended for 12 months. Surplus MA cases were/ will be extended 6 months at a time. No Medicaid case will be closed for failure to renew or failure to provide documentation during this period.

The renewal extension applies to all renewal cases including the Office of Mail Renewal, Managed Long Term Care (MLTC), Nursing Home Eligibility, Medicare Savings Program, MBI-WPD (entitled to six months extended grace period if loss of employment), Stenson/ Recipients who lose their SSI eligibility, and Rosenberg/Recipients who lose their eligibility for Cash Assistance.

Former SSI recipients and any discontinued Temporary Assistance/Medicaid cases that required a separate Medicaid eligibility determination had Medicaid coverage extended. No renewals or redeterminations were required during this time period.

During the COVID-19 emergency, New York City residents who are age 65 or over; living with blindness or other disabilities; in receipt of Medicare and are not a parent or caretaker relative of minor children; or are young adults under age 26 who were formerly in foster care are able to submit a Medicaid application via fax to 917-639-0732. All other applicants not in the categories listed above may submit an application via the NY State of Health at nystateofhealth.ny.gov or by calling 855-355-5777.

Technology

Technology was a key component to the well-being of our community as it provided connectivity, needed information and services, entertainment, education, and access to the supply chain. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic helped bring the advantage of technology to many and assisted MOPD in advancing the accessibility for people with disabilities.

Accessible Virtual Communications



NYC Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities

Hiring Accessibility Professionals

- American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL) for people who are Deaf
- Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART) for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- Audio Describers for people who are blind

@NYCDisabilities

Walei Sabry

MOPD Digital Accessibility Coordinator, Walei Sabry, presenting on how to hold accessible virtual meetings.

In April 2020, MOPD's digital team created guidance to ensure accessible virtual meetings. Read MOPD's [Accessible Virtual Meetings Guide Online](#). Topics covered include, choosing an accessible virtual conferencing platform, creating accessible digital materials, providing accommodations, and tips on running an effective meeting. This guide was distributed to City agencies and community partners, including cultural institutions.

As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must ensure that all messaging (not just emergency information) is accessible to people with disabilities. Thus, we are training multiple agencies and staff members including the Disability Service Facilitators on providing accessible meetings and materials.

Many websites contain a wealth of information about resources and services that are available to constituents. These websites are accessed by millions of people, including individuals with disabilities, every day. If these websites are not digitally accessible, a large portion of the constituency cannot receive this information. Before publishing any content online, be sure that it adheres to the guidelines laid out in [MOPD's Website Accessibility Checklist](#).

Whether it be guidelines or resources, both print and digital documents need to be accessible for people with disabilities. These standards have been laid out and explained in [MOPD's Accessible Documents Guide](#).

Social Media is an informal way to inform and develop a relationship with our constituency. Although many platforms have accessibility features built into their operation, there are still steps that need to be taken by the user for full accessibility. These steps and more are highlighted within the [MOPD's Accessible Social Media Guide](#).

All videos need to be cognizant of the needs of blind and low vision constituents as well as Deaf and hard of hearing constituents. Standards for all forms of video have been laid out in detail in the [MOPD's Audio Description and Captioning Guide](#).

As a result of COVID-19, we must still be able to virtually congregate while ensuring meetings are inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities. MOPD laid out these steps from a

practical standpoint in the [Accessible Virtual Meetings Guide](#).

To go along with the guide, MOPD provided trainings on Accessible Virtual Meetings to the following cultural institutions:

- The Museum Access Culture Consortium (over 40 attendees representing various cultural institutions around NYC)
- Culture at 30 (Over 40 attendees representing various cultural institutions around NYC)
- Public event during ADA 30 (40 attendees)

Text-to-911



Text-to-911 successfully launched in June 2020, the culmination of a collaborative effort between the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), NYPD, and FDNY. In the months leading up to launch, MOPD and DoITT met with stakeholders on a bi-weekly basis to discuss technology updates, progress, training materials, and marketing

strategies. Text-to-911 is a reliable and safe way to reach emergency services in New York City. Calling 911 should always be used unless calling is not an option. If you are Deaf, hard of hearing, have a disability that makes speech difficult, or you are in a situation where you cannot safely call, then text 911. For more information, please visit: nyc.gov/text911.

For the first six months of the availability of Text-to-911, over 11,000 text sessions were initiated with an average duration of almost nine minutes.

Total Aggregate Text Metrics From 6/2 to 12/1

Total Text Sessions	11,247
Total Messages Exchanged	249,114
Avg messages per session	22
Avg duration of text sessions (min)	8.9 minutes

Digital Divide

We have always been aware that some individuals with disabilities do not have access to computers or internet connectivity. This became more apparent during the pandemic as work and social events migrated from in-person to virtual and the lack of connectivity was increasing as places, such as Independent Living Centers, libraries, and provider agencies, were closing their doors and delivering services and programs remotely. Thus, many people with disabilities were unable to answer emails, respond to job postings, or participate in virtual social and entertainment activities.

NYC responded to this digital divide in March when the Department of Education (DOE) began issuing iPads with data plans to students who would otherwise be unable to connect with schools through remote learning. In April, [Mayor de Blasio announced that 10,000 seniors living in NYCHA developments would receive internet-connected tablets through a partnership with T-Mobile](#). To ensure the success of the program, NYC partnered with Older Adult Technology Services (OATS) as the

official nonprofit partner to train seniors to use the devices and to provide a hotline, staffed by OATS certified multi-lingual trainers, for individualized personal assistance and tutoring with any issue or question they may have related to the use of the device, how to locate specific online resources, or how to perform a particular task, such as ordering food online.

As this program rolled out, MOPD worked to secure resources to ensure job seekers with disabilities also had access to computers, training, and internet connectivity. The result is a pilot under the **NYC: ATWORK** program, which is discussed in more detail on page 76 of this report.

Transportation

When Governor Andrew Cuomo's "New York State on PAUSE" Executive Order went into effect on March 22, 2020 closing all non-essential businesses statewide, transportation operations and utilization changed. For example, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) had to change how it handles its operations, particularly those that involve interacting with the public. However, DOT found innovative ways to communicate and respond to requests from the public. For example, its Mobility Management team shifted in-person outreach efforts to digital platforms and over-the-phone conversations. The team also found ways to partner with community organizations like [DOROT's University Without Walls](#) to share information about DOT's programs and services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, riders used the various modes of transportation differently. Going forward policies and procedures will change, and strategic investments in our infrastructure will be developed in order to make the City more accessible to people with disabilities.



MTA Bus Company President and Senior Vice President of NYCT Department of Buses Craig Cipriano and Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Victor Calise.
(Marc A. Hermann / MTA New York City Transit)

In February, with critical support from disability advocates, [Mayor de Blasio appointed MOPD Commissioner Calise to serve on the MTA Board. Commissioner Calise's nomination was sent to the New York State Senate by Governor Cuomo in June where it was unanimously approved along with NYC Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez.](#) As the only current MTA Board Member with a self-disclosed disability, Commissioner Calise will advocate for more accessible subway, bus, commuter rail, and paratransit systems.

Taxis

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) continues to work to increase the number of accessible vehicles in the Yellow and Green Taxi sectors. For much of 2020, however, the entire industry was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting public health measures. Learn more about these challenges by reading [TLC's COVID-19 Impact on the NYC For-Hire Industry](#). Despite these challenges, TLC has worked on several initiatives to advance our goal of providing greater accessibility in the taxi and for-hire vehicle industries.

All Yellow and Green Taxis in New York City are required to include Braille and raised lettering to identify the specific taxi and relevant information for making a complaint. In addition, all taxis are equipped with an Accessibility Mode on the passenger information screen to assist passengers who are blind or have low vision as well as individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. There are 3,007 taxis equipped with induction loop systems that transmit sound directly to cochlear implants or hearing aids with a T-coil to ease communication between drivers and passengers who have hearing loss.



As of November 2020, there are 3,565 wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Yellow Medallion Taxi fleet and 157 wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Green Taxi fleet. TLC continues offering incentive payments to owners and drivers of wheelchair accessible Yellow and Green taxis. Through the first part of 2020, owners and drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles have received over \$15 million in incentive payments.

TLC's Accessible Dispatch program continued operating during the pandemic. The program allows passengers to request a wheelchair accessible Yellow or Green taxi from anywhere in New York City for the price of a standard metered fare. Customers have several options to book a ride, including calling the dispatch center directly at 646-599-9999, dialing 311 (NY Relay: 711), booking online at [accessibledispatch.com](https://www.tlc.nyc.gov/accessibledispatch), or using the "Accessible Dispatch NYC" mobile application.

For-Hire Vehicles

TLC rules requiring wheelchair accessible service in the for-hire vehicle (FHV) sector, which includes companies ranging from small community-based car services to the app-based dispatching providers Uber, Lyft, and Via, have been in place for over a year. Every passenger can request a wheelchair accessible vehicle from their local car service, app-based company, or any other FHV company with the cost and service comparable to a trip in a non-accessible vehicle. FHV companies must either dispatch a minimum percentage of its annual trips to wheelchair accessible vehicles or must work with an approved Accessible Vehicle Dispatcher to provide wheelchair accessible trips within certain wait times.

[FHV Wheelchair Accessibility Information on TLC Website](#)

The TLC approved four Accessible Vehicle Dispatchers (Uber, Lyft, Via, and Exit Luxury) at the start of the program in January 2019. The TLC has worked to hold the approved Accessible Vehicle Dispatchers accountable to meeting their requirements. After noticing that some of the large app services required passengers to navigate to a settings menu to request a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) trip, the TLC worked with these companies to ensure the WAV option was clearly displayed so passengers could request a WAV trip in the same manner as requesting a non-WAV trip. The TLC also monitored service levels closely during the year and removed Exit Luxury as one of the dispatchers after observing several months of noncompliance with minimum service requirements.

As of November 2020, there are 1,898 wheelchairs accessible vehicles in the FHV fleet. Given the trend from prior months, the TLC expects the number of FHV WAVs will continue to increase going forward.

TLC Driver Education and Passenger Engagement



Screenshot of TLC Driver Education Module

The [TLC's Education Unit](#) updated the three-hour Wheel-chair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) course curriculum for drivers and selected a new group of education providers that will begin teaching the new course by the end of the year. The revamped course reflects industry updates and will feature new training videos on how to use WAV securements. WAV education providers will also be

required to provide, and all drivers will receive, in-vehicle training on how to use WAV securements and ramps going forward.



The TLC's Office of Inclusion successfully launched a [Service Refusal Campaign](#) directed towards drivers and passengers to combat illegal service refusals across all TLC industries. It is illegal for TLC-licensed drivers to refuse to drive passengers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or destination. The campaign encourages passengers to report illegal service refusals due to discrimination by calling 311, visiting the 311 website, or using the 311 app.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TLC reached out to several disability organizations to participate in remote meetings and speak about the agency's accessibility and inclusion initiatives. The TLC attended organizations' weekly meetings to better understand the disability community's needs and obstacles during COVID-19 and provide them with the appropriate resources. A wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) mobile and online guide is readily available on the TLC website and at its inspection facility in Woodside, Queens, to ensure that WAV drivers can provide the best service possible to people with disabilities.

Buses

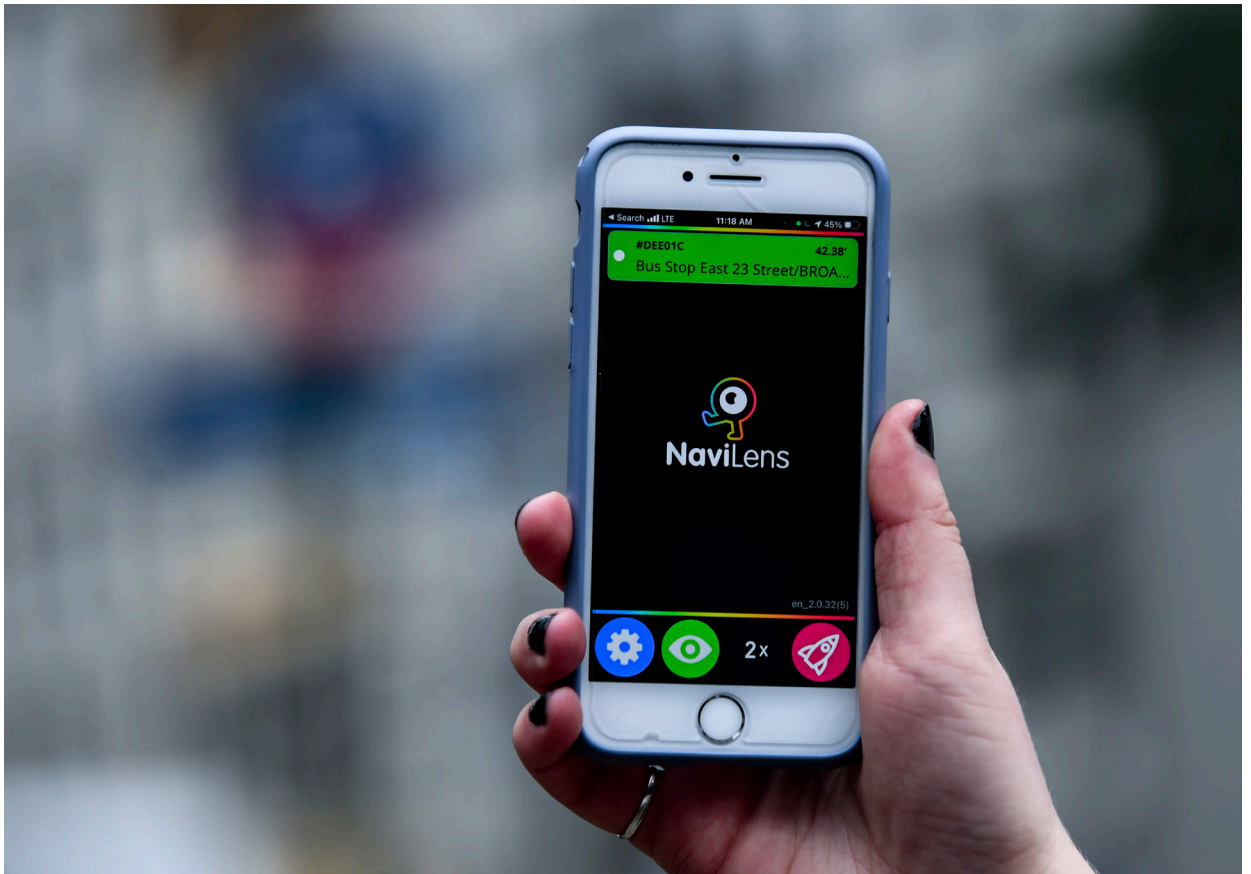
Currently, NYC DOT is conducting a citywide survey of all bus stops to identify those with physical accessibility challenges. The survey will help prioritize upgrades to bus stops in future years.

Bus service played a critical role in the MTA's response to COVID-19, ensuring that accessible transit was available across New York City even through the hardest weeks of the crisis. Overnight bus service was increased and new routes added to make sure essential workers could continue to get to and from work, and to provide access to critical services for New Yorkers, even during the overnight subway closure. The MTA also implemented the most aggressive cleaning program in the agency's history, disinfecting the entire bus fleet every 24 hours with a focus on frequent touch points such as grab rails.



MTA New York City Transit begins enhanced cleaning of buses and runs additional overnight service on Wed., May 6, 2020. Casey Stengel Depot.
Photo: Trent Reeves / Metropolitan Transportation Authority

While the MTA moved to rear door boarding on buses from March to August, to encourage social distancing and protect operators, the front door remained open to all those who needed the ramp or kneeler including customers with disabilities. In August, the front door reopened with a new protective barrier to keep bus operators safe. The MTA worked closely with operators and the community throughout the crisis to keep bus service accessible to all those who rely on it every day.



In November 2020, as part of Transit Innovation Partnership's Transit Tech Lab Accessibility Challenge, MTA launched a pilot program that allows blind and low-vision bus riders to use their smartphones to find bus stops and learn of arrival times. With assistance from the NYC DOT, signs along the M23 SBS bus route display decals that allow for use of a new app. The NaviLens app, which can be downloaded on Android or iOS devices, uses a cutting-edge algorithm to translate visual signage into audio and allow customers to determine the accurate location and distance to the nearest bus stop, find out when the next bus will arrive, know how crowded the bus is (if the necessary sensor technology is onboard), and be directed onto the bus when it pulls up to the stop. Colorful, next generation QR-style unique seven-inch-tall codes are installed on bus stop poles that the app can detect from up to 40 feet away and at an angle of up to 160 degrees. The

M23 SBS bus route is a popular route, carrying almost 14,500 weekday riders pre-pandemic. It is the eighth busiest bus route in Manhattan with stops near the Selis Manor Residence for the Blind, VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library.

NaviLens is one of four tech companies participating in a year-long pilot in Transit Tech Lab's Accessibility Challenge. [Read more about the Transit Innovation Partnership and the Accessibility Challenge.](#)

Access-A-Ride

Access-A-Ride (AAR) is the largest paratransit service in the country, with over 31,000 trips on peak days and over 8 million scheduled trips in 2019. Forty-four percent of these trips were provided in accessible vehicles. The service operates 24/7 throughout the five boroughs of NYC, and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of NYCT fixed route services into Westchester and Nassau Counties. These trips are provided to over 161,000 registrants of whom 15% are passengers who use wheelchairs and 71% are over the age of 65.

The weighted average cost per ride for 2019 was \$54.

Carriers	Brokers	Taxi/Livery
\$81*	\$34	\$19

*Does not include fuel, liability insurance and vehicles

In 2019, MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) continued its strategy to enhance AAR service by expanding and improving its broker program offering trips in taxis and for-hire vehicles, upgrading the dedicated carrier van fleet, and continuing to

invest in technology like the new, state-of-the-art scheduling, dispatch, and automated vehicle monitoring system and MyAAR smart phone app.

In 2019, AAR launched its enhanced broker service, through which thousands of customers travel by taxi or for-hire vehicle (FHV) each day when they book a trip with AAR. The improved and expanded broker program allows AAR to use taxis for door-to-door service, increases capacity to serve customers who use wheelchairs, requires more robust trainings for taxi and FHV drivers that do AAR trips, gives customers the ability to track broker trips on the MyAAR app, and improves tracking and reporting of the on-time performance of taxi and FHV trips. The new broker program also includes broker service on Staten Island. In 2019, more than half of AAR trips were completed through the broker program, offering customers a fast and comfortable ride.

In 2019, AAR also took significant steps to improve dedicated carrier service, including investing in replacing hundreds of vans with new models that provide a cleaner, more comfortable ride. AAR continues to work closely with the NYC DOT and has 121 dedicated Access-A-Ride pick-up and drop-off stops throughout the City. In May 2019, the NYC DOT adopted a new rule that allows AAR vans to use dedicated bus lanes to further improve the customer experience while using AAR. AAR has also made policy changes to simplify its late and no-show/cancellation policies and improved eligibility with reduced re-assessments.

The 2019 MTA NYCT Paratransit AAR Customer Satisfaction Survey once again highlighted the improvements in service. With an overall satisfaction rate of 84%, many customers indicated that such factors as ease of use, on-time performance, convenience, good service, and ability to be

independent contributed to their overall satisfaction. In 2019, an overwhelming majority (95%) of AAR customers continued to consider the service to be a “good value for the money,” a significant improvement over the 2017 survey results of 91%. A copy of the survey is available on the MTA website at new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit.

As a result of the recently adopted New York State budget, the City of New York increased its annual financial contribution to paratransit operations from 33.3% to 50%. The City, and especially Commissioner Calise in his role as an MTA Board Member, is committed to working with the MTA to create a more efficient paratransit service for all New Yorkers with disabilities.



Photo courtesy of Donna Fredericksen

AAR acted quickly in response to the COVID-19 crisis, taking an all hands-on deck approach to keep customers and vehicle

operators safe. The MTA continued to offer 24/7 paratransit service across its entire service area without interruption, while taking a series of steps to enhance vehicle cleanliness and customer safety. Shared rides and in-person eligibility assessments were suspended throughout the crisis, and customers were granted eligibility extensions as needed. In November 2020, AAR reopened two of its in-person assessment centers with reduced capacity. Fare collection on AAR remains suspended until further notice. Changes to the e-hail on-demand pilot program were put on hold, and the 1,200 current on-demand pilot users were allowed to continue to utilize the pilot program to request a trip at any time via the Curb, Arro, or Limosys smart phone apps or by phone . AAR also enacted an enhanced cleaning regimen including nightly cleaning of all dedicated carrier vans. Operators were required to wear masks and dedicated vans started carrying extra masks for customers. In fact, MOPD supplied AAR with extra masks in April, to help ensure a sufficient supply of masks to continue with the smooth operation for customers. AAR also worked with its fleets and brokers to find safe ways to transport COVID-19-positive patients.

Fair Fares Expanded to Access-A-Ride Customers

Low-income individuals with disabilities under age 65 can now receive transit subsidies under the Fair Fares NYC program to get them where they need to go. As of July 2020, AAR customers who also enroll in Fair Fares NYC will now have half their AAR fares subsidized. AAR customers will be able to apply directly online at [the Fair Fares webpage](#). Once eligible, a client's AAR and Fair Fares NYC accounts will be linked, and riders will only pay half-fare for all AAR trips.

Subway Accessibility

An accessible subway system benefits all New Yorkers. It increases transportation options, which among other things increases employment opportunities and community interaction, all helping our city grow. The more than 1 million New Yorkers with disabilities include 554,000 New Yorkers with ambulatory disabilities, and there are an additional 1.23 million seniors and 553,000 young children in the City. As of December 31, 2020, only 135 of the City's 493 subway stations, serving about half of daily ridership, have vertical access via a ramp or elevator. While many more stations have other accessibility features like tactile warning strips, braille signage and accessible audio and visual announcements, there is still work to do to achieve a fully accessible subway system.

Of the 134 accessible subway stations, 58 are in Manhattan, 36 in Brooklyn, 21 in Queens, 14 in the Bronx, and 5 in Staten Island. Ninety-seven of the 100 Key Stations in the program mandated by state and federal law are complete, with the remaining three in progress. Additional stations are ADA accessible, including four new ADA stations that opened in 2019 and 2020 in south Brooklyn. For a list of accessible stations visit mta.info/accessibility or see the appendix.



Commissioner Victor Calise and Former NYCT Systemwide Advisory for Accessibility Alex Elegudin celebrate the new elevator opening at 86th Street Station in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. (Marc A. Hermann / MTA New York City Transit)

The MTA has more than twenty additional stations with ADA improvements in progress, including several stations with new elevators opening in 2021. When these stations are complete, the system will be over 30% accessible by station count, and stations that serve more than half of ridership will be accessible.

The MTA continues to work with community advocates, the New York City Council, and key City agencies including DOT, Department of City Planning, Housing Preservation and Development, and MOPD to utilize existing zoning and other

tools to encourage developers to add new elevators to the system and to identify areas where easements can be created for future installation of elevators. In September 2019, the New York City Council released a report on Zoning for Transit Accessibility (ZTA), a proposal to expand the use of two specific zoning tools – the Transit Easement Certification and Station Improvement Bonus – to a wider swath of the City. ZTA would enable the MTA to leverage these zoning tools to increase accessibility across more of the City. This initiative would incentivize more developers to invest in subway accessibility directly or give the MTA easements to enable elevator installation at more stations. Any private investment would supplement the MTA’s own continued Capital investments in station accessibility, and such creative approaches are needed now more than ever. The MTA, Department of City Planning and other partners are currently undertaking the environmental analysis with the goal of bringing the zoning text amendments to City Council by early fall 2021.

The MTA has invested nearly \$5B in accessibility through past capital programs, including funding for new elevators and ramps, significant funding for replacing elevators that have reached the end of their useful life, and investing in additional accessibility features such as raised platform boarding areas, tactile warning strips at the platform edge, braille signage, and AutoGates that allow customers with disabilities to use the system independently. In 2019, the MTA announced its largest ever five-year Capital Plan for 2020-2024, including a commitment of more than \$5B in this plan alone for station accessibility projects. Working closely with the community, the MTA identified 66 priority stations, including stations across every borough to ensure that riders are never more than two stations away from an accessible station at the completion of this Plan.

As of this writing, many future Capital projects are on hold due to budget constraints brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. However, even with the pandemic, the MTA remains committed to forging ahead on station accessibility projects. The MTA safely completed work on ADA projects at 10 stations in summer and fall of 2020: Astoria Blvd on the N and W lines in Queens; 1st Ave on the L line and Chambers St on the J and Z lines in Manhattan; Canarsie-Rockaway Pkwy and Bedford Ave on the L line, 59 St on the N and R lines, 86 St on the R line, Greenpoint Ave on the G line, and Eastern Pkwy-Brooklyn Museum on the 2 and 3 lines in Brooklyn; and Bedford Park Blvd on the B and D lines in the Bronx. These stations provide critical access points in some of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the City and bring the MTA to 134 accessible stations systemwide.

In July, the MTA Board awarded a contract to make three additional stations in the Bronx – the 149 St – Grand Concourse 2/5, 149 St – Grand Concourse 4, and Tremont Av B/D stations – fully accessible, bundling the projects and taking advantage of lower ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic to shorten the construction schedule, lower costs, and minimize impacts on riders. Finally, the MTA is working to accelerate the delivery of ADA projects where current ridership and service conditions allow. The MTA remains committed to continuing this work and keeping accessibility at the top of the agenda in the fight to secure Federal funding for this historic Capital Plan.



MOPD Housing Coordinator, Arthur Jacobs examining a tactile map of Jay Street Metrotech Station

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 features, including several wayfinding apps, new tactile and braille maps and signage, and floor guideways designed to make subway travel more accessible for all riders, including those with vision, hearing, mobility, and intellectual/developmental disabilities. The formal pilot ran for three months in fall 2019, but features remain in the station for on-going customer testing and feedback. Based on positive feedback received during the pilot, the MTA is seeking ways to expand the use of some of the most popular physical features and apps. For example, the MTA installed Accessible Boarding Area floor decals and wayfinding tape at Grand Central subway station

to help customers navigate the accessible pathway during construction.

MTA NYCT is also creating and distributing online and print resources that can help people with disabilities navigate the subway system. The Guide to Accessible Transit, available online at new.mta.info/accessibility, provides more information on the accessibility of subway stations, as well as buses and Access-A-Ride paratransit service. MTA NYCT is working daily to provide additional information regarding elevator outages and alternate route information in real-time on their website and mobile app, via email and text alerts, and at in-station kiosks. Customers can verify an elevator's status or sign up for E-Alerts on the MTA website.



On Wednesday, May 6, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority began its unprecedented 24/7 cleaning operation and new MTA Essential Plan Night Service during the subway closure from 1 – 5 a.m. The new cleaning and disinfecting regimen marks the most aggressive in the MTA's history, and will include around-the-clock efforts at all facilities. Photo: Patrick Cashin / MTA New York City Transit

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the MTA temporarily suspended subway service from 1a.m. to 5a.m. daily to enact an enhanced cleaning regime. Stations are cleaned and disinfected multiple times a day, with a focus on high-touch areas including elevator doors and call buttons. The MTA is also investigating innovative methods to eradicate traces of COVID-19, including through a pilot program focusing on the use of ultraviolet (UV) light to eradicate SARS-CoV-2 from rolling stock. In addition to allowing for additional cleaning to protect customers and employees, these station closures also enabled the MTA to speed up certain subway improvement projects, including ADA station upgrades, as mentioned above.

To ensure the continuity of accessible service during the overnight closure, bus service was enhanced, and an Essential Connector program was developed to continue moving essential workers overnight. This program utilized wheelchair accessible taxis and for-hire vehicles and ran through August 30.

Commuter Railroad

LIRR

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) is well on its way to full station accessibility, with 107 out of 124 stations ADA accessible. In the first half of 2020 alone, LIRR completed accessibility projects at the Nostrand Avenue station in Brooklyn and Murray Hill station in Queens.



Help Point Kiosk at Glen Head Station

One unique feature that will be included in some future station projects is a new type of Help Point kiosk that LIRR is now testing through a pilot program. These Help Points allow customers with disabilities to press a button to notify train crews that they need boarding assistance, in addition to requesting general system information or reporting an emergency. This will allow customers to safely board the train without having to call ahead. LIRR is also incorporating braille as part of an on-going signage replacement program.

[Learn more about Help Points](#)

Customer assistance is a key element of LIRR's approach to accessibility. LIRR employees are trained on ADA issues and accessibility as part of their Train Crew biannual training. In July 2018, the agency started the LIRR Care Program for customers with mobility-related disabilities who may need assistance to board and exit trains. Customers can call a dedicated phone number ahead of their trip or visit customer service/ticket offices at major stations to request assistance.

The program is available 24/7 and had provided nearly six thousand customers with assistance as of December 2020.

Finally, LIRR recently re-launched its ADA Task Force. The group includes community members, MOPD staff members and other agency colleagues, and meets quarterly to give people with disabilities direct input into LIRR operations.

Metro-North Railroad

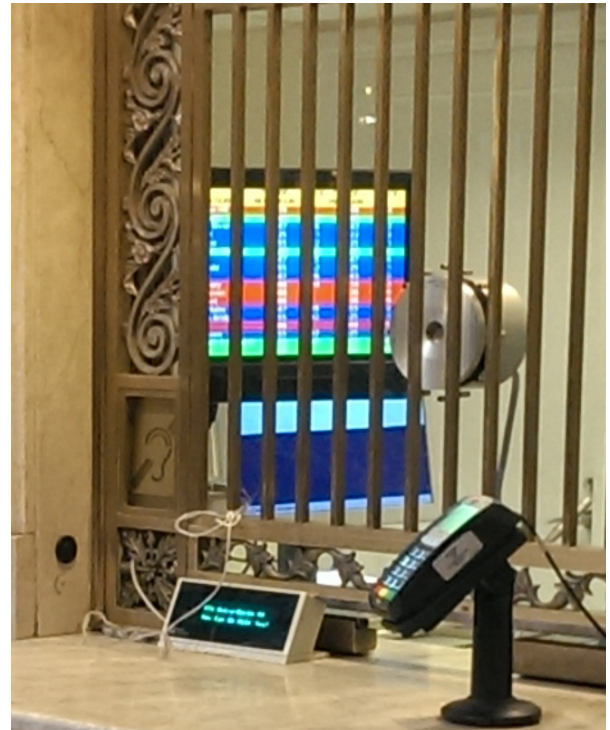


Newly Installed VMS Signage at White Plain, NY Station

Sixty of 85 Metro-North Railroad (MNR) stations in the seven county New York State service area are currently accessible for people with mobility disabilities. Elevator installation at the White Plains station is scheduled to be complete in the first quarter of 2021. All New York State stations have tactile signage and the majority of stations have tactile warning strips at the platform edge.

Metro-North is also committed to making train arrival and service information fully accessible at every station. Every station has a public address system providing train arrival and service information in audio format, and nearly every station has digital screens providing similar information in text format. To improve announcement quality and better sync audio and visual information, Metro-North is installing newer generation PA systems that will be

fully integrated with digital screens. New PA systems have already been installed at Grand Central Terminal and a stretch of the Harlem line from White Plains to Wassaic and will be installed at additional stations over time. Every New York State station also has upgraded digital signage that provides information in large format, with similar signs coming soon to Connecticut stations.



Induction Loop at Grand Central Ticket Booth

At Grand Central Terminal, Metro-North has installed hearing loops at two ticket windows and recently launched a major project to improve signage with a focus on accessibility. So far, Metro-North has completed a full review and evaluation of existing wayfinding, directional and station identification signage, as well as tactile-braille signage. They are now reviewing the evaluation recommendations and developing an implementation plan for signage improvements throughout the station.

All Metro-North conductors receive ADA-focused classroom and field training, so they can assist customers who use mobility devices in boarding and be prepared to assist customers with disabilities in case of an emergency. Through the Call Ahead Program, Metro-North offers 24/7 assistance to customers with disabilities. Customers can call 511 an hour before their trip to arrange assistance to safely navigate the platform, and wait for and board the train. At Grand Central and other major stations, Station Ambassadors can help customers with mobility devices and provide sighted guidance for blind or low-vision customers. In 2019, Metro-North employees assisted nearly 5,000 customers through the Call Ahead program and provided sighted guide to 1,200 customers.

Finally, Metro-North has a newly formed Accessibility Task Force that will provide an opportunity for MOPD staff and regional representatives from throughout the MNR service territory to engage with MNR on accessibility initiatives. The quarterly Task Force meetings will also provide a forum for the exchange of information on Metro-North services and facility accessibility as they relate to persons with disabilities and their transportation needs. The inaugural meeting was held in November 2020.

iRideNYC

iRideNYC currently provides real-time passenger information for trains and buses as well as Citi Bike availability. iRideNYC now includes spatial information for elevators and escalators throughout the subway system and high contrast capability for users to invert the colors or entirely change the color scheme of the information on display. DOT had hoped to use a Federal Transit Administration grant to redesign the

iRideNYC application and enhance its capabilities in several areas, but unfortunately was unable to find a vendor capable of undertaking the work within available budget.

Bike Share

Making bike share accessible to individuals with disabilities is a challenge. Docked bike share programs around the country do not include accessible bikes, but many recreation-based bike lending programs have incorporated handcycles and tandem bikes. Thus far, DOT and MOPD have been unable to find a bike manufacturer that could create a handcycle sturdy enough to withstand the NYC climate and sustain public use while also being able to utilize the docking stations.

Simultaneously, as part of Lyft's acquisition of Citi Bike, DOT and Lyft agreed to work together to develop an ADA pilot program. Since the merger, the two entities have continued researching prototype handcycles that could withstand the NYC climate and sustain public use. They also collaborated on a pilot by bringing a fleet of handcycles to various community events throughout the summer of 2019. Parallel research has begun to solicit feedback from New Yorkers with disabilities on what it would take for them to feel safe riding a handcycle on the City's 1,200+ miles of bike lanes.

E-scooter Pilot

City Council legislation requires NYCDOT to launch an e-scooter share pilot program in 2021. E-scooters are electric-powered standing scooters that typically have a maximum speed of around 15 miles per hour. One of DOT's main priorities for the pilot will be to prevent parked e-scooters

from blocking sidewalks or corner pedestrian ramps, so that all sidewalk users, including people with disabilities, have a clear path of travel. The pilot program will also explore the feasibility of alternative e-scooter designs and service models that may better meet the needs of people with disabilities. MOPD will be involved in reviewing the submissions from e-scooter companies to the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) as a voting member of the Committee.

Pedestrian Ramps

Pedestrian ramps provide access on and off our streets and sidewalks and are an essential tool for all pedestrians, especially persons with disabilities. NYC DOT maintains the City's 12,760 miles of sidewalks and 185,000 corners. DOT recently conducted a detailed survey to evaluate the condition of existing pedestrian ramps using high-definition smart city technology, street-level imagery, and ground-based LiDAR data to extract measurements of each pedestrian ramp. The agency uses this data to plan construction work. All pedestrian ramp surveys were completed in 2019, an unprecedented achievement for the City of New York.



DOT typically performs new pedestrian ramp installation and upgrade work anytime alterations or new construction work – such as resurfacing, street improvement projects, and identification of defects or complaints – occurs at legal pedestrian crossings, where needed. In addition to this work, the survey data will be combined with geographic and demographic information to determine where to begin work and to prioritize locations in the five boroughs, which in addition to construction in connection with resurfacing, will address all corners needing upgrades in the City.

All new and upgraded pedestrian ramps include a red (or white in special districts) detectable warning surface to help guide individuals who are blind or have low vision. For more information on pedestrian ramps visit <http://nycpedramps.info>.

Vision Zero

Increasing accessibility for all New Yorkers is a key element of the de Blasio administration's Vision Zero plan, which was launched in 2014 with the overarching goal of reducing preventable traffic injuries and fatalities.

The City's commitment to providing accessibility for all New Yorkers continues with the introduction of raised crosswalks, which increase pedestrian visibility, reduce vehicle speeds, and encourage drivers to yield to pedestrians. The treatment was first introduced in 2016, and after a successful pilot program that focused on Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, raised crosswalks have been installed in all five boroughs. Early data shows a reduction in 85th percentile, and maximum speeds at locations where the treatment was installed.



DOT has installed Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) in all five boroughs by collaborating with the disability community on identifying priority corners. These devices provide information in non-visual formats, such as audible tones, speech messages, and vibrating surfaces, to alert individuals with vision disabilities when the “walk” phase is available at a given intersection. As of December 31, 2019, there were APS units installed at 548 intersections citywide. [A full list of APS locations is available on DOT’s Website.](#) Pursuant to Section 19-188 of the New York City Administrative Code, DOT is required to install APS units at 75 intersections each year.

Connected Vehicle Technology Pilot

Preparations for New York City’s pilot of connected vehicle technology were completed in 2018, with the installation

of sensors along Midtown Manhattan avenues, the FDR Drive, and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. This program's current goal is to equip 3,000 vehicles (including 700 MTA buses) with technology that allows vehicles to electronically "communicate" with each other to identify roadway risks aimed at preventing crashes.

NYC DOT and DCAS are partnering with the Federal US DOT to evaluate the functionality and effectiveness of vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure telematics systems. Over 2,100 vehicles of the City's fleet had this new technology installed through 2020 with all 3,000 to be completed by June 2021. This technology has the potential to alert drivers, through direct short-range communication, to take specific actions to avoid a collision or reduce collision severity if one occurs. Some of the applications of this technology are traffic signal red light change warnings, blind spot and pedestrian at crossing walk alerts, road hazards, and to test pedestrian-oriented phone apps to assist pedestrians with disabilities navigate street crossing.

Due to the financial crisis in the taxi industry prior to COVID-19 and collapse of demand for all for-hire-vehicles in the wake of COVID-19, the goal of the project was reduced from the original 8,000 vehicles to 3,000 vehicles. DOT is in discussions and coordination with the US Department of Transportation about how to move forward with the project.

Staten Island Ferry

The Staten Island Ferry 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 are equipped with escalators and elevators

and operate within ADA guidelines. Passengers who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices may board on the lower level, and they do not need prior documentation. It is important to note that the lower level waiting area is located outside and is only partially protected from the elements. Due to the restricted nature of the lower level area, any individual that is granted access for lower-level boarding is subject to search by security personnel and/or the New York Police Department (NYPD).

The DOT Ferry Division also works closely with the local community so 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.

NYC Ferry

As with all forms of public transportation, the NYC Ferry was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership was decreased significantly as New Yorkers were told to stay indoors and practice social distancing. In addition, many jobs were lost due to the pandemic and most of the workforce that were still employed began to telecommute.



Photo courtesy of NYC Ferry

NYC Ferry ridership began to rebound over the summer as New Yorkers ventured out to explore their city and began to return to the physical workplace. At its peak, ridership was at 70% of 2019 levels, showing positive recovery for the city.

Work on new terminals continued throughout the pandemic and in late August, the Astoria route was extended to include East 90th Street. Both the St. George route connecting Staten Island with the West Side of Manhattan in Battery Park City and Midtown West and the Coney Island route connecting communities in Coney Island and Bay Ridge to Wall Street/Pier 11 will launch in 2021.

NYC Ferry remains the same cost as a subway ride — currently \$2.75 — and offers reduced fare monthly ticketing passes at

a 50% discount. Applications can be obtained at ferry.nyc/ticketing-info or by calling 1-844-469-3377.

Central Business District Tolling

The Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program will charge drivers a toll to enter Manhattan south of 60th Street. The program is designed to reduce congestion on the City's busiest streets and generate revenue for the MTA's capital program. State law exempts vehicles carrying people with disabilities from paying the CBD toll. The MTA, which is overseeing the program, is working with the City of New York to develop a process for administering the exemption. The program, originally slated to begin in 2021, has been delayed to 2022 or 2023 due to delays in securing Federal approval.

Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (PPPD)

City Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (PPPD) are issued by DOT to residents and non-residents of the City who have permanent disabilities that seriously impair mobility as certified by physicians, limiting them to the use of a private vehicle for transportation. These permits allow eligible recipients to park on NYC streets, contrary to many posted parking regulations.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, DOT's Permits and Customer Service office, which issues PPPD permits, closed all permit operations activity as of March 20, 2020. As of that date, an indefinite extension was automatically applied to any previously issued City PPPD permits that expired in January 2020 or were/are scheduled to expire in any subsequent month.

Recently, permit operations resumed in a limited capacity. Applications for City PPPD permits are being accepted via mail and are being sporadically reviewed for completion. After review, applications are being sent to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) for a determination. Once DOT receives word from DOHMH that the applications have been granted medical approval, DOT is printing and mailing out City PPPD permits. In addition, DOT established a remote call center operation on October 13, 2020, which has been fielding approximately 275 calls per day and providing PPPD permit information directly to the public.

[More information about PPPD permits is on DOT's Website](#)

Municipal Off-Street Parking Garages and Facilities

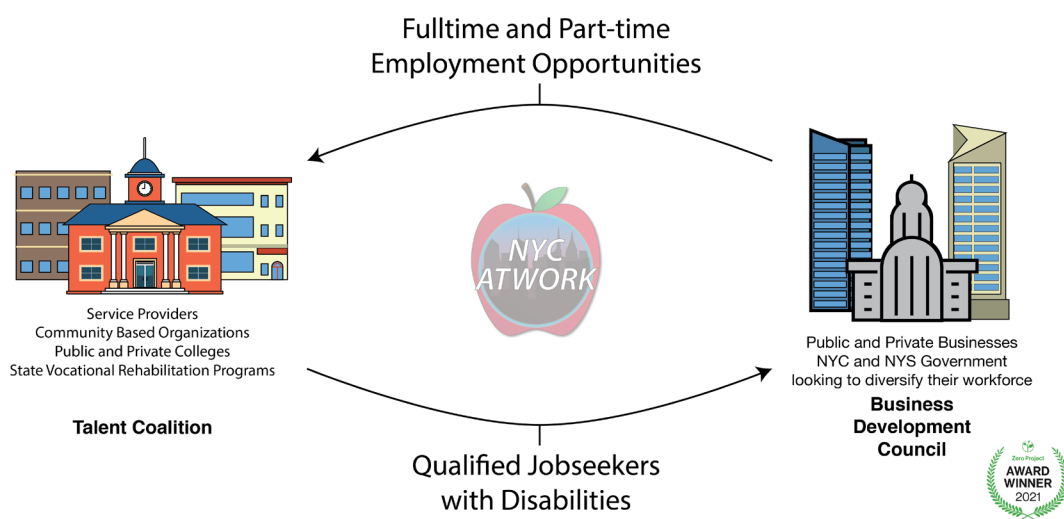
All DOT municipal parking facilities provide accessible parking spaces, including van accessible parking spaces with access aisle. DOT manages 30 municipal parking fields and 6 municipal parking garages, providing a total of 253 accessible parking spaces.

Employment



People with disabilities jobseekers at their place of employment after being connected via **NYC: ATWORK**

This section examines how we will respond to the loss of jobs during the pandemic and create new opportunities during the recovery process. It will discuss the interrelation between employment and access to transportation and technology. As we reimagine the work environment and the improved access offered by remote opportunities, we also confront the deficit in available technology known as the digital divide.



NYC: ATWORK is a business-driven, person-centered workforce development program. Staff recruits, pre-screens, and connects New Yorkers with disabilities to job opportunities and internships with our established business partners in both the public and private sectors. Participation in **NYC: ATWORK** is voluntary, and more importantly, self-driven. During the orientation process, job seekers learn about the program. We offer guidance to improve resumes and cover letters, job searching and interviewing process, information on disclosure and reasonable accommodations and informational interviews.



[On the UN International Day of With Disabilities, NYC: ATWORK received the Zero Project Award for 2021.](#) The Zero Project focuses on the rights of people with disabilities globally. Their annual award honors the innovative and effective policies and practices that improve the lives of people with disabilities around the world.

Each participant is assigned a relationship manager who assists them in their search. It is up to the jobseeker to implement our tips and proactively look for opportunities. Our goal is to empower New Yorkers with disabilities with the job readiness knowledge, skills, and confidence to take control of their career journey, advocating for themselves based on their strengths and experiences – on what they can do – and not on their disability.



In 2019, MOPD partnered with Microsoft to hold a series of professional development and networking events during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The final event was a job fair connecting hundreds of qualified jobseekers to businesses looking to interview and hire.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, over 650 active job seekers were enrolled in **NYC: ATWORK**, many at different stages of the process. Of those, we successfully connected over 350 to employment in high growth sectors.

In mid-March, our office closed, and all staff was set up to work remotely. We put a temporary halt on the recruitment process so we could assist our active job seekers or those that were furloughed or laid off. We provided guidance to those transitioning to working remotely and helped them understand the reasonable accommodations process. When necessary, we aided those applying for unemployment and continued to refer to Empowered NYC, the City's financial empowerment program for New Yorkers with disabilities and their families.

We also continued regular contact with our jobseekers through bi-weekly newsletters highlighting resources and job opportunities.

Remote Work Policies

In July we began providing regular virtual one-on-one services with job seekers. We also established a provider task force to offer support and best practices to our coalition members. We learned the difficulties facing the providers to communicate with both their staff and their participants due to lack of access to computers, internet, and Wi-Fi.

COVID-19 shed more light on the digital divide with day-to-day activities being moved to remote work. With the shutdown of Community Based Organizations and public libraries that many of our jobseekers rely on for computer use and digital access, many were left disconnected from the outside world and unable to continue their employment search.

We also learned that many of the essential staff at our partner agencies that provide job development, job coaching, and support were also impacted by the digital divide. How can staff help their participants gain access to jobs if everyone is working from a cell phone? That is not a sustainable strategy.

Digital Divide in the 21st Century

For decades, job seekers and employees with disabilities have requested remote work as a reasonable accommodation, especially due to limitations in accessible or reliable transportation. In most cases, these requests were denied, even if the potential employee had the ability to perform well

on the job, contribute to diversity within a company, and provide diversity of thought.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed a light on remote work as a viable, productive, and flexible employment option. For thousands of New Yorkers, including much of the City's workforce, the ability to work from home became an essential solution to keeping businesses and City services alive. Telework is now seen as an option, a solution and yes, a reasonable accommodation.

But many of our jobseekers lack the access to a computer, Wi-Fi, and internet. They rely on their local library or provider agency or community-based organization for access to the technology needed to apply for jobs, create resumes and cover letters, research potential employers, or gain 21st century skills. This is not only a disability issue. It is a poverty issue that continues to affect our community.

In the past six months we have conducted 397 virtual meetings, including one-on-one sessions with job seekers with over 50% of the participants joining by phone or iPad.

We ask:

- How can you escape poverty without a job and self-sustaining wages in the 21st century?
- How can you be competitive in this new workforce, upgrade your computer skills, enroll in trainings and certification-based programs without the essential tools?



A shipment of 50 Lenovo ThinkPads donated to **NYC: ATWORK** courtesy of Global Brands Group

With support from the Mayors' Fund to Advance New York City, MOPD received a grant to establish a pilot project to address the digital divide. We are securing 50 laptops, complete with Microsoft Office licenses, Wi-Fi and internet capability. Microsoft is partnering with us to provide in-kind support and free training for participants.

Additionally, our Business Development Council member, Juniper Unlimited, a division of Global Brands Group, has donated an additional 50 computers. We will work with our coalition of provider and non-profit agencies to distribute the additional computers for training and remote work for their own participants. The pilot will roll out in phases beginning in 2021 and managed by a consultant with IT, training, and community partnership experience.

NYC: ATWORK participants enrolled in the pilot project will be assessed based on specific criteria, including job readiness, proven motivation and determination and their career goals. They will have access to free trainings, certification programs and remote work.

Remote Training/Events



Ashley Newton, **NYC: ATWORK** Coalition Director, providing a virtual orientation to the program for jobseekers with disabilities.

By July, orientations for **NYC: ATWORK** and the 55-a Program were being regularly held virtually. We hosted and participated in trainings, workshops and panel discussions for job seekers, providers, and our business partners.

In July we held month-long career-related events in honor of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, reaching over 1420 attendees.

For the 75th anniversary of National Disability Awareness Month in October, 2,060 participants took part in trainings on topics such as Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and Employment Roundtable, Disability Etiquette and Awareness, Reasonable Accommodation and Disclosure, the ADA and inclusive hiring practices, remote employment opportunities, mental health in the workplace, and access to internships.

Success Story



Matt Decker enrolled in **NYC: ATWORK** in early 2019 after leaving his previous position. He is a mechanical engineer with several years of highly specialized experience. After attending **NYC: ATWORK** orientation, he collaborated with his relationship manager to tailor his resume and highlight his transferrable project management skills. Over subsequent meetings, Matt learned how to articulate the ways his experience can be transferable for different positions and how to clearly demonstrate his interest in the employer throughout his application materials and in interviews.

After several months, two career fairs, and interviews secured independently and through **NYC: ATWORK**, Matt had not received any offers. Together with his relationship manager, he spent a considerable amount of time rethinking his approach to interviews and preparing for them. He was connected to a member of the **NYC: ATWORK** Business Development Council for a one-on-one mock interview session where he received personalized and impactful feedback. Less than two months later, he was able to put it into practice in an interview with the NYC Parks and Recreation Department and received an offer. He worked with **NYC: ATWORK** to complete the 55-a enrollment process and submit his request for a reasonable accommodation so he could be seamlessly onboarded.

In his role as a Project Manager, Matt is responsible for overseeing the design and construction of some of the Parks department's most significant engineering projects, including the development of more sustainable facilities, such as the implementation of building automation systems. He celebrated his one-year anniversary with the NYC Parks and Recreation Department in November 2020!

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.



Eliza Cooper shares her experience with the 55-a program

Currently 383 employees throughout City government are participating in the 55-a Program. This number fluctuates annually for three reasons: resignations, retirements and those who have been made permanent. In 2020 four City employees who gained access to their job through 55-a became permanent.

If every City agency committed to hiring four qualified individuals through 55-a, we would finally reach the goal of 700 set into law more than 30 years ago.

MOPD and DCAS work together to assist City agencies in utilizing the 55-a Program to fill their recruitment needs by hiring qualified persons with disabilities who may have encountered barriers to City employment. Prior to the collaboration with **NYC: ATWORK**, DCAS strived to recruit and hire New Yorkers with disabilities under 55-a, yet the results did not reflect the efforts made overall.

The City hired four employees per year through 55-a in 2016 and 2017. Over the next two years and as a direct result of relationship building, education and training at all levels for jobseekers, 73 employees were hired through 55-a and 10 employees through non-competitive positions.



Maricela Brea, **NYC: ATWORK** Workforce & Intergovernmental Relations Director, providing a virtual presentation on 55-a to City Agency recruitment managers.

In partnership with DCAS we have presented to City agencies, and networks of people with disabilities including veterans with disabilities. **NYC: ATWORK** identifies, recruits and educates jobseekers with disabilities on 55-a and how we serve as a recruitment resource and work closely with DCAS which administers the 55-a Program.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a hold on the hiring of non-essential positions. Our office continues to coordinate recruitment efforts for those essential positions as they become available.

In addition, we continued to provide Disability Etiquette and Awareness Trainings as well as participate with DCAS in the Educational Opportunity Program STEM Diversity Virtual Career Fair - Disability Community Career Fair - Job Seekers with Disabilities where we discussed the City jobs and 55-a Program.

In July 2020 in partnership with DCAS, we held a Reasonable Accommodations Symposium that consisted of an overview of roles, the Reasonable Accommodation (RA) process for both City employees and the general public, and guidance for Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility issues raised during the pandemic and in relation to return-to-work guidance already issued to City agencies.

Success Stories

Tori Ann Sala



Toni Ann Saia identifies as a disabled woman with a deep commitment to social justice, inclusion, and equity for all. Her experience has involved advocating for progressive understanding of disability. She received her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Arizona. After moving back to New York,

she connected with **NYC: ATWORK** through the Mayors Office of People with Disabilities. She is currently a Project

Leader, Foundations of Inclusion and Accessibility: Building Organizational Capacity in Cultural Institutions with the Museum, Arts, and Culture Access Consortium, leading a grant funded initiative to increase access for people with disabilities at four cultural institutions in New York.

Sean White



Sean White, who was working but underemployed based on his education and experience, self-referred to **NYC: ATWORK**. He met with his relationship manager for a pre-screening, and immediately began updating his materials and focusing on his employment search.

He participated in the DCAS Human Capital Diversity Career Fair and had an opportunity to meet and interview with several hiring managers. After the event he further

tailored his resume and cover letter and applied online.

Sean was offered and accepted the position as a Computer Technician at New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), which more than doubled his previous annual salary and shortened his commute in half.

He writes:

"I want to thank you for helping me with career tips, resumes/cover letter and inviting me to two different careers events. Without you and MOPD I wouldn't have gotten this job opportunity. I also want to say I would like to keep in contact with you and MOPD for career advice or anything that I need to be aware of".

Internships to Career Pathways

In partnership with New York State's vocational rehabilitation agency, ACCES-VR, **NYC: ATWORK** connects students and adults with disabilities with internship opportunities in the public and private sector. While working one-on-one with jobseekers, the **NYC: ATWORK** staff saw a common trend of recent graduates and adults who transition careers: they needed more work experience to qualify for positions they were interested in. **NYC: ATWORK** Internship Coordinator advocates on behalf of the jobseekers that have career goals based on the education they received but who lack tangible work experience in their desired field.

Through conversations with the current employers in our Business Development Council, as well as outreach in developing new relationships with various employers, we emphasize the importance of hiring interns that need hands-on workforce experience without being enrolled in a matriculated educational program. Through these efforts we were able to develop relationships with New York City government agencies and companies in the private sector such as a nationally recognized publishing company to onboard internship jobseekers that were not enrolled in school to participate in up to 320 hours of internship experience.

Success Stories

Alexander Genecin



Alex Genecin is a motivated graduate of CUNY Hunter College who graduated with a Master's Degree in Geography and Urban Planning and desires a career as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst. Although Alex had previous internship experience in a different field, he faced many challenges applying to jobs in the field where he invested his education. Through the outreach

efforts of our Internship Coordinator, he was accepted as an Urban Planning Intern with the Department of City Planning where he is gaining those industry-specific skills he needs to qualify for the positions he is passionate about. This experience will help prepare him to apply for positions more

closely associated with field, and **NYC: ATWORK** will continue to assist him in obtaining his career goals.

We are committed to creating internships even during the COVID -19 environment and are collaborating with both public and private partners to create safe, remote opportunities for college students, recent graduates and those re-entering the workforce.

CeAsia Sands



This year, **NYC: ATWORK** developed a relationship with Global Brands Group, one of the world's leading branded fashion accessories, footwear, and apparel companies. With likeminded missions, Global Brands Group and **NYC:ATWORK** collaborated in recruitment for open full-time employment and internship opportunities for JUNIPERunltd.

NYC: ATWORK discussed deficit trends they saw when it came to students and adults with limited tangible work experience in desired fields, and as an outcome Global Brands Group identified four internship roles based on the needs of their Graphic Design, Social Media Marketing, Copywriting and Data Entry departments.

For one success story, **NYC: ATWORK** was able to place a recent graduate with an Associates Degree in Animation

and Motion Graphics. This participant said she had faced many challenges trying to find internship opportunities. One of the deficit trends **NYC: ATWORK** found, were jobseekers who entered the workforce without professional work experience in the fields they pursued in college. When **NYC: ATWORK** first started working with this job seeker, she was hired at Uniqlo as a Sales Associate while she completed her degree.

Upon graduation, she reached out to her Relationship Manager for support in finding an opportunity in her field.

She has now been connected to a paid internship in “her dream job” as JUNIPERunltd’s first Graphic Design intern. **NYC: ATWORK** will continue to support her through the internship and beyond as she works toward her career path in Digital Design.

This internship is supported through our partnership with ACCES- VR, New York State’s Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, which funds internship opportunities that are a part of an individual’s career plan and meet the expectations for their career goals.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is celebrated every October and 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of celebrating the contributions Americans with disabilities have made to the workforce. Every year, MOPD has hosted an employment award ceremony and provided a series of

events centered around the theme chosen by the US Office of Disability Employment Policy. The theme this year was “Increasing Access and Opportunity.”



For the 75th anniversary of NDEAM in October, 2,060 participants took part in trainings on topics such as Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and Employment Roundtable; Disability Etiquette and Awareness; Reasonable Accommodation and Disclosure; The ADA and Inclusive Hiring Practices; Remote Employment Opportunities; Mental Health in the Workplace, Access to Internships, Financial Independence and the NY ABLE Program, Microsoft Resume Workshops and Remote

Work Opportunities. We hosted the Cooke School and Moody Foundation launch of their report: “Roadmap for Inclusion, A Collaborative Digital Skills Training Model for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities.”



We ended the month with a virtual award event thanking those businesses who helped our city and our community get through the pandemic:

- **Uniqlo USA** for donating 10, 000 masks to District 75 students and staff.
- **CVS Health** for their efforts in hiring front line workers to ensure that NYC residents had access to necessary supplies and medications.
- **Global Brands Group** for their donation of PPEs to the disability community.
- **UPS** for coming to the assistance of a New Yorker requiring transport for her wheelchair as she was transported on a medical plane.
- **Northwell Health** for their partnership with our city and state and during the pandemic.
- And **NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)** for procurement of PPE for MOPD’s community.

WeCARE

When applying or recertifying for Cash Assistance at the Human Resources Administration (HRA), clients can be referred to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) program. WeCARE provides a continuum of services to help Cash Assistance clients to attain their maximum levels of self-sufficiency when they have medical and/or mental health conditions that affect their employability. Individuals referred to WeCARE receive a comprehensive clinical assessment to identify possible conditions and social barriers that may affect their ability to participate in work-related activities. Based on the results of this assessment, WeCARE contractors determine an individual's functional capacity, develop a customized service plan, and provide a range of services tailored to meet their needs.

During the COVID-19 crisis, WeCARE services have been modified. All Wellness and SSI services are being conducted virtually. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) have also been moved to a virtual platform that provides a menu of relevant and topical subjects. Additionally, all clients receive regular health triage calls to assist with any issues they may be facing during this time, including case issues, medical intervention, food insecurity, housing, or Social Security concerns.

The Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII)

Thanks to a generous grant from The Taft Foundation, the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) and AHRC

New York City (AHRC NYC) formed a partnership to provide internship opportunities and create pathways for future employment for New Yorkers with disabilities.

The program, known as the Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII), is a formal internship program within City government for people with disabilities. The program leverages AHRC NYC's resources, experience, and success in finding employment for people with disabilities, as well as DSS' vast network of programs and services, to offer a wide variety of internship opportunities across HRA and Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Since its inception in 2019, PII has placed more than 70 interns with disabilities across the Agency.

Qualified candidates for each individualized internship opportunity are identified by partner organizations that, through their own unique programs, have experience and relationships with these individuals. MOPD's **NYC: ATWORK** program not only refers qualified candidates but works closely with the PII interns on career pathways in city government by accessing opportunities through the 55-a program. Other Partner organizations in this initiative include AHRC NYC, Yachad/Jewish Union Foundation, the CUNY: LEADS program, and the Institute for Career Development (ICD). Internship opportunities include clerical, data entry, IT, accounting, social service placements, and more.

The PII Program has had a smaller footprint during the pandemic but has been able to sustain a small number of interns virtually, while providing support and training to past and present interns through webinars and online events.

Financial Empowerment

Without access to financial information and an understanding of the various tools available, individuals will not be able to adequately plan their futures, including addressing housing, health care, employment, and overall financial well-being.

EmpoweredNYC

In 2018, the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP)ⁱⁱⁱ and MOPD, in partnership with the National Disability Institute (NDI), launched EmpoweredNYC. EmpoweredNYC was the first-of-its-kind in the country and the first local program of Empowered Cities, a national initiative supported by Citi Community Investing and Development. The multi-pronged initiative aims to test, adopt, and promote new strategies to improve the financial stability of New Yorkers with disabilities and their families.



Before the pandemic and its staggering unemployment rates, New Yorkers with disabilities already faced a wide employment gap: only 165,500, or 19.5%, of people with disabilities in New York City (ages 16+) were employed.^{iv} Additionally, one in

three working New Yorkers with a disability (ages 18-64) were employed, and, even if working, half of them were earning less than \$31,000 a year.^v These New Yorkers were and continue to be significantly more reliant on food stamps and public health coverage.^{vi} While all New Yorkers are navigating the same banking, credit and debt systems, and higher cost of living, New Yorkers with disabilities must do so with lower incomes and higher unemployment rates.

EmpoweredNYC was an opportunity to design a program tailored to the needs of the community. EmpoweredNYC educates clients about federal and state public benefits available for those returning to work and provide financial counseling in order to strengthen the financial capability of New Yorkers with disabilities. Everything about EmpoweredNYC, including messaging, branding, service provider selection, training content, outreach, marketing, performance metrics, and the accessibility of the service locations, was created with the target community in mind. EmpoweredNYC even launched the City's first public awareness campaign targeting people with disabilities.

In an effort to eliminate as many barriers to services as possible, the financial counseling services were co-located with other community services, and locations were selected based on accessibility and on being in communities with a high density of people with disabilities. By placing the EmpoweredNYC financial counseling service within more than 20 community-based organizations, we were able to leverage opportunities for client referrals and forge strong relationships with these organizations as they integrated financial counseling into their work.

Through EmpoweredNYC, clients met with specially trained

professional financial counselors for free, one-on-one, confidential counseling about banking, credit, debt, and savings. Counselors also assisted with navigating the asset limits and rules of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, tackling Social Security Administration (SSA) overpayments, and avoiding common benefits-related challenges when transitioning to work. During the 2019 pilot of EmpoweredNYC, 667 New Yorkers participated in more than 1,100 financial counseling sessions.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on all of New York City, communities where New Yorkers with disabilities live were hit particularly hard. Eleven of the 14 target EmpoweredNYC zip codes were among the hardest hit by COVID-19.^{vii} EmpoweredNYC, as with all DCWP financial counseling programs, transitioned to remote, phone-based counseling and is available to support New Yorkers with disabilities during this unprecedented health and financial crisis.

The program is poised to provide services that are now needed more than ever. EmpoweredNYC financial counselors can help New Yorkers with disabilities with benefits-related situations such as providing accurate information about earning income and maintaining benefits, understanding wages, researching eligible work incentives, understanding SSA overpayment and filing an appeal if needed, and opening a safe and affordable bank account, such as an NY ABLE account.

A financial counselor can also support navigating sudden changes to household budget or income, developing a strategy to reduce debt, balancing a household budget, drafting letters to creditors to lower or temporarily suspend payments due to hardship, and finding local, state, and federal resources.

As we begin to see what the lasting effects of COVID-19 will

be on New York City and its residents, the City of New York is committed to supporting New Yorkers with disabilities and their families to improve their financial health.

Over the course of 2020, remote EmpoweredNYC financial counseling services were available, and several former Empowered NYC financial counselors now provide counseling through the larger NYC financial empowerment network.

Moving into 2021, EmpoweredNYC will continue in two directions. First, DCWP will be developing curriculum based on the trainings and learnings from EmpoweredNYC to train additional financial counselors and the broader network of financial counseling providers so they can tailor their services to the needs of people with disabilities.

Second, the remote EmpoweredNYC financial counseling services from 2020 will be extended through December 31, 2021. This bridge to the next phase of EmpoweredNYC is made possible by the support of Citi, The Taft Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

Empowered Cities

Individuals with disabilities and their families are one of the most underserved and financially vulnerable segments of the NYC population, often overlooked in the current dialogue around diversity and inclusion. Financial stability is crucial to the success of all New Yorkers. Understanding the financial implications of new opportunities, such as full-time employment, is key to making informed decisions.

Approximately 18 months after its initial launch, EmpoweredNYC has made an impact on the financial inclusion of New Yorkers

with disabilities. In May 2019, Citi sponsored the first ever multi-city convening of municipal leaders to address the needs of people with disabilities and their families. Leaders from New York, Boston, Cambridge, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Houston, and Philadelphia gathered in New York City to learn and exchange ideas regarding programs and policies that support their constituents' financial inclusion and sustainability.

The convening confirmed the need for expanding EmpoweredNYC as a national initiative, Empowered Cities, and to focus municipal support for people with disabilities on three pillars: Financial Inclusion, Employment/Training and Accessible Affordable Housing.



Empowered Cities launched in 2019 with support from Citi. Empowered Cities (EC) is a collaboration co-chaired by the MOPD Commissioners of Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and New York City. Spearheaded by New York City's MOPD, Empowered Cities will elevate the voices of municipal leaders and

Commissioners from offices for disabilities across the country and bring a disability lens to the national discussion.

Building a national network will ensure that cities and municipal leaders can collaborate, share best practices, and challenge each other to improve and innovate programs. We will build a collective voice to advocate for policy to gain inclusivity and empowerment for people with disabilities and their families.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession, people with disabilities faced tremendous barriers to financial security. Prior to the pandemic, more than a quarter of people

with disabilities in the United States lived in poverty and over two-thirds of adults with disabilities were out of work. Further, researchers estimate that in the United States, a household which includes an adult with a disability that limits their ability to work requires, on average, 28% more income (or an additional \$17,690 a year) to obtain the same standard of living as a similar household without a member with a disability.^{viii} The context for the work of Empowered Cities is more urgent than ever.

The pandemic has mobilized the leaders of Empowered Cities to:

- Meet the immediate needs of the disability community related to the COVID-19 crisis;
- Address long-standing equity issues magnified by the COVID-19 crisis, including accessibility, health care, food insecurity, and the digital divide; and
- Identify strategies to increase access to financial empowerment, employment, and affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities.

Bank On



Additionally, MOPD partnered with Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE), a national nonprofit organization, to promote Bank On. Bank On is a national project that supports close to 90 local coalitions across the country, made up of nonprofit groups, consumer advocates, policy makers, federal regulators, financial institutions, and

local elected officials that works to ensure that everyone has

access to a safe and affordable bank or credit union account. Bank On has certified accounts at 45 financial institutions available at 24,000 bank and credit union branches across the country. NYC MOPD worked with CFE to ensure that their Bank On COVID-19 promotional toolkit is fully accessible and share it with the Empowered Cities and other municipal partners.

NY ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Accounts

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 allows those with disabilities to save for qualified disability expenses without the risk of losing their benefits from assistance programs like SSI and Medicaid.

To be eligible for an NY ABLE account, the individual must be disabled before the age of 24. Anyone can contribute to an NY ABLE account, and there are many ways to contribute. An account can be opened for as little as \$25.

MOPD works with representatives from NY ABLE to educate New Yorkers with disabilities about this program. For more information about New York ABLE accounts visit mynyable.org.

Housing

The City continues to work hard to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to gain accessible housing. We continue to develop new accessible units, create new rules to obtain existing accessible units, discover new ways to identify existing accessible units, and create more opportunities to provide modifications in New Yorkers' current housing units to improve and expand the supply of accessible housing.

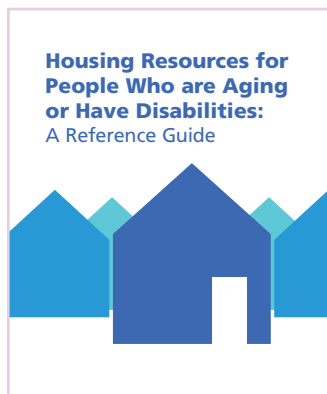


St. Augustine Apartment, 1180 Fulton Avenue, The Bronx, 2019.
Credit: Jonathan Patkowski for HPD

The City also recognizes the need to create housing policies that address the needs of New Yorkers as well as augment current policies and systems to alleviate issues that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City and State placed a moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shut offs. The City lobbied the State to push forward a policy change allowing people to use their security deposit to pay a month's rent. The Mayor urged the Rent Guidelines Board to freeze rents for the year.

DSS Housing Resources



In late 2018, the Department of Social Services (DSS) 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. DSS is currently updating the Guide to include additional housing programs and resources and, once completed, will share the Guide widely with staff and vendors.

The DSS Source of Income Discrimination (SOI) Unit works to prevent and prosecute instances of housing discrimination based on lawful source of income (including disability-related income and housing subsidies) through an approach that includes education and outreach, pre-complaint intervention, investigations, and filing and prosecuting complaints on behalf of the City.

New York City's Office of Civil Justice (OCJ), a part of the City's Human Resources Administration (HRA), provides access to a range of civil legal services for New Yorkers in need, including tenants, immigrants, low-wage workers, and other New Yorkers facing civil legal challenges. Today, New York City is a national leader in providing legal assistance to low-income families and individuals.

Through OCJ, New York City has led the way in providing access to legal help for tenants facing eviction and housing instability, with approximately 450,000 New Yorkers receiving free housing legal assistance since 2014. In 2017, the City enacted the “tenant’s right to counsel” law and became the first city in the nation to establish a program to provide access to eviction-defense legal services in housing court or administrative proceedings for all tenants facing eviction. Since OCJ began making legal services widely accessible for tenants, the percentage of tenants represented in court by counsel has risen dramatically, reaching 38% in Fiscal Year 2020, compared to only 1% in FY 2013.

OCJ also provides free legal assistance programs for immigrant New Yorkers, low-wage workers, seniors, survivors of domestic violence, veterans, and other New Yorkers in need. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/civiljustice or email civiljustice@hra.nyc.gov.

Housing Connect 2.0

The screenshot displays the NYC Housing Connect 2.0 website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Dashboard, Open Lotteries, About, Learn, and a Menu dropdown. A search bar is located below the navigation bar, with the text "Search Open Lotteries" and a home icon. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Rentals" (selected) and "Sales". The main content area shows "21 Rental Lotteries" and a prompt to "Refine your search to find the right lottery for you". A "Sort by Days Remaining" dropdown menu is visible, along with a "Refine Search" button. Three lottery listings are shown as cards:

- METCALF AVENUE APARTMENTS**: Lottery closing in 57 days, 223 Units Available, Nearby Transit (6), Southeast Bronx | Bronx.
- 885 Rogers Plaza**: Lottery closing in 54 days, 32 Units Available, Nearby Transit (2, 5, B, Q, S), Flatbush | Brooklyn.
- VAN DYKE III**: Lottery closing in 50 days, 125 Units Available, Nearby Transit (A, C, J, L, Z), East New York and New Lots | Brooklyn.

Each listing card includes a "Summary" tab (selected), "Details", and "Map" options.

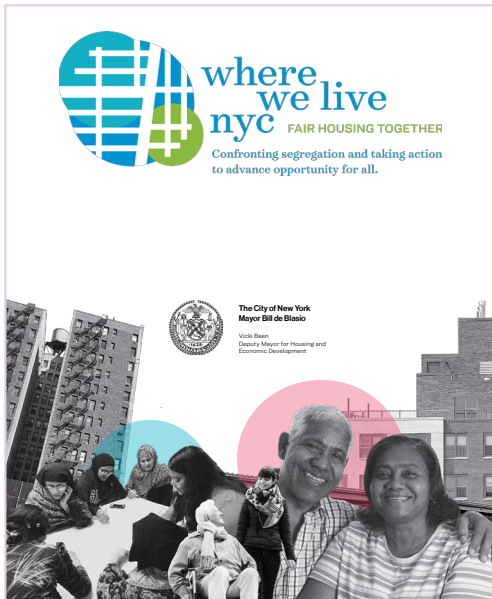
NYC Housing Connect 2.0 Website

In July 2020, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) launched the new Housing Connect online system for applying to affordable housing opportunities in New York City. The affordable housing application portal was completely redesigned, and includes additional features to assist people with disabilities track units set-aside for people with specific disabilities, and provide new opportunities for renting apartments beyond initial occupancy.

The biggest positive result from the pandemic is the increase in online and virtual options. To increase access and make housing assistance and affordable housing processes simpler, the City should continue to invest in moving these processes online. For

instance, creating a 'Housing Connect' like portal for applying to Project-Based Section 8 developments.

Where We Live NYC Plan



In October 2020, the City released the final [Where We Live NYC plan](#), which was the culmination of a comprehensive, inclusive fair housing planning process that centered the housing needs of New Yorkers with disabilities. The final plan includes seven commitments to create more independent and integrated living options for people with disabilities.

The City engaged hundreds of residents, over 150 community-based and advocacy organizations, and dozens of governmental agencies through the Where We Live NYC process to discuss difficult fair housing issues, including persistent discrimination in the housing market, segregation in our neighborhoods and schools, and unequal access to amenities and resources on the basis of race, disability, and other characteristics protected by fair housing laws.

This Plan brings together data, experiences, and feedback received from many different sources. After the release of a draft version in January 2020, the Final Plan is responsive to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and includes additional analyses, new metrics for measuring success, and more concrete and specific actions that the City will undertake through 2025.

MOPD played a key role in ensuring that the Where We Live Plan reflects the voice of the disability community and the barriers faced by them. We consulted with HPD, the lead agency on the Plan, on all aspects of the process to make sure a cross-section of the disability community was engaged. MOPD participated in feedback sessions, helped to facilitate community forums, and provided comments on the Plan.

New York City is home to approximately one million New Yorkers who identify as living with a disability, and New Yorkers with disabilities tend to be concentrated (greater than 20%) in certain neighborhoods, many of which also have a high concentration of poverty. These areas include the Bronx, upper Manhattan, the Lower East Side, parts of east Brooklyn, Coney Island, and the Rockaways.

Services for People Experiencing Homelessness

One way to improve access to housing for people with disabilities is to provide more supportive housing. Supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective approach to addressing the needs of people who are homeless and have a mental illness, substance-use disorders, or have other barriers to independence. By providing tenants with permanent, rent-stabilized housing with access to onsite case management, alcohol and substance-use programs, and other social services, supportive housing reduces the need for placement in higher-cost homeless shelters, hospitals, mental-health institutions, jails, and prisons. In November 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced his landmark commitment to provide 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years to the most vulnerable New Yorkers. These units will house adult families experiencing

chronic homelessness, single adults, and families with children who have serious mental health disabilities and/or substance-use disorders. There are also units designated for young adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness that have high utilization of City services.

To improve access to supportive housing for eligible individuals and families with mental health conditions, HRA expanded the types of professionals allowed to complete a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation as part of the HRA 2010e application. Additionally, it is no longer required to provide the supervising psychiatrist's name and license number. For guidance on completing a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation, please refer to the Center for Urban Community Services' guide: [Suggested Outline for the HRA 2010e Psychiatric Summary](#).

DHS has refined its organizational structure so that it can more effectively address the challenges of homelessness every day. Currently, the shelter census numbers which were held flat over three years for the first time in a decade through the strategies we have implemented, is now below 54,000. DHS has accomplished this by helping more than 155,000 New Yorkers move out of shelters or avoid homelessness through rental assistance and rehousing programs. DHS and contracted homeless outreach providers have helped more than 3,000 unsheltered New Yorkers come in off the streets via HOME-STAT, the nation's largest street outreach program. As part of the comprehensive effort to transform the City's shelter system, DHS has sited 80 new, high-quality borough-based shelters across the five boroughs, including sites with accessible units and beds to better address the needs of shelter clients with disabilities.

Based on the settlement of the *Butler* Lawsuit in 2017, DSS and

DHS leadership have:

- Hired a Director of Disability Affairs for Homeless Services;
- Hired a Disability Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) Director;
- Engaged an experienced consulting firm to assess shelter accessibility;
- Established a multi-disciplinary workgroup and several sub-workgroups to improve policies and procedures around the provision of reasonable accommodations; and
- Embarked on a process to develop training for all shelter employees on successfully serving people with disabilities.

As part of this training development, DSS has already implemented an *Introduction to Disabilities* training that promotes positive interactions/outcomes, explores the history of the disability rights movement, discusses related legal requirements, outlines reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette/culture, and addresses attitudes that can be barriers to effectively working with people with disabilities. 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 intake facilities and the Office of the Ombudsman. DSS and DHS have also embarked on a process to ensure more consistent and streamlined access to sign language interpretation services for clients who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

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

As part of this Administration's commitment to using every tool

at our disposal to address and prevent homelessness, we are continuing to strengthen our processes around our supportive housing programs, with enhancements including: streamlining the housing application process by creating a vacancy control system that will better identify units for households who need accommodations; further expanding the pool of eligible professionals who can submit housing applications; reducing barriers for clients with behavioral health issues; enhancing the client experience by restructuring the client interview process, including the implementation of remote interviews and virtual unit viewings during the COVID-19 pandemic; and simplifying the document submission process by clearly outlining at the outset the documentation requirements for all City agencies, as well as housing providers and property managers.

Identifying affordable housing that is accessible is a significant challenge citywide. This is even more true for individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness and/or living in temporary housing. To support efforts to identify and secure appropriate housing opportunities in the community for New Yorkers with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness and residing in shelter, DHS is tracking basic accessibility features of apartments when conducting inspections. This information will be compiled into a database that will enable staff to find potential housing for clients.

DHS Initiatives During COVID-19

To respond to the immediate, complex threat COVID-19 posed for residents of the City's shelter system, DHS mobilized its efforts on a scale that was unprecedented in the history of the Agency. Establishing protocols and moving clients to isolation beds in commercial hotels, reducing density in shelters, and

providing PPE to our clients and staff were crucial steps the Agency took to protect shelter clients.

For individuals who were experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, DHS secured hundreds of isolation beds in commercial hotels at the high point of the pandemic, an important factor in helping to stop the spread of infection. To protect clients at risk, the Agency also effected the strategic relocation of approximately 10,000 adult individuals at the height of the pandemic, beginning with the transfer of DHS clients aged 70 and over to commercial hotels and continued with additional transfers of single adult clients in congregate shelters. In all, through the transfer of thousands of individuals out of congregate settings into commercial hotel locations, more than 12,000 of the 18,000 single adults in DHS shelters are now residing in commercial hotel locations, helping to stop the spread of the virus.

To increase the Agency's capacity to serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness—an important consideration given the Agency's expanded outreach efforts at end-of-line subway stations during the MTA's nighttime shutdown—the Agency worked to secure more than 1,200 new safe haven and stabilization beds, establishing such beds in commercial hotels. The Agency also established an additional drop-in center near Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx. And to ensure outreach teams were equipped with as many tools as possible to assisting unsheltered New Yorkers, we established a streamlined outreach intake process, a new process by which outreach providers can conduct intake and shelter assessments in subway stations and provide a direct placement from the subway station.

Additionally, in further efforts to streamline the intake process across the board amid this crisis, DHS also simplified the process for families applying to shelter by eliminating some

in-person appointments and shifting to conducting interviews by phone; both were steps that helped the Agency reduce the risk of infection for both staff members and clients, and contributed to the Agency's efforts to provide services in a safe manner. In further efforts to streamline the intake process, DHS also established a new process by which outreach providers can conduct intake in subway stations and provide a direct placement from the subway station.

DHS remains committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers experiencing homelessness have access to safe and secure shelter placements. As we work with the City's health experts and follow the science and the data, including to closely monitor indicators, DHS will continue to operate the single adult congregate shelter density reduction initiative. Any future changes will reflect public health guidance.

Project Open House

Project Open House (POH) uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to remove architectural barriers from the homes of New York City residents who have disabilities. The extent of the work depends on the needs of the applicant. Projects include grab bar installations, main entry components (ramp, lift, and door), and kitchen and bathroom modifications. Project Open House affords program recipients greater independence through greater accessibility of their living environment.

This past Fiscal Year, 73 applications were received and are being reviewed for eligibility. Initially, the COVID-19 pandemic halted construction work but once resumed, we were able to complete four projects and are working on six more.

Access

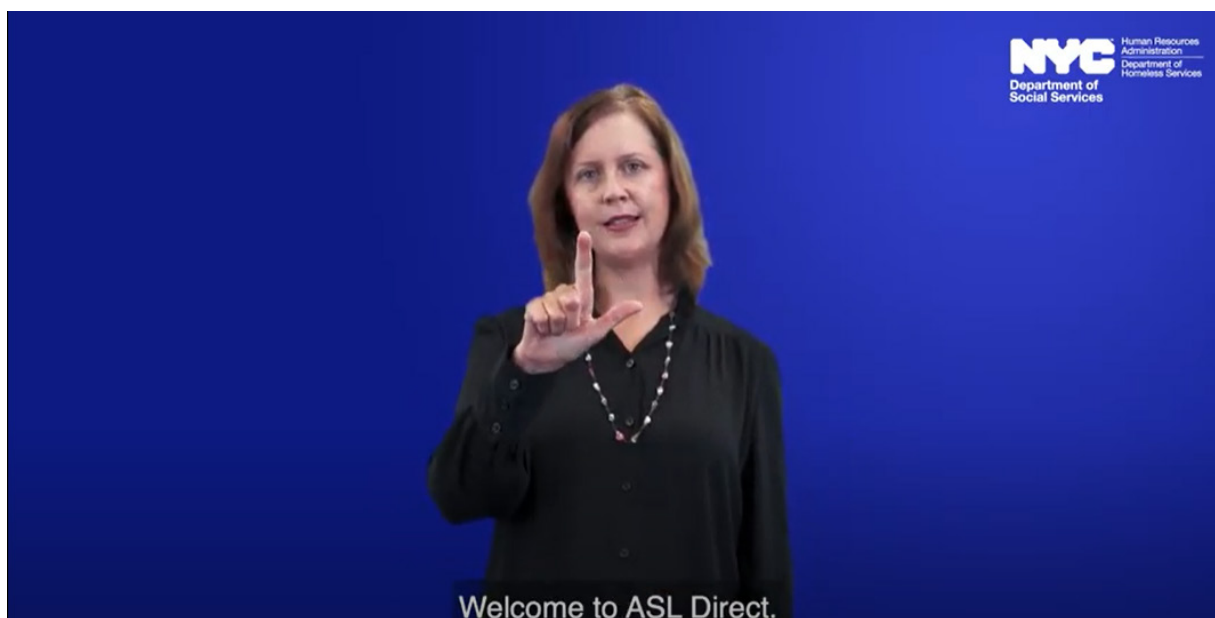
This section provides a review of the programs, services, policies, and initiatives that increase access for persons with disabilities to their neighborhoods as well as throughout the five boroughs.

ASL Direct

ASL Direct is a video conferencing line where constituents who prefer to communicate in American Sign Language (ASL) can be directly connected to an information specialist fluent in ASL.

In the past year, ASL Direct has connected with nearly one thousand constituents, providing them with resources and information in American Sign Language. During 2020, most calls concerned availability of PPE and COVID-19 testing as well as assistance with filing for unemployment and housing.

Since its inception in 2018, the program consists of two individuals at MOPD who not only provide information via video phone (646-396-5830) or at nyc.gov/asl but also organize community meetings and work with other entities to provide more effective communication to individuals who prefer to communicate in ASL. For example, ASL Direct staff worked with LinkNYC to ensure that Smart City technology was part of the Links so individuals who want to call via video phone had the ability to do so. As a result, in August 2019 the Purple Video Relay Service application became available on the Links.



ASL Direct Video from NYC DSS

In 2019 an ASL Direct Resource Specialist was placed at HRA's Infoline call center, where people can access information on all public benefits available in New York City. To further facilitate communication between DHS and HRA staff and sign language users, DSS utilizes an ASL (American Sign Language) Options Card. Specifically, the card is designed to inform 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), in-person interpretation, and scheduling an appointment for a later date and time. For more information on using this tool or for information on contacting HRA and DHS via ASL Direct, visit [ASL Services for HRA and DHS Clients](#) or use your video phone to call 347-474-4231.

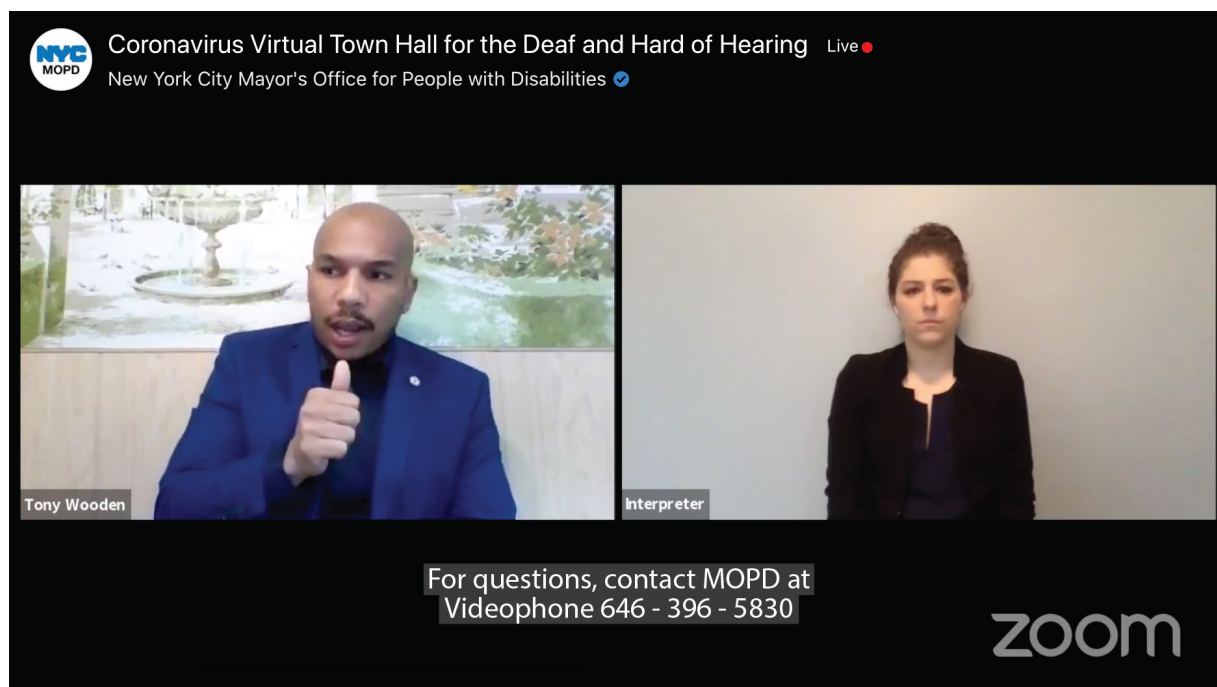
ASL Direct staff will continue to work with other agencies to explore opportunities to provide ASL Direct within their programs.

Deaf Town Halls

Prior to the pandemic, MOPD hosted two in-person Deaf Town Halls for the Deaf community. The first was on November 27, 2018 at the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library. We introduced ASL Direct to a group of 20 Deaf individuals. They were shown how to access it and what it looks like via PowerPoint. Future access for the Deaf community was also discussed. It was stated that access within the homeless shelter system was lacking as well as access when dealing with emergency services such as Police, EMS, and Fire. As a result of this, ASL Direct brought DSS in contact with Sorenson Videophone to install video phones within each shelter. Unfortunately, the implementation of this has been on hold.

The second Deaf Town Hall was on August 27, 2019 at MOPD's office at 100 Gold Street and had over 70 attendees. We gave an overview of ASL Direct and the services provided to the Deaf and hard of hearing residents of New York City. After the presentation, we opened the floor to allow community members and organizations to introduce themselves and announce any upcoming events as well as details on where to get more information. We also asked the community to share their vision of what they would like to see in NYC regarding accessibility for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. One of the major topics discussed during the event was the possibility of NYC establishing a Deaf organization to be responsible for Deaf culture events. This organization would represent all things Deaf regarding referrals and resources as well as setting up various events in NYC for the community to come together and preserve the culture of ASL and simply meet others who are like themselves. In the past, there was an organization established

for the Deaf but dismantled due to lack of funds, leadership, and interest. Overall, the attendees were thrilled to have a Deaf Town Hall hosted by the Mayor's Office and to have someone from the Deaf community working at MOPD representing them in City government.



Virtual Deaf Town Hall on April 30th, 2020

With the onset of COVID-19, we moved the April 30, 2020 Deaf Town Hall to a virtual platform via Zoom webinar. The event was streamed live through MOPD's Facebook page and had close to 100 people registered. During this town hall, we focused on providing information regarding COVID-19 and NYC resources. All the information was provided in American Sign Language as well as captioning. Unfortunately, while streaming from Zoom to Facebook Live the captioning was delayed for individuals participating via Facebook.

We learned from the April event and held the next Deaf Town Hall on September 24, 2020 through Zoom webinar. This event had close to one hundred attendees. We invited speakers from several City Agencies to provide updates on their respective fields/jobs, to explain how the pandemic may impact the Deaf community, and talk about available resources. The topics presented included COVID-19 updates, Text-to-911, availability of clear masks, Department of Education's Interpreting Services and re-opening of schools during COVID-19, importance of completing the 2020 Census, voting and accommodations, financial empowerment, and resources.

After all the panelists provided their information, the community had the opportunity to question the panelists directly and receive their answers. This event provided three interpreters and captions, which allowed individuals who are Deaf to ask questions in their native language.

One concern that we will work on, is how to provide Deaf Town Halls to community members who are unable to participate because they lack Wi-Fi or internet capabilities or those who are Deaf/blind.

Disability Service Facilitators

Since Local Law 27 of 2016 was enacted, Disability Service Facilitators (DSF) have been designated in over 45 agencies creating easy entry points for the public to obtain information, services, and assistance around issues related to disability. A list of the DSF's and their contact information is available at nyc.gov/dsf.

MOPD sends out quarterly surveys for each DSF to complete

and convenes quarterly meetings for the DSFs to discuss disability topics important to their agency. These meetings create opportunities for potential collaborations across agencies and programs. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we began meeting weekly to ensure that all agencies are up to date with the happenings of the City and are providing adequate assistance to the disability community.



Assistant Commissioner Martha Jackson provides a virtual presentation on Employment during MOPD's ADA Coordinator/DSF Training Series

Typically, MOPD partners with the ADA National Network and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to provide the DSF Training Academy including information on compliance, guidelines, resources, and other pertinent information specific to City governmental programs and services offered to New Yorkers with

disabilities. Due to the pandemic, the DSF Training Academy was delivered via Zoom meetings consisting of four two-hour sessions during November 2020. Resources and information on the laws governing the disability community are constantly updated at nyc.gov/mopd.

We will continue to work with the DSFs and provide additional training opportunities.

New York City Commission on Human Rights

The NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) is the City agency that enforces the NYC Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation, and requires that people with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations. If someone is facing discrimination on the basis of their disability or is not being given a reasonable accommodation in the workplace, in housing, or in public accommodations, they can contact CCHR by going to nyc.gov/humanrights, calling 311, or calling the CCHR directly at (212) 416-0197.



**Fear about COVID-19 is not
an excuse for harassment
or discrimination.**

NYC Commission on
Human Rights

NYC Human Rights PSA

CCHR has, since the early days of the pandemic, considered actual or perceived infection with COVID-19 to be protected as a disability under the NYC Human Rights Law. Beginning in March 2020, CCHR published guidance on the intersection between COVID-19 and the NYC Human Rights Law, which is continually updated as the situation in New York City, and our understanding of the virus, evolves. The guidance provides information on one's rights with respect to COVID-19 as a disability in the workplace, in housing, and in public accommodations. People cannot be discriminated against because of their actual or perceived infection with COVID-19 or an underlying disability that places them at greater risk of complication from infection with COVID-19. In addition, covered employers, housing providers, and providers of public accommodations have an ongoing duty to provide people with disabilities with reasonable accommodations, including those related to COVID-19. In April 2020, CCHR launched a COVID-19 rapid response team comprised of

Law Enforcement and Community Relations staff that quickly tracks and responds to harassment and discrimination incidents connected to the pandemic. As of October 2020, CCHR has had 28 successful pre-complaint interventions that included a COVID-19-related disability claim.

Access to accommodations in housing can be a life or death situation for people with disabilities in New York City, which is why the CCHR intervenes early when it learns of alleged acts of discrimination based on disability. Project Equal Access provides pre-complaint intervention advocacy to work with housing providers to make facilities accessible to people with disabilities, including installing ramps, renovating bathrooms and other areas to make them accessible, installing electronic doors, grab bars and handrails, and training staff on how to accommodate people with disabilities. While some of this work became more challenging due to the pandemic, in Fiscal Year 2020, CCHR achieved 72 reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities without having to file a complaint.

CCHR's Community Relations Bureau educates the public on protections against discrimination based on disability status by conducting workshops and hosting various programs. The Community Relations Bureau has a dedicated training on the NYC Human Rights Law and protections for people with disabilities and incorporates issues on disability rights into general workshops and presentations on human rights law protections. In December 2019, CCHR hosted a roundtable for Deaf and hard of hearing community members to discuss ways the agency can assist with the various issues community members face. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Relations Bureau hosted dozens of Know Your Rights programs which discussed protections for

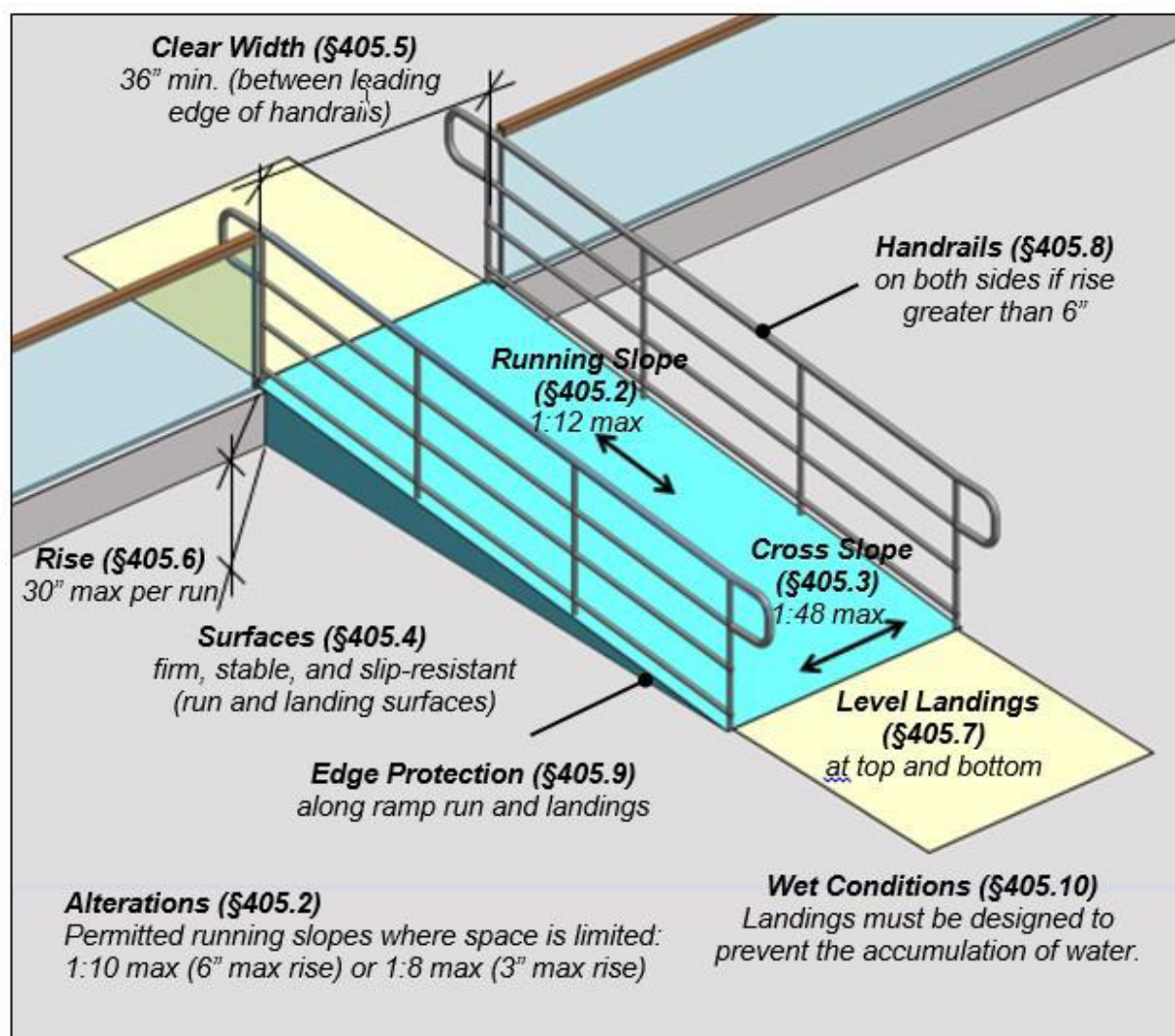
those who have, or are perceived to have, COVID-19.

CCHR's Law Enforcement Bureau investigates claims of discrimination brought by members of the public and can obtain accommodations, monetary damages, and other relief for people who have experienced discrimination. In Fiscal Year 2020, disability discrimination claims represented the most common claim filed at the CCHR at 18.6% of all claims, totaling 199 claims filed (133 disability discrimination claims in employment; 41 in housing; and 25 in public accommodations). Disability discrimination claims were also the most common claims where the Commission was able to successfully intervene without having to file a complaint, making up almost 34.8% of all successful intervention claims, totaling 188 claims (10 disability discrimination claims in employment; 118 in housing; and 35 in public accommodations).

While most cases filed at CCHR resolve prior to the issuance of a final Decision and Order, CCHR issued one final Decision and Order in two consolidated disability discrimination cases in Fiscal Year 2020, *Commission on Human Rights ex rel. Goldstein v. Limón Jungle* and *Commission on Human Rights v. Intermezzo*. The decision, issued September 25, 2019, held that the Respondents, who are sophisticated restaurant operators with nine locations in New York City, repeatedly discriminated against customers with service animals. The Commission ordered Respondents to pay Complainant \$14,000 in emotional distress damages, undergo training on the New York City Human Rights Law, post a notice of rights, undergo two years of monitoring by the Law Enforcement Bureau, and pay a fine of \$50,000. The full [Decision and Order is available on the CCHR's website](#).

Open Restaurants

NYC's Open Restaurant program is an effort to implement a citywide multi-phase program to expand outdoor seating options for food establishments to promote open space, enhance social distancing, and help them rebound in these difficult economic times. On [September 25, 2020, NYC announced that the Open Restaurants program will be made permanent](#). Restaurants will be permitted to use heating and enclosures as well as expand seating to adjacent properties with neighbors' consent. The requirements for Open Restaurants mandates accessibility including providing an 8-foot clear path on the sidewalk for pedestrians, accessible tables, and an accessible route to on street seating via ramp or decking. For more guidance, visit MOPD's [Small Business Resources](#) page. If an individual sees any violations, they can report them by calling 311 or texting 311-692.



Technical Drawing from NYC MOPD Open Restaurants Accessibility Guide

In addition, New York City partnered with NYCxDISIGN, the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIANY), Design Advocates, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to form Design Corps, calling on designers, architects, and the broader design community who are individually licensed or associated with a firm to provide pro bono design services to help restaurants successfully reopen. The services include meeting with business owners and providing recommendations to

help improve their space and ensure compliance with the requirements of the City's Open Restaurant program, New York State's Guidance for New York City Indoor Food Services, and New York State's Guidelines for Reopening Indoor Food Services in the City. Design professionals will provide pro bono services that fall within the scope of indoor and outdoor dining and will be available on a first come, first served basis. [Learn more about Design Corps on NYCxDesign's Website](#)

Access HRA

The Human Resources Administration (HRA) continued 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, 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. ACCESS HRA is also available as a mobile app on any smart device. Through the site, clients can apply and re-certify for SNAP and Cash Assistance (CA) benefits and retrieve case information such as the status of their applications and their EBT balances; view upcoming appointments and documents that need to be submitted; and update their contact information. 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. 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 utilizing the site to help clients with their cases. ACCESS HRA mobile app allows clients to electronically upload

documentation for their SNAP or CA case and Fair Fare NYC Program by taking pictures or selecting from gallery the document required and submit them for agency review.

HRA services during COVID-19

By accessing several time-limited Federal and State waivers, HRA was able to make several changes to service delivery to keep clients safe, including allowing interviews to be conducted via telephone rather than in person. HRA eliminated requirements for in-person appointments for all programs and stopped negative case actions for any appointments already scheduled during the COVID-19 crisis.

To protect clients' safety, HRA consolidated their HRA Job, SNAP, and Medicaid Center locations. As a result of these consolidations, New Yorkers were encouraged to apply for public benefits online at ACCESS HRA in order to prevent unnecessary visits to an HRA center. For clients who cannot or do not want to apply online, a list of Job, SNAP, and Medicaid Center locations and listed online.

[Find Job and Service Centers](#)

[Find SNAP Centers](#)

[Find Medicaid Offices](#)

During the pandemic, HRA has made changes to the application and recertification submission process for individuals who are unable to use ACCESS HRA or come into one of the open Job Centers. Individuals applying or recertifying have the option to do so:

- In person at one of the open Job Centers;
- Online through ACCESS HRA;
- Through the mail;
- Over the telephone if other submission methods are not viable options for the applicant; or
- Through a home visit, if necessary.

HRA also obtained a signature waiver during COVID-19 enabling clients with disabilities or other hardships that made applying online difficult, to apply for Cash Assistance, Emergency Assistance and SNAP over the phone with HRA staff and mail, fax or upload documentation.

The Agency continues to conduct home visits for those clients who could not visit ACCESS HRA and who could not apply or recertify by other means, but the Agency attempts to limit home visits whenever possible in order to protect clients with disabilities, some of whom may be especially vulnerable during the pandemic. For those clients who have previously needed home visits, and who may have been experiencing additional challenges with accessing food and medical care, the Agency also began calling these clients to conduct wellness checks; these phone calls enabled the agency to refer home visit clients to food delivery programs when needed, as well as referring them to their primary treatment providers if they were experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Access to 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.

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 1.3 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.

Virtual Access to Arts and Culture

MOPD's digital team provided consultations for cultural institutions (including New York Botanical Gardens, Central Park Conservancy, Posterhouse, and Gallop NYC) seeking to improve the accessibility of their electronic communications. Some of the topics covered include alt-text for images as well as captions and audio description for videos/live performances.



Screenshot from Accessible Videos Presentation

Also, to support New Yorkers with disabilities staying at home, MOPD put together a list of accessible virtual activities and events that are available on the MOPD website. These free or low-cost events and activities include:

- Audio described workouts and museum tours with verbal descriptions
- Accessible virtual art galleries that include alt-text for images
- Recorded tours or performances with captions or American Sign Language
- Autism-friendly programming
- Adaptive workouts and yoga for people with physical disabilities
- Podcasts and radio performances

Education

This section provides a review of the process by which collaborative partnerships with other levels of government, academic institutions, and the private sector support people with disabilities, as well as efforts to educate others to better communicate and interact with people with disabilities.

Community Engagement

Once the pandemic set in and gatherings and meetings were no longer an option, we established a weekly Zoom call with the community to provide updates on the latest COVID-19 news and programs. Many City agencies participated on a weekly basis including DOHMH, EM, and DSS; while other agencies came in periodically to report relevant information. This included, DOE, CCHR, DemocracyNYC. In August, the calls went to every other week and in October they became monthly meetings. We will continue holding these virtual meetings even after the pandemic ends and in person will be allowed as some individuals are unable to travel to our offices but will still want to participate and stay informed. At the beginning our weekly participation was over 100 callers and as the City began to reopen in the summer, attendance remained at 50 to 70 callers.

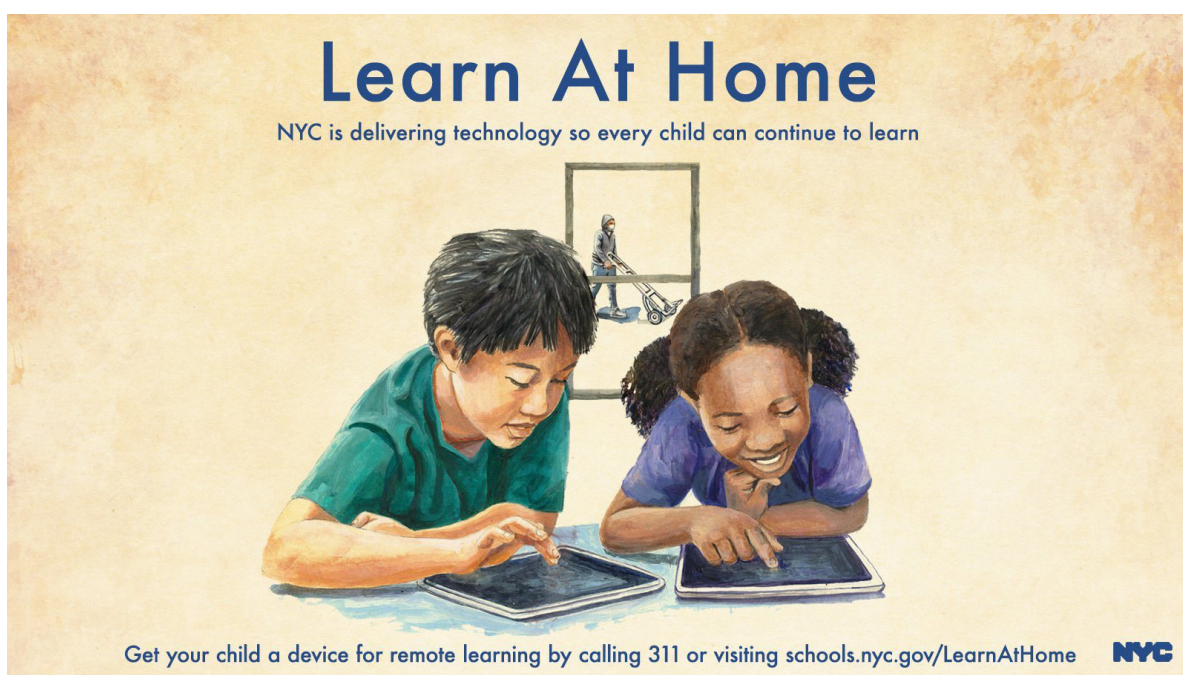


MOPD COVID19 Call with the Disability Community,
September 4th 2020.

These community calls are only one way we interact with the community. We also offered a wide variety of events during July for the 30th anniversary of the ADA and in October for the 75th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). These special events were in addition to our virtual trainings offered to businesses, organizations, and government agencies as well as our normal daily activities of meeting in smaller groups to discuss particular topics and answering telephone and e-mail inquiries. In total at time of publication, we hosted 25 Community Calls, 32 Virtual events, and 36 various training sessions for MOPD public and private partners.

DOE Remote Learning

Nearly 20% of the over one million NYC K-12 students have a disability and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Many of the programs provided offer highly specialized education for students who have disabilities and learn in various ways. Thus, school building closure creates particular hardships for students with disabilities and their families. With that mind, throughout the pandemic, the DOE has prioritized continuity of services for students with IEPs and supports for their families.



In March, the DOE began issuing iPads with data plans to students who would otherwise be unable to connect with schools through remote learning. Students with IEPs were prioritized in the distribution process, and as of late October, over 100,000 iPads have been provided to students with IEPs. Aided by these devices, DOE providers have delivered nearly three million remote sessions of speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling to students with

IEPs since March. The DOE has also kept in touch with families through over 120,000 remote IEP meetings, and the DOE's central Special Education Office continues to monitor and respond to parent inquiries via our specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov inbox and 311.

Recognizing that in-person service is critical to maintaining progress for some students with IEPs, the DOE sought to resume the safe delivery of in-person instruction and related services as soon as possible. When in-person special education services were authorized to resume, the DOE developed comprehensive health and safety protocols and training for providers, and identified 12 school sites—at least two in each borough—to deliver in-person related services, beginning in July. Through the combined efforts of DOE staff and families who opted in, the DOE served 625 students in-person, safely. New York City was the only major urban school district in the nation to provide in-person services over the summer.

The DOE has also been ahead of other districts in opening schools this fall. When schools reopened for in-person instruction in September, the DOE opened District 75 programs (for students with the most significant disabilities) first. District 75 programs are serving some students every day. The DOE is working to expand full-time offerings for students with IEPs in all schools, as much as possible given space, social distancing, and staffing limitations.

To document students' programs and services, the DOE created the Remote Learning Plan, for the spring; and the Program Adaptations Document (PAD) and Related Services Adaptations Document (RAD), for blended and fully remote learning this fall. The DOE has made clear that parent input is essential for the development of these documents, and the DOE has enhanced its systems to ensure that teachers

make every effort to discuss them with parents, using live interpretation when needed.

To further assist families to understand remote services and support the critical role they play in their children's education at home, the Special Education Office developed and launched the Beyond Access Series on June 1. These live one-hour online sessions share information on special education practices, based on feedback from families and advocates. Sessions have covered subjects including instructional strategies, sensory supports, and supporting Autistic students. The DOE will continue to offer the [Beyond Access Series](#) monthly throughout the school year. Families can access past sessions with captions available in 35 languages. This series has created a new avenue for sharing information with families, one that the DOE plans to maintain after the pandemic.

Going forward, every student should have a Remote Learning Plan on file that is developed in conjunction with the parents/primary caregivers. To the greatest extent possible, traditional learning should be maintained for those students with disabilities for whom remote learning is not feasible. However, remote learning should continue to be an option for students with disabilities who thrived learning in this manner and who may have more difficulty learning in a traditional setting.

Voting and Civic Engagement

Prior to the pandemic, MOPD and DemocracyNYC convened several organizations and stakeholders within the disability community to discuss access to voting and civic engagement in NYC and ways to ensure improvements moving into the 2020 elections and beyond. We conducted several surveys after elections in November 2019 and February 2020 to learn

about the voters' experience. Upon moving to a virtual reality, the Campaign Finance Board and DemocracyNYC co-hosted an Elections Consortium with representation from good-government groups, disability rights organizations, immigrant groups, and other community-based organizations to address issues related to voting safely during a pandemic and other barriers to the polls.

Following the 2020 presidential election, DemocracyNYC and MOPD held a listening session with the disability community along with representatives from the Board of Elections (BOE) to learn about the early voting experience and again conducted a survey to inform BOE of issues raised in order to make any necessary improvements.

Throughout 2019, MOPD worked with the Campaign Finance Board and DemocracyNYC to provide for the first time, the 2019 candidate video statements in the online Voter Guide in American Sign Language. This was replicated again in 2020 through picture-in-picture interpretation within video statements from the candidates who chose to participate.

Discussion on Race and Disabilities

In New York City, 73% of people with disabilities are people of color. Although the ADA paved the way for much progress towards equity for this community, disparities still exist at the intersections of multiple identities. To highlight these disparities, MOPD and the Office of Deputy Mayor Thompson hosted an event on race and disabilities in September 2020. Commissioner Calise kicked off the event, and Rasheta Bunting, Civic Engagement Coordinator of the Bronx Independent Living Center, moderated. Panelists included Ever Lee Hairston, *Board of Directors, National Federation for the Blind*; Daphne Frias, *Youth Activist and NY State Director of March for Our Lives*; and Namel Norris, *Artist and Community Activist*. The discussion explored and addressed the systemic challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) with disabilities and provided cultural and linguistic competent information and resources.

Participation in Racial Inclusion and Equity Taskforce

The Racial Inclusion and Equity Taskforce brings an equity-based approach to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. We participate as a subcommittee member and presented the following topics of concern to this taskforce:

1. Digital accessibility of telehealth solutions;
2. Training community-based health care providers about the needs of people with disabilities;
3. Establishing care systems and models that merge acute care with long term services and support;

4. Physical accessibility of health care facilities and examination equipment;
5. Effective communication: sign language interpreters, materials in formats for people who are blind/low vision;
6. Gaps in health insurance coverage for prescription drugs and durable medical equipment;
7. Access to accurate health care data for people with disabilities; and
8. Review of the City's procurement process and emphasize legally mandated accessibility requirements.

ADA 30th Anniversary Virtual Celebration



On July 26th, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law. Commonly known as the ADA, this law has been instrumental in creating more accessibility in employment and education, as well as public and digital spaces. July 2020 marked the 30th anniversary celebration of the signing of the ADA. Traditionally, the celebration of the ADA takes place with the NYC Disability Pride Parade as well as a series of other in-person events. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all

previously planned in-person events were migrated to a virtual platform.

In July, MOPD held and promoted well over 30 events in 30 days, including events focused on disability advocacy, employment, financial empowerment, and a weekly series on digital accessibility.



Excerpt from Our History: The photograph is from a 1997 action against Greyhound. Long after the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) had agreed to make buses accessible, Greyhound and other private carriers refused.

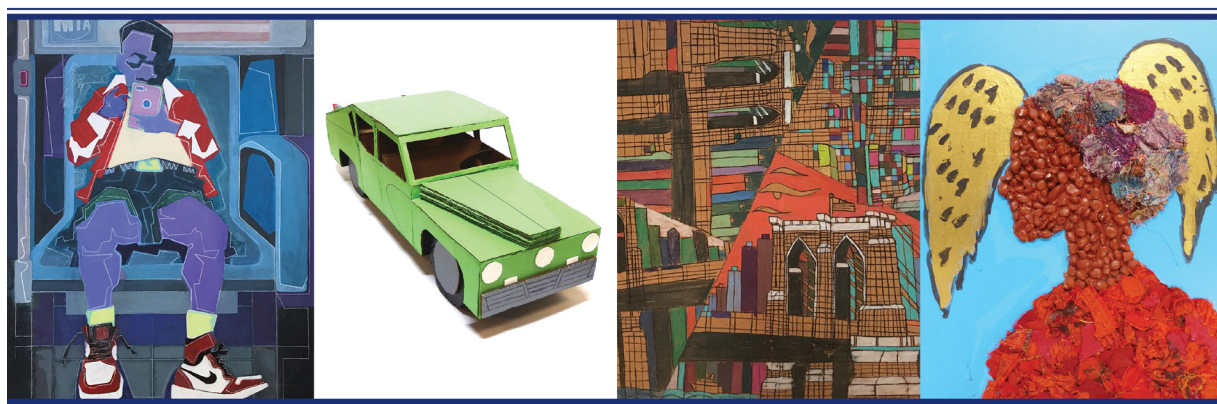
In honor of the 30th anniversary, we assembled and digitized a virtual exhibit on the disability rights movement. This virtual gallery is based on the first museum exhibition about the New York City Disability Rights Movement presented at the

Brooklyn Historical Society on July 1, 2015 in honor of the 25th anniversary of the ADA and curated by Warren Shaw.

Both the physical and virtual exhibits would not be possible without the generous donations from Carr Massi of Disabled in Action.

[Our History - Virtual Exhibit](#)

“The Journey” Virtual Art Exhibition



ADA 30 NYC
Americans with Disabilities Act
1990 - 2020

In addition, we proudly presented “The Journey,” a virtual exhibition of artists with disabilities. We received over 100 submissions of which we selected our favorite 30 submissions for the exhibition. Special thanks to our panel of judges from YAI Arts and Culture, The Met, Positive Exposure, Fountain House, Shield Institute and The League Center.

[View “The Journey” Virtual Exhibition Gallery](#)

Disability Unite

To conclude the 30th celebration of the ADA, MOPD partnered with Disability Unite to put on a variety of virtual programming for all ages. This day-long community event included musical and dance performances, powerful discussions about the issues of today, live gaming and much more. The event was curated by members of the disability community, and disabled artists included in the festival were paid for their artistry (at a time when many lacked employment) though generous funding from the Ford Foundation.



The Disability Unite Festival took place entirely online with a customized live stream experience to ensure the highest standards of digital accessibility. It also included the debut of Plain Language interpretation, the first time this accommodation was ever offered to the public in the United States. To view an archive of this celebration, visit DisabilityUnite.org

Conclusion



Photo from the 2019 Convening of Mayoral Offices from around the country focusing on disability. In this image Mayor de Blasio joins members of NYC MOPD as well as MOPDs from Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Though this report is divided into various topics, each topic intersects with the others. If transportation is not accessible individuals with disabilities cannot move about the City, thus limiting employment opportunities and socialization. If employers cannot see past a qualified job applicant's disability, that person cannot access accessible housing and take part in business and commerce because their disposable income is limited. If restaurants, businesses, museums, and government facilities are not accessible and do not offer programming that accommodates individuals with disabilities, those entities lose out on potential income not only from people with disabilities but their friends and families.

As we tear down physical barriers, communication barriers, and discriminatory practices (whether conscious or unconscious), society grows and opportunities for all expand. MOPD will continue to work to make the City more accessible by collaborating with other agencies, the disability community, and businesses. We are also working with other MOPD offices around the country and the world to share ideas and solutions.

Endnotes

- i U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2019, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes311120.htm>.
- ii Extreme Vulnerability of Home Care Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic—A Call to Action
Theresa A. Allison, MD, PhD; Anna Oh, PhD, MPH, RN; Krista L. Harrison, PhD
JAMA Intern Med. published online August 4, 2020.
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2769095?resultClick=3>
- iii In 2019, 50 years after its establishment as the Department of Consumer Affairs, the agency was renamed the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection to reflect its expanded mandate.
- iv Population data from U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates via Public Use Microdata File Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning. (2020).
- v Population data from U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 1-Year Estimates via 2018 Statistics on New York City Residents with Disabilities- New York State Office of the Comptroller. (2020).
- vi Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York. Disability Status: ADA 25. (2015). https://cidny.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Disability-Status-ADA-25_FINAL.pdf
- vii Hardest-hit COVID-19 Neighborhoods: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/neon/programs/covid-neighborhoods.page>
- viii <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/extra-costs-living-with-disability/>

Appendix



New York City Transit Office of ADA Compliance

The following 97 Key stations in New York City Transit's Revised Key Station Plan are accessible to people with disabilities, listed in order of completion.

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
1	125 Street	4 5 6	Manhattan
2	175 Street	A	Manhattan
3	42 Street-Port Authority	A C E	Manhattan
4	Pelham Bay Park	6	Bronx
5	Great Kills	SIR	Staten Island
6	51 Street	6	Manhattan
7	42 St-Grand Central	4 5 6	Manhattan
8	World Trade Center	E	Manhattan
9	Simpson Street	2 5	Bronx

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
10	Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue	D F N Q	Brooklyn
11	34 Street-Herald Square *	N Q R W	Manhattan
12	34 Street-Herald Square *	B D F M	Manhattan
13	Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall	4 5 6	Manhattan
14	149 Street-3rd Avenue	2 5	Bronx
15	Borough Hall	2 3	Brooklyn
16	Dongan Hills	SIR	Staten Island
17	Flatbush Avenue-Brooklyn College	2 5	Brooklyn
18	Church Avenue	2 5	Brooklyn
19	34 Street-Penn Station	1 2 3	Manhattan
20	Woodside-61 Street	7	Queens
21	Flushing-Main Street	7	Queens
22	Union Square	N Q R	Manhattan
23	207 Street	A	Manhattan
24	66 Street-Lincoln Center	1	Manhattan

Accessible Key Stations List

25	14 Street	A C E	Manhattan
26	8 Avenue	L	Manhattan
27	Franklin Avenue	C	Brooklyn
28	Franklin Avenue	S	Brooklyn
29	161 Street-Yankee Stadium	4	Bronx
30	161 Street-Yankee Stadium	B D	Bronx
31	Grand Central-42 Street	7	Manhattan
32	Grand Central-42 Street	S	Manhattan
33	34 Street-Penn Station	A C E	Manhattan
34	Flushing Avenue	J M	Brooklyn
35	Prospect Park	B Q S	Brooklyn
36	72 Street	1 2 3	Manhattan
37	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr.	D N R	Brooklyn
38	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr.	B Q	Brooklyn
39	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr.	2 3 4 5	Brooklyn
40	Howard Beach	A	Queens

Accessible Key Stations List

41	Marcy Avenue	J M Z	Brooklyn
42	Lexington Avenue	E M	Manhattan
43	Crown Hts-Utica Avenue	3 4	Brooklyn
44	Dekalb Avenue	B Q R	Brooklyn
45	West 4 Street	A B C D E F M	Manhattan
46	179 Street	F	Queens
47	Times Square-42 Street	N Q R W	Manhattan
48	74 Street-Broadway	7	Queens
49	Jackson Hts-Roosevelt Avenue	E F M R	Queens
50	125 Street	A B C D	Manhattan
51	Euclid Avenue	A C	Brooklyn
52	Fordham Road	4	Bronx
53	Queens Plaza	E M R	Queens
54	Times Square-42 Street	1 2 3	Manhattan
55	Times Square-42 Street	7	Manhattan

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
56	231 Street	1	Bronx
57	Junction Boulevard	7	Queens
58	168 Street	A C	Manhattan
59	Pelham Parkway	2 5	Bronx
60	233 Street	2 5	Bronx
61	Bowling Green	4 5	Manhattan
62	Myrtle Avenue	L	Brooklyn
63	Wyckoff Avenue	M	Brooklyn
64	135 Street	2 3	Manhattan
65	Church Av	F G	Brooklyn
66	St. George	SIR	Staten Island
67	Union Turnpike	E F	Queens
68	South Ferry	1	Manhattan
69	47-50 Sts-Rockefeller Ctr	B D F M	Manhattan
70	Chambers Street	1 2 3	Manhattan
71	59 Street	A B C D	Manhattan

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
72	59 Street	1	Manhattan
73	Jay Street-MetroTech	A C F	Brooklyn
74	96 Street	1 2 3	Manhattan
75	Kings Highway	B Q	Brooklyn
76	Mott Avenue	A	Queens
77	East 180 Street	2 5	Bronx
78	Bay Parkway	D	Brooklyn
79	Bleecker Street	6	Manhattan
80	B'way/Lafayette Street	B D F M	Manhattan
81	Forest Hills-71 Avenue	E F M R	Queens
82	Utica Avenue	A C	Brooklyn
83	Hunts Point	6	Bronx
84	Cortlandt Street	R W	Manhattan
85	Kingsbridge Road	B D	Bronx
86	23 Street	6	Manhattan
87	Lefferts Boulevard	A	Queens

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
88	Rockaway Parkway	L	Brooklyn
89	Astoria Blvd	N W	Queens
90	86 St	R	Brooklyn
91	Bedford Avenue	L	Brooklyn
92	Chambers Street	J Z	Manhattan
93	Bedford Park Boulevard	B D	Bronx
94	59 St	N R	Brooklyn
95	Greenpoint Avenue	G	Brooklyn
96	Eastern Pkwy-Brooklyn Museum	2 3	Brooklyn
97	Gun Hill Road	5	Bronx

The following 38 non-Key stations are wheelchair accessible, but are not part of New York City Transit's Revised Key Station plan.

Accessible Non-Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
1	Lexington Ave/63rd Street	F, Q	Manhattan
2	Roosevelt Island	F	Manhattan
3	21st Street-Queensbridge	F	Queens
4	Jamaica/Van Wyck	E	Queens
5	Jamaica Center	E, J, Z	Queens
6	Sutphin Boulevard	E, J, Z	Queens
7	Middle Village-Metropolitan Avenue	M	Queens
8	Rockaway Park/Beach 116	A, S	Queens
9	Park Place	S	Brooklyn
10	Tottenville	SIR	Staten Island
11	Canal Street Station	6	Manhattan
12	Union Square	L	Manhattan

Accessible Non-Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
13	Gun Hill Road	2, 5	Bronx
14	Jay Street-MetroTech	R	Brooklyn
15	Fulton Street	4, 5	Manhattan
16	Court Square	7	Queens
17	Fulton Street	A, C	Manhattan
18	Fulton Street	J, Z	Manhattan
19	Fulton Street	2, 3	Manhattan
20	34 Street-Hudson Yards	7	Manhattan
21	Aqueduct Racetrack	A	Queens
22	72 Street	Q	Manhattan
23	86 Street	Q	Manhattan
24	96th Street	Q	Manhattan
25	Arthur Kill	SIR	Staten Island
26	WTC Cortlandt	1	Manhattan
27	New Utrecht Avenue	N	Brooklyn
28	62 St	D	Brooklyn

Accessible Non-Key Stations List

Count	Station	Train Services	Borough
29	1 Av	L	Manhattan
30	50th Street (Soutbound only)	C, E	Manhattan
31	Borough Hall (Northbound only)	4, 5	Brooklyn
32	49 St (Northbound only)	N, Q, R	Manhattan
33	Avenue H (Southbound only)	Q	Brooklyn
34	Dyckman Street (Soutbound only)	1	Manhattan
35	Wilson Avenue (Northbound only)	L	Brooklyn
36	28 Street (Southbound only)	6	Manhattan
37	86 Street (Northbound local only)	6	Manhattan
38	8 Av (Northbound only)	N	Brooklyn



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities