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Accessibility 5-Year Plan (2024-2028)



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5-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028)



GENERAL

The New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) is committed to providing services to New Yorkers and committed to improving opportunities for people with disabilities. SBS continues to build on accessibility to ensure all New Yorkers receive resources and services. SBS's Office of Disability Services (ODS) is dedicated to answering questions and assisting those in need of accessing our services. ODS is responsible for preparing and updating the Agency's 5-year Accessibility Plan (Plan). The contact information for SBS's Disability Services Facilitator (DSF) can be found below:

Michelle Barnes-Anderson, MPA-IG

Director of Office of Disability Services/DSF

Email: mbarnes-anderson@sbs.nyc.gov

Telephone: 212-618-6717

AGENCY'S COMMITMENT STATEMENT

SBS is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. SBS strives to administer services, programs, and activities that are accessible to the needs of individuals with disabilities. Our dedication to accessibility aligns with our values of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and includes working to ensure that the Agency's workspace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to, and accommodating and inclusive of, persons with disabilities.

To fulfill this commitment, SBS will:

1. Continue to comply with all City, State, and Federal accessibility laws and standards, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended in 2010, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.



2. Regularly assess and enhance our accessibility features, utilizing feedback from users and staying informed about advancements in accessibility technology and standards.
3. Provide ongoing training to SBS staff to raise awareness about accessibility and provide them with the knowledge to create and maintain accessible content and facilities.
4. Ensure that SBS communications including requests for Reasonable Accommodations (RA) - both digital and non-digital - are accessible to individuals with diverse abilities. This includes alternative formats and clear communication channels.
5. Take proactive measures to seek input from the community, including individuals with disabilities, to understand their unique needs and preferences, and aim to incorporate them into our accessibility initiatives.

This statement reflects SBS's dedication to accessibility. We strive to collaborate and provide guidance to our service providers and SBS's small business and job seeker customers to foster an inclusive environment that provides equal access for all.

AGENCY MISSION

The mission of SBS is to help unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building thriving neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

AGENCY PLAN

Over the next five (5) years, SBS will implement any required updates to ensure the Agency remains in compliance with all accessibility requirements. During the first two (2) years of the plan, the Agency will do a comprehensive evaluation to ensure the Agency's workplace, services, programs, and activities are accommodating, accessible to, and inclusive of

persons with disabilities. Accordingly, the Agency will evaluate and update five (5) areas below:

Physical Access (Implementation timeframe 2024-2028)

SBS aims to continue to ensure programs are provided in an accessible location. SBS is committed to ensuring all individuals have equitable access to all facilities, meetings, and events. Prior to the 5-year plan, a complete self-evaluation was conducted on SBS headquarters located at One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006.

SBS facilities have automatic doors to building entrances, ramps or hydraulic lifts where there are steps, and ADA-compliant handles throughout the space, as well as accessible elevators with sound indicators. Headquarters and program facilities are located near accessible public transportation. Sidewalks leading to facilities have curb indication.

SBS provides accessible workstations with adjustable desks and ergonomic office chairs if needed. Conference rooms, lunchrooms, and restrooms are wheelchair accessible. Facilities have Braille tactile writing system signage, and strobe lighting. For its events, SBS will continue to implement inclusive seating with accessible routes and/or accessible seating locations. SBS is committed to providing physical accessibility and will develop a plan to evaluate, identify, and correct structural barriers to ensure compliance with ADA regulations and other applicable laws. Starting in 2024, SBS will set a realistic, ongoing timeline to address accessibility issues. For any new construction, SBS will consult experts to ensure buildings meet accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

Digital Access (Implementation timeframe 2024-2028)

Our digital accessibility plan is to ensure all users, including those with disabilities, are able to access our programs, job applications, resources and materials needed for full participations and inclusion. SBS's Information Technology (IT) Division, working closely with our Digital

Inclusion Officer (DIO) and Communications Division, will continue to monitor the website for color contrast, ensure images have alternative text (alt text) for accessibility with screen readers, use text-based styled-buttons for accessibility with screen readers, and keeping the code set up to properly define the structure of the page. Additionally, our IT, DIO, and Communications teams will continue assessing and updating technology according to the WCAG 2.1 guidelines. SBS will continue to ensure its website and contents are perceivable and understandable. This may include, but is not limited to, utilizing captions for videos, plain language, and other features. SBS will ensure that forms and applications that are found within its website have accessibility labels and proper instructions. SBS will continue to assess its website for accessibility by making lists of contents found within its website and making them accessible.

Programmatic Access (Implementation timeframe 2024-2028)

SBS creates all of our program collateral (flyers, calendars, presentations, signage) that are accessible including images, font, and text size. Additionally, SBS ensures the website is accessible and all social media content with pictures include alt text. Reasonable Accommodations and Auxiliary Aids are provided upon request to participate in programs and services. SBS ensures program facilitators work with partners that can provide additional assistance when requested (e.g. ACCES-VR, NYC ATWORK, etc.).

Program Center space locations are selected for ADA compliance. Centers not located on the ground floor have elevator access and Centers on the ground floor with steps have accessible ramps. Resource rooms have designated computers for text magnification, assistive listening, and mobility accessibility. Restrooms have accessible stalls.

SBS's reasonable accommodation policy is shared with training programs offered by CUNY institutions (e.g. LaGuardia Community College). SBS partners with CUNY's Office of Disability Services to help ensure students' needs are met upon student disclosure of a disability and a request for

accommodation. Training programs work with students to identify programmatic supports that are feasible and reasonable.

SBS will continue to provide accessible resources to ensure programs are provided inclusively. We will continue to provide programmatic support if and when requested, which includes providing ASL interpreters, screen readers, providing additional tutoring hours, and/or project due date extensions.

SBS will conduct an assessment on all training and seminars but will convert certain training and seminars to be both accessible in person and online when feasible.

Workplace Inclusion (Implementation timeframe 2024-2028)

SBS will continue to provide an inclusive workplace through effective communication by providing clear, succinct guidance concerning requests for reasonable accommodations and grievances/complaints. SBS will continue to send out job postings to organizations working directly with people with disabilities, promote the 55a program on all competitive city job postings; promote the city's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy on all job postings; and provide trainings such as: Sexual Harassment Prevention, Conflict Of Interest Board's (COIB) Conflicts of Interest Prevention Training, LGBTQ: Power of Inclusion, DOI's Corruption Prevention Awareness, and EEO and Diversity & Inclusion Training. During interviews, meetings, etc., SBS offers language/sign interpreters or other accommodations, if needed. Applicants may apply for job postings in multiple ways, including online, mail, and email. SBS will continue to hold monthly meetings seeking ideas and innovative ways to inspire morale and advance the goal of maintaining an accessible workplace through the volunteer-led Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA) Council. Additionally, regularly distributed employee surveys solicit staff perspectives on the workplace and areas where improvement is desired.



Over the next year, SBS will strive to provide new employees with mandatory Disability Etiquette Training offered by the Department of Administrative Services (DCAS) and/or Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) for managers and supervisors as soon as practicable.

Our commitment is to provide programs and resources which are inclusive and in compliance with the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, City and State laws. Inclusivity is what makes a city function and expand. SBS will work closely with the public for feedback and insight on how to continue to provide quality services, which will allow us to build on equality and human connectivity.

Effective Communications (Implementation timeframe 2024-2028)

SBS's approach is to support and provide inclusive and accessible communication throughout our workplace and programs. We aim to ensure there are multitudes of outlets to provide effective communications. SBS will continue to use plain language in its communication. SBS headquarters and program facility sites provide access to documents in Braille, large print, and audio recordings using external vendors, upon request. Documents are screen reader ready for a variety of reader software. SBS provides Sign Language Interpreters and Auxiliary Aids upon request. Our headquarters' conference room has inductive loop and is available for SBS contractors and other city agencies to utilize. Public events are advertised with information to request a Reasonable Accommodation in advance.

SBS will continue to provide resources and services to ensure diverse effective communication through alternative formats such as but not limited to Braille, audio recordings, large print, and sign language interpreters.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

SBS's Office of Disability Services is the central intake for requests for Reasonable Accommodation and all related disability issues. The Office of Disability Services is headed by SBS's Disability Services Facilitator.

- Information regarding the Office of Disability Services is posted on SBS's intranet and website, outlining the operation of the office, including relevant processes and forms.
- The Request for Reasonable Accommodation form is provided online and on request.
- The process for consideration of Requests for Reasonable Accommodation includes providing written acknowledgement of requests. Medical documentation is requested, if necessary. A process to appeal accommodation determinations is included.
- Cooperative dialogue with the Disability Service Facilitator is in place to allow all requests to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and for examination of all resources and services available.
- Applicants and employees receive written notification of approval or denial of Reasonable Accommodation within 14 days of the request.
- All requests and outcomes for Reasonable Accommodations are recorded.

SBS will continue to post our process and procedures for Reasonable Accommodations and grievances, on both our website and intranet. We will continue to provide Sign Language Interpreter (SLI), Closed Caption, Cart Access Transcription (CART), and other Auxiliary Aids and services as requested and needed. SBS will continue to advertise and post the tagline "Reasonable Accommodations and auxiliary aids and service are available upon request" on all job postings, events, and training programs. Our Disability Services Facilitator will remain the central source to ensuring there is a concise effort for clear and effective communication.

METHODOLOGY

The DSF attended monthly meetings to brainstorm with other agencies and get their input on areas that could collectively impact clients interacting with other City agencies. SBS conducted a self-evaluation of all its programs. The DSF created a committee comprised of all division heads, the EEO Officer, and the DIO to evaluate agency systems and programs and receive their



input. SBS shared its proposed 5-year plan with the public to seek comments and feedback through multiple outlets, including website postings and emails. SBS did not receive any comments or feedback from the public, and as a result no changes were made to the plan. In addition, MOPD posted the proposed plan and notice of opportunity to comment on the NYC Agency Accessibility Plans website and publicized the site via its email list, social media channels and at its quarterly community meeting in early January.



APPENDIX A

Department of Small Business Services Accessibility 5-Year Plan (2024-2028)

Department of Small Business Services Policies Prohibiting Discrimination Against People with Disabilities in Access to Services

It is the policy of Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Rehabilitation Act, the New York State Human Rights Law and the New York City Human Rights Law. SBS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of its programs, services and activities and strives to be welcoming to and inclusive of people with disabilities.

Employment related complaints for employees and applicants for employment seeking a reasonable accommodation are covered under [the City's EEO Policy](#).

Any member of the public who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures in order to participate in our programs, services or activities (involving matters other than employment) is invited to direct their needs and preferences to SBS's Disability Service Facilitator by email, phone, or mail:

Michelle Barnes-Anderson
New York City Department of Small Business Services
One Liberty Plaza, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10006
(212) 618-6717
mbarnes-anderson@sbs.nyc.gov



Requests should be made as soon as possible but no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled program, service, or activity.

Questions, concerns, or requests for additional information may be directed to SBS's Disability Service Facilitator.

If you believe that you have been denied an auxiliary aid or service or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures that you need in order to participate in programs, services, or activities provided by SBS or its providers, please see SBS's grievance procedure below.



APPENDIX B

Department of Small Business Services Accessibility 5-Year Plan (2024-2028)

Department of Small Business Services Grievance Procedure for Members of the Public Alleging Discrimination Based on Disability

Any member of the public alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by SBS may file a grievance with SBS, which should contain:

- the name, address, telephone number, and/or email of the grievant and
- information about the alleged discrimination, such as the location, date, and description of the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights Law, or NYC Human Rights Law.

“Grievance” is the term for the allegation filed with SBS by a member of the public.

“Grievant” is the term for the person alleging discrimination in the grievance.

When and How to File a Grievance

The grievance should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the alleged violation to:

*Michelle Barnes-Anderson
New York City Department of Small Business Services
One Liberty Plaza, 11th Floor
(212) 618-6717*



Mbarnes-anderson@sbs.nyc.gov

(Please include “Grievance” in subject line.)

The grievance may be filed in one of two ways:

1. By submitting the grievance in writing by mail or email using the above address; or
2. Upon request, by an alternative means, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights Law, or NYC Human Rights Law. A request for an alternative means of filing may be granted as an accommodation for a grievant with a disability.

Timeline Following Filing of Grievance

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the grievance, the Disability Service Facilitator or designee will contact the grievant to discuss the grievance and possible resolutions.

Within fifteen (15) calendar days of this contact with the grievant, the Disability Service Facilitator or designee will provide a response in writing. Grievants may request the response in an additional format accessible to them, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the grievance, describe SBS’s position, and offer options for substantive resolution of the grievance, where applicable.

When and How to File an Appeal

The grievant may appeal SBS’s decision within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of SBS’s response.

The appeal should be mailed to:

Commissioner Kevin Kim



New York Department of Small Business Services
One Liberty Plaza, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10006

The appeal may be filed in one of two ways:

1. By submitting the appeal in writing and by mail using the above address; or
2. Upon request, by an alternative means, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights Law, or NYC Human Rights Law. A request for an alternative means of filing may be granted as an accommodation for a grievant with a disability.

Timeline Following Filing of Appeal

SBS's response to the appeal will be provided to the grievant in writing within sixty (60) days following receipt of the appeal. Grievants may request the response in an additional format accessible to them, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the appeal, describe SBS's decision, and offer options for substantive resolution of the appeal, where applicable.

All written grievances, appeals, and responses in connection with a grievance made to SBS's will be retained for at least three (3) years.

Note: Upon request to the Disability Service Facilitator, this page can be made available in an alternative format.

APPENDIX C

Department of Small Business Services Accessibility 5-Year Plan (2024-2028)

Department of Small Business Services Website Accessibility Statement

The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) is committed to ensuring its digital content is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. We are continually improving the user experience for everyone and applying the relevant accessibility standards.

Conformance Status

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) define requirements for designers and developers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. They define three levels of conformance: Level A, Level AA, and Level AAA. Our digital content is partially conformant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to this accessibility standard.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the accessibility of our digital content. Please let us know if you encounter accessibility issues by using the [Website Accessibility Feedback Form](#).

If you need assistance accessing a particular program or service, please reach out to SBS's Disability Services Facilitator at (212) 618-6717 or mbarnes-anderson@sbs.nyc.gov.

Assessment Approach

SBS assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

Additional Resources

The SBS website offers valuable information for people with disabilities, such as guidance on our policy and procedures:

- Notice of Rights
- SBS Non-Discrimination Policy
- Grievance Procedures
- Web Accessibility Statement
- Request for Reasonable Accommodations
- Office of Disability Services Poster
- Five Year Accessibility Plan

SBS policies and procedures are online and available in alternative formats upon request. To obtain copies of these forms online, visit [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\)/Disability Services](#).

Five-Year Accessibility Plan

Local Law 12 of 2023 requires agencies to develop and implement a five-year accessibility Plan. SBS's Proposed Five-Year Accessibility plan can be found at nyc.gov/accessibilityplans.