



# **5-Year Accessibility Plan**

## **Taxi and Limousine Commission**

**December 31, 2023**



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## General

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission's (TLC) Office of Inclusion is pleased to present the agency's 5-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan is prepared in accordance with Local Law 12 of 2023 ("Local Law 12"), which is codified as Section 23-1004 of the NYC Administrative Code. Accessibility means people with disabilities have equal access to places, programs, and services without being obstructed by physical or programmatic barriers. The goal of this plan is to describe the actions that TLC will take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people who have a disability. For the purposes of this plan a barrier to accessibility can be described as anything that prevents a person with a disability from accessing a service or event because of a disability.

## Executive Summary

TLC is committed to creating an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of ability. Identifying, preventing, and removing barriers for people who have a disability is an ongoing process. TLC's Office of Inclusion will monitor and regularly test accessibility.

This Plan provides details on identified barriers and objectives to remove barriers. The Accessibility Plan provides the below information:

- Communicate TLC's commitment to remove barriers for persons with disabilities and comply with the requirements of applicable local, state, and federal regulations pertaining to accessibility.
- Describe the process used to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- Review the past accomplishments of the organization in removing barriers to people with disabilities.
- Provide how identified barriers will be eliminated and a proposed timeframe.
- Describe the ways the organization will make the plan available to the public.

The Office of Inclusion is responsible for the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the Plan. Elsa Hampton, serves as the agency's Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer oversees the Office of Inclusion and is the Digital Inclusion Officer (DIO). As the DIO, she serves as the main point person within an agency on digital accessibility and as the liaison with the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) on digital accessibility issues. The DIO acts as an accessibility advocate in the agency.

DIOs will have the following responsibilities:

1. Work with OTI, MOPD, and their agency's leadership to identify a list of digital assets that will be prioritized for accessibility enhancements.



2. Monitor samples of outgoing communications including emails, social media posts, electronic documents, and videos and test them for accessibility to ensure consistency in the overall accessibility of outgoing communications. Where problems are found, recommend corrective actions.
3. Be the agency's subject matter expert whenever new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is being considered for production or procurement. They would also work with MOPD and OTI to ensure appropriate language related to accessibility requirements is included in all procurement documents and to ensure the resulting ICT is indeed accessible upon launch.
4. Identify training needs within their agency and collaborate with OTI and MOPD to organize trainings for staff in their agency.
5. Collect and share data with MOPD for the bi-annual report required by Local Law 26.

Under Local Law 27 of 2016, which is codified as NYC Administrative Code § 23-1002, every City agency is required to appoint a Disability Service Facilitator ("DSF"). The DSF coordinates agency efforts to comply with and carry out the agency's responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning access to agency programs and services by persons with disabilities. TLC's DSF is Yesenia Torres, and any questions or comments should be directed to:

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## **Mission and Background of Agency**

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), established in 1971, plays a crucial role in licensing and overseeing various transportation services within New York City. These services include Medallion (Yellow) taxi cabs, for-hire vehicles (such as community-based liveries, black cars, and luxury limousines), commuter vans, and paratransit vehicles. The Commission's Board comprises nine members, with eight of them serving voluntarily. The Chair/Commissioner, who is salaried, presides over regular public commission meetings and serves as the agency's leader. The TLC maintains a staff of approximately 600 employees.

TLC, as a Charter-mandated agency, bears the responsibility for developing and enhancing for-hire transportation services in New York City. Its duties encompass the licensing and regulation of taxis, for-hire vehicles (FHVs), commuter vans, paratransit



services, drivers, and affiliated businesses. Furthermore, the TLC enforces rules and regulations while establishing standards for service quality, insurance coverage, driver safety, and equipment safety and design.

With over 200,000 TLC licensees facilitating approximately 1,000,000 trips daily, the agency ensures that all drivers meet specific criteria, including passing a background check, possessing a safe driving record, and completing 24 hours of driver training. TLC-licensed vehicles undergo safety and emissions inspections at TLC's Woodside Inspection Facility.

The mission of the TLC is to enhance the for-hire transportation system in New York City, striving for equitable service, empowering drivers, and offering safe and dependable transportation to both residents and visitors.

The TLC created the Taxi Improvement Fund (TIF) to support medallion owners and drivers who are putting accessible vehicles on the road ensuring that all customers have equitable access to taxi transportation services. As of December 2023, there are over 3,500 wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the Yellow Medallion Taxi fleet and 25 wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Green Taxi fleet.

Through the TLC's Accessible Dispatch program, residents and visitors can 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, dialing 311 (NY Relay: 711), booking online at [accessibledispatch.com](https://accessibledispatch.com), or using the "Accessible Dispatch NYC" mobile application. In 2023, there were over 75,000 trips completed through the Accessible Dispatch program.

Since 2019, TLC rules have required wheelchair accessible service in the for-hire vehicle (FHV) sector, which includes companies ranging from small community-based car services to the application-based dispatching providers Uber and Lyft. Every passenger can request a wheelchair accessible vehicle from their local car service, application-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. As of December 2023, there were nearly 6,000 wheelchair accessible vehicles in the FHV fleet and the number of FHV WAVs is expected to continue to increase going forward. In calendar year 2023, there were over 470,000 FHV accessible trips requested by passengers.

Additionally, on January 1, 2021, the TLC launched new curriculum and hands-on training for its Passenger Assistance and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Training course. All TLC driver license applicants must take this course prior to licensure. The course is divided into six different modules, covering in-depth information about the



disability community, disability etiquette, and the unique role drivers play in providing equitable transit for New York City. TLC also created a video, how- to guide and decals that illustrate all of the steps drivers must follow during the wheelchair securement process. Staff from the Office of Inclusion and Education regularly conduct outreach to drivers and the riding public to provide them with the decals and how to guide. In the fall of 2021, TLC launched its “TLC Driver Continuing Education Course.” The course will significantly focus on Passenger Assistance and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle training. All TLC licensed drivers will be required to demonstrate their knowledge of proper passenger securement or re-learn the essential skills that are required to drive for-hire.

## **Divisions**

The TLC consists of seven divisions, as follows:

### **TLC’s Operations, People, and Innovation (OPI)**

OPI provides technical, professional, and operational support to every other division in the agency. One of the principal drivers of operational success is if leaders and employees feel they have the right tools to do their job well. OPI sets out to meet that critical need through sound information technology practices, human capital focus, and operational excellence. We are committed to enabling our customers’ success by providing them with the right resources at the right time.

Human Resources is committed to working strategically in identifying and responding to TLC and its employees’ changing needs. They provide high quality service to all prospective, current, and past employees and handle all aspects of the employee life cycle from recruitment through retirement.

The Operations Unit provides the agency with operational continuity and emergency management expertise to handle a wide range of potential emergencies, space planning projects for the agency, and is responsible for the planning, budgeting, and production of all agency events.

Information Technology Unit is tasked with fulfilling the technology needs of the Agency. IT also develops and supports systems designed to ensure the highest degree of public safety while also making our business operations as efficient as possible. IT also collects, guards, and securely disseminates the industry data that leads to intelligent rule making.



## **Legal Affairs and Prosecution**

Legal Affairs is the agency's in-house legal counsel. The division provides legal advice for the Commission, the Chair, and the senior staff of the TLC. Medallion transfers, litigation, contracts, employee discipline and labor, rulemaking and legislative drafting are all essential functions of Legal Affairs.

The Prosecution Unit prosecutes summonses issued by TLC officers in the field, administrative summonses for records-based violations, summonses issued for failure to comply with directives of TLC Safety & Emissions rules, and consumer complaint summonses based on complaints filed by the public through NYC 311.

Driver Protection Unit assists licensees with complaints regarding TLC rule violations and makes itself accessible to licensees by accepting complaints through the DPU Helpline, DPU email inbox, referrals from other departments, and Owner/Driver Resource Center appointments.

## **Uniformed Services Bureau (USB)**

This division consists of TLC Police who exemplify professionalism and integrity as they rigorously enforce the law, fostering safety and trust for both passengers and the taxi and for-hire industry.

The Enforcement Division of the Uniformed Services Bureau (USB) is a specialized law enforcement Division comprised of Peace Officers who are designated as NYS Special Patrolmen. The primary mission of enforcement is to maintain public safety by deterring illegal operation of unlicensed vehicles, and ensuring compliance of all TLC Rules and Regulations, Vehicle Traffic Laws, the Administrative Code and NYC Rules and Regulations within its regulated industries.

Safety and Emissions Unit conducts inspections on licensed for-hire transportation. Located at TLC's Woodside facility, Safety and Emissions is a New York State licensed inspection facility, testing for all NYS-required safety and emissions elements such as properly functioning brakes, seatbelts, lights, suspension components, and emission systems. Additionally, vehicles are inspected for all TLC-required equipment and markings, such as taximeters in yellow and green cabs and base markings on livery vehicles.

Tour Command Unit manages daily administrative tasks and produces timely, accurate reports, optimizing efficiency within the Enforcement and Safety & Emissions Divisions.



Court Calendar Unit is devoted to delivering immediate, accurate access to records for other units within USB, ensuring seamless operations.

The Administrative Services Unit (ASD) supports seven (7) TLC facilities across New York City and is responsible for providing efficient, cost-effective support and maintenance for TLC fleet vehicles and fueling sites. ASD also provides an uninterrupted flow of inventory and supplies for each facility to operate, and the division maintains adequate quality standards for inventory planning, control of production, and procurement plans.

Special Initiatives & Reporting Unit facilitates access to precise and high-performance data through dependable, timely reporting. They successfully execute initiatives and projects aligned with USB's mission, consistently meeting the expectations of our valued customers.

Central Communications Unit plays a critical role in supporting officers in the field and contacting emergency services when required.

## **Budget & Finance Division**

This division oversees the processing, recording, and monitoring of all financial transactions. Our focus extends beyond mere record-keeping; we maintain robust processes, tools, and controls to prevent and detect fraud, theft, and the misuse of financial resources, ensuring the utmost financial integrity.

Within the realm of procurement, the dedicated team is responsible for acquiring goods, services, and overseeing contractual agreements that support the TLC's operations.

### Program Planning & Management Unit

This Unit manages TLC programs and direct services to promote the economic stability of the industry and to expand accessibility for all. They provide oversight of the Accessible Dispatch program, approve FHV dispatchers, contract management, and customer service.

Office of Financial Stability manages Agency programs and direct services to promote the economic stability of the industry and to expand accessibility by creating and bolstering support for the economic stability of the yellow medallion industry. This Office also manages the Medallion Relief Program (MRP) and related programs)

Business Practices Accountability Unit (BPAU) mission is to protect Drivers, Medallion Owners, and other industry stakeholders from unfair or misleading industry practices that may be utilized by TLC-licensed businesses. BPAU is responsible for





leading the efforts to expand the Agency's capacity to improve oversight, enhance the regulatory framework, and strengthen operational accountability over the practices of TLC-Licensed business. These efforts are intended to facilitate compliance with TLC rules and support the long-term health of the Taxi Industry.

The Owner/Driver Resource Center (ODRC) provides financial counseling, legal services, public benefit application assistance, and driver protection services referrals. All services are free of charge to TLC owners/drivers. ASL and other language interpretations services are available for all appointments.

### **Licensing and Standards Division**

This division consists of several Units located in the TLC's Long Island City facility, each playing an integral role furthering the safe transportation of the riding public, as well as overall public safety. The Licensing and Standards Division processes various transactions relating to drivers, vehicles, bases, medallions, street hail livery vehicles, TLC compliance, and the DMV. All Units within the Division work together to provide licensing support throughout the Agency, allowing the TLC to make appropriate licensing decisions, as well as supporting the entire industry.

Call Center addresses inquiries for the Agency that range from questions about applying for a TLC License and what to do after leaving property in a taxicab, to commending a TLC Licensed Driver for superior behavior or exemplary service.

Education Unit conducts presentations on customer service and required equipment for wheelchair accessible vehicle securement at taxi fleets and bases.

### **Policy and Community Affairs**

Policy Unit provides guidance and spearheads new projects and initiatives within the TLC. They work closely with the Office of the Commissioner to ensure the agency fulfills its mission while monitoring current events in the industry, both in New York City and other cities and countries. Policy manages and conducts large research projects and pilot programs within the TLC. Policy research focuses on the core areas of TLC's regulatory power—ensuring safety, accessibility, and accountability—utilizing taxi and for-hire vehicle trip data and administrative data on drivers and vehicles.

The Community Affairs team ensures licensees are up to date on the new projects and initiatives that the Office of Policy spearheads. EA conducts outreach and communications and assists with constituent cases. The team interacts directly with major stakeholder groups, business entities, bases, and TLC licensees.

Office of Public Affairs ensures the media and public have an accurate and detailed understanding of the agency's actions and objectives. In addition to handling all press



issues, the Press Office is responsible for the agency's branding and social media content, ensuring that public facing information is clear, concise, and engaging.

## **Accessibility Statement**

The Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is committed to providing equal access for individuals with disabilities to TLC programs, meetings, publications, and activities. The TLC will make reasonable accommodations, including modifications or adjustments to a program, publication, or activity, to enable an individual with a disability to participate.

The TLC has steadily increased the number of accessible vehicles in the yellow and green taxi fleet for people who have mobility, vision, hearing, and intellectual / developmental disabilities. 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."

Our commitment to enhancing accessibility extends to the Green Rides Initiative, which sets ambitious goals for the transition of New York City's high volume for hire-vehicle fleet, currently Uber and Lyft, to one hundred percent zero-emission vehicles and wheelchair accessible vehicles by 2030. Uber and Lyft will be required to fulfill 80% of WAV requests in 10 minutes or less and 90% in 15 minutes or less. To meet that requirement, the companies will need enough WAVs in their fleets to make these trips. We will continue to meet with advocates and manufacturers to push for the creation of a zero-emission WAV.

## **Agency Plan**

Local Law 12 codified in NYC Admin Code § 1004(b)(2) requires each agency to publish a plan describing the steps it is currently taking and will take over the next 5 years to ensure that TLC's workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities in the following areas-Digital and Programmatic Access, Physical Access, and Workplace Inclusion.

The below list details how TLC provides accessible services to licensees and applicants, employees, and the public.

Copies of the Plan will be made available to employees, licensees, and the public via TLC's website. Upon request, the plan will be made available in alternative formats.



## **Programmatic and Digital Access**

Programmatic and digital access refers to the strategic implementation of measures and technologies to ensure that digital content, services, and programs are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities through effective communication. This encompasses designing and developing online services in a way that allows people with various abilities, including those with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive impairments, to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the information effectively.

Key aspects of programmatic and digital access include adherence to accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and the incorporation of features like screen reader compatibility, alternative text for images, keyboard navigation, and other assistive technologies. The goal is to create an inclusive digital environment that enables equitable participation and engagement for all users, regardless of their disabilities, promoting universal access to information and services in the digital realm.

## **Physical Access**

Physical access refers to the design and implementation of spaces, facilities, and infrastructure to ensure that individuals with disabilities can navigate and use them without barriers. It involves creating an environment that accommodates diverse needs, such as wheelchair ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and clear pathways. Physical access aims to eliminate obstacles, allowing everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, to participate fully in various activities and have equal opportunities to access facilities and services.

## **Workplace Inclusion**

Workplace inclusion is the practice of fostering a work environment that values and embraces diversity, ensuring that all employees feel respected, supported, and empowered to contribute their unique skills and perspectives. In an inclusive workplace, individuals of different backgrounds, abilities, and identities are treated equitably, and efforts are made to create a sense of belonging for everyone. This extends beyond compliance with diversity policies and involves actively promoting an organizational culture that celebrates differences, encourages collaboration, and provides equal opportunities for professional growth and success. Workplace inclusion is not only about diversity but also about creating an environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.



## **Agency Access Issues**

The agency has identified key areas to improve access, focusing on both programmatic and physical accessibility. For effective communication, the agency emphasizes the use of plain language in all communications, avoiding jargon. Notices for commission hearings and public meetings are provided in writing and may also be distributed electronically. This practice is ongoing and aims to ensure accessible and effective communication.

In terms of real-time digital access, the agency has implemented measures to enhance digital accessibility, including real-time access to public hearings, with locations accessible to individuals with physical disabilities. This effort is also ongoing. The agency's website, currently partially compliant with WCAG Level 2, is undergoing enhancements to improve accessibility further. Plans are in place to ensure that all images include alternative text, headings are correctly labeled, and that color contrast is adequate. The website will be fully accessible by 2025, benefiting both licensees and employees.

Additionally, most agency notices and publications are available on the website, with alternative formats provided upon request. This initiative is ongoing, ensuring accessible access to information.

Physical access improvements include the installation of ADA-compliant push button devices at the 33 Beaver Street location, enhancing doorway access for individuals with disabilities. The agency will continue to maintain these accessible entrances. However, access to agency records at the Foster Avenue site remains a concern, and the agency will assess necessary changes if required for employees with disabilities by 2025.

The lack of emergency ambulatory devices at the College Point and Long Island City (LIC) sites poses another challenge. The agency is exploring funding options to procure these devices by 2025. Furthermore, the LIC site currently has an inaccessible entrance; the agency plans to work with the building landlord to develop an accessibility plan by 2025.

On the workplace inclusion front, the agency provides Disability Etiquette Training for all employees, emphasizing awareness and proper interaction with individuals with disabilities. This training has been part of the onboarding process since 2019, and existing employees are encouraged to participate in courses offered by the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

Additionally, new employees receive guidelines on requesting reasonable accommodations during their onboarding. The agency complies with all relevant laws and regulations regarding disability accommodations, with the EEO Officer overseeing



this process. Overall, these actions demonstrate the agency's commitment to improving accessibility and inclusivity for all employees and stakeholders.

By applying these actions to the identified access issues, the agency demonstrates its commitment to addressing and rectifying accessibility concerns across various areas within the organization. These steps ensure a structured approach to accessibility improvements, including specific timelines, roles and responsibilities, and mechanisms for tracking intended outcomes.

## Methodology

The agency employed a comprehensive methodology to assess access issues and incorporate feedback from people with disabilities in the preparation of the plan. The agency took additional steps to involve people with disabilities in the plan's development process. This proactive approach ensures that the plan is not solely based on internal assessments but also reflects the real experiences and perspectives of those directly impacted by access issues.

These following details the methodology that was used to identify barriers:

### Website Audit

Website Accessibility- OTI conducted an audit of TLC's website and identified the accessibility issues pursuant to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

### Consultation with Disability Advocacy Groups

The agency met with advocates representing 9 different disability advocacy groups. The meeting served as a platform for engaging in a constructive dialogue with individuals who have firsthand experience and expertise in disability-related issues.

### Site Visits and Accessibility Assessment

The Disability Service Facilitator (DSF), ADA Coordinator, and Office of Inclusion staff conducted site visits and reviewed evacuation plans for the purpose of identifying accessibility issues at each location.

In summary, the agency's methodology encompasses engagement with disability advocacy groups, collaborative operations, on-site assessments, and ongoing consultations with individuals with disabilities. These actions demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and a holistic approach to addressing access issues in the agency's plan.