



New York City Department for the Aging

Local Law 12 Five-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028)

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Introduction

Local Law 12 of 2023 (Local Law 12), codified as section 23-1004 of the NYC Administrative Code, requires agencies to develop and implement a 5-year accessibility plan in consultation with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and post it on their website. The law states that the "plan must include, at minimum:

- The steps the agency is currently taking and will be taking over the next five years to ensure that the agency's workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities; and
- Information regarding the agency's ongoing projects and programs planned over the next five years that are related to improving physical, digital, and programmatic access, and effective communications for persons with disabilities, including, but not limited to:
 - any alterations or structural changes to facilities or premises that are owned and operated by the agency, contracted for use by the agency, or otherwise under the agency's jurisdiction;
 - any planned upgrades or investments in technology or tools that will improve accessibility within the agency or access to such agency's services and programs." (See Local Law 12 at: <https://intro.nyc/0682-2022>)

General Information

Offices Responsible for Preparing the Plan

The Department for the Aging's (NYC Aging) Office of Planning and Strategic Initiatives (PSI) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office are jointly responsible for preparing and updating the agency's Proposed 5-year Accessibility Plan.

Contact Information

Local Law 27 of 2016, requires that each City agency designate a disability service facilitator (DSF) to coordinate its efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (See Local Law 27 at: local.law.27.pdf.nyc.gov)

NYC Aging Disability Service Facilitators (DSFs): Sandy March and Heava Lawrence-Challenger

Address: 2 Lafayette Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10007

Email: Accessibility@Aging.nyc.gov

NYC Aging's Notice of Rights and Grievance Procedures can be found at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/about/nyc-aging-website-accessibility-statement.page>
(See also Appendix A)

NYC Aging's Website Accessibility Statement can be found at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/about/nyc-aging-website-accessibility-statement.page>
(See also Appendix B)

Agency Background and Mission

Background

The Department for the Aging (“NYC Aging,” “the Department,” or “the Agency”), promotes, administers, and coordinates the development and provision of services for older New Yorkers to help them maintain their independence and participation in their communities. NYC Aging supports a broad range of services, both directly and through approximately 400 direct service contracts. Programs include **Older Adult Centers, Home Delivered Meals, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), Home Care, Transportation, Case Management, Caregiver Support Services, Foster Grandparent, Senior Employment, Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center, Elder Justice, Mental Health Initiatives, and Tenancy and Eviction Support Services**. In addition, NYC Aging operates **Aging Connect**, an information and referral contact center for older adults and their families, which refers callers to resources, services, and opportunities in their community.

To learn more about NYC Aging’s programs and services, go to:

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/services/find-help.page>

Mission

NYC Aging’s mission is to work to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality-of-life of New York City’s diverse older adults, and for the support of their caregivers, through service, advocacy, and education.

Accessibility Statement

NYC Aging is deeply committed to ensuring its workplace, services and programs are accessible to and inclusive of individuals with disabilities, and that they can participate fully and meaningfully in all its activities. NYC Aging strives to meet the needs and preferences of individuals with disabilities, and to provide the accommodations and supports needed to enhance accessibility. NYC Aging embraces the letter and spirit of Local Law 12 of 2023.

Executive Summary

NYC Aging has completed its evaluation of its accessibility to individuals with disabilities, as required by Local Law 12 of 2023, in order to develop this Proposed Five-Year Plan. This Proposed Plan outlines the results of this assessment and includes measures that have been implemented or will be implemented to address barriers to accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The Proposed Plan addresses the five areas identified in section (b)(2) of Local Law 12 of 2023 (NYC Admin Code § 1004(b)(2)): Physical Access, Digital Access, Programmatic Access, Effective Communication, and Workplace Inclusion.

The result of the self-evaluation revealed that generally, NYC Aging's workplace, services and programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities. There were no physical barriers identified at the location from which the Agency operates. NYC Aging's clients throughout the city have access to accessible facilities where they can participate in the various services offered through its programs. The assessment did reveal some areas for improvement, and the Agency has outlined efforts that will be taken to address those issues.

NYC Aging welcomes comments on this Proposed Plan and will take all feedback into consideration. The Department will conduct further assessment, as needed, and implement solutions where practicable, to create an even more accessible environment.

The implementation timeframe for all issues identified in the Proposed Plan is **2024-2028**.

Methodology

In developing this Proposed Plan, NYC Aging conducted an assessment of its accessibility utilizing a series of self-evaluation tools provided by MOPD. The Disability Service Facilitators convened a committee comprised of various internal stakeholders, including representatives from the Office of Human Resources (OHR), the Office of General Counsel (OGC), the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Procurement, the Division of Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Press and Public Information, Facilities, General Services, and staff with disabilities. Individuals from each area assisted in conducting self-evaluations relative to their area of work or experience within the Agency. The information collected from the self-evaluations and discussions informed the content of this Proposed Plan.

Agency Plan

This Proposed Plan addresses five areas identified in section (b)(2) of Local Law 12 of 2023 (NYC Admin Code § 1004(b)(2)):

- Physical Access;
- Digital Access;
- Programmatic Access;
- Effective Communications; and
- Workplace Inclusion.

Physical Access

NYC Aging operates out of a City-owned building located at 2 Lafayette Street, New York, New York 10007. The Department leases space on floors 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 of the building. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) is responsible for common areas in the building, and NYC Aging is responsible for the Agency's demised areas (the office space).

NYC Aging is currently working with DCAS on identifying and selecting a new office location, which would require the Agency to assess physical access for the new site and update the Plan as necessary.

The following demised areas of 2 Lafayette Street were assessed:

- dedicated entrances/exits;
- open areas;
- workstations;
- conference rooms;
- staircases;
- signage; and
- bathrooms; (See DCAS's Plan, page 24 at: <https://accessibilityplans.cityofnewyork.us/dcas/>)

The entrance to the building and all demised areas are accessible to individuals who use a wheelchair or other mobility device. Additionally, staff are informed by the EEO Officer of their right to an accessible environment and how to request a reasonable accommodation, if needed.

As part of its ongoing effort to improve physical access to the facility, NYC Aging will take the following action:

- Starting in 2024 and on an ongoing basis, increase involvement of staff with disabilities in the implementation of the Proposed Plan.
- Work with DCAS to address any physical access issues identified in the future.

Digital Access

NYC Aging is committed to making its digital content accessible to and usable by everyone, including those with disabilities.

NYC Aging employees who create digital content adhere to laws and standards relating to digital accessibility relevant to the content they create. For social media content, the Agency references its social media policy, which complies with Citywide mandates and policies. Content creators also follow guidelines for website accessibility established by the NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) and MOPD.

NYC Aging's intranet and external - facing websites conform with Level AA accessibility standards. OIT and the Press and Public Information Office work together to ensure that all website and social media content created are thoroughly reviewed for accessibility prior to being posted on the Agency's internal and public facing websites. This includes adding alternative text to images to provide a description of the images for people who cannot see them, as well as including closed captions to videos posted on websites and YouTube channels for users who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additionally, all mass emails distributed to the public are reviewed for accessibility and plain language.

NYC Aging will be exploring the following measures to increase accessibility of its digital content to people with disabilities:

- By the end of 2024, provide official accessibility trainings for staff who create digital content.
- Starting in 2024 and at least annually, provide staff training on accessibility best practices for virtual meetings, utilizing MOPD's Accessible Virtual Meeting Guide.
- Conduct user testing for new applications and tools, using testers with different disabilities.
- In 2024, implement a formal review process to ensure electronic documents are accessible prior to public distribution.

NYC Aging's website accessibility page can be found at:

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/about/nyc-aging-website-accessibility-statement.page>.

To submit feedback on NYC Aging's website accessibility, go to:

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/about/nyc-aging-website-accessibility-feedback-form.page>.

Programmatic Access

As required by law, NYC Aging and its providers aim to provide equal access to its services and programs accessible for all older adults, including those with disabilities. In 2021, approximately 30 percent of older New Yorkers reported some level of disability. (2021 ACS 5-Year PUMS Custom Tables)

Contracted agencies that serve older adults onsite are all required to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), NYC Building Codes, and other applicable laws for people with disabilities. Title II of the ADA is also incorporated in contracts for services. In addition, contracted providers are required to comply with targeting objectives outlined in their contracts and program standards and concentrate their services on “unserved and underserved older adults in greatest social or economic need”, including those with disabilities.

NYC Aging’s Facilities team conducted an assessment of the approximately 300 facilities out of which contracted agencies operate older adult centers (OACs) and concluded that overall clients and eligible individuals throughout the five boroughs have access to an accessible OAC.

Some sites were identified that have accessibility issues (approximately 40 centers); however, for each of these, an accessible OAC is located within the same Community District where older adults can access equivalent services and activities. It was determined that the modifications required to fix the inaccessibility issues at many of those sites were technically infeasible or would create an “undue economic burden.”

NYC Aging will take the following actions to improve programmatic access:

- Between 2024 and 2028, NYC Aging will explore procuring funding to modify structures where modifications to inaccessible sites are feasible.
- Review all program standards and assessment tools to ensure that they clearly outline the contractors’ obligation to comply with Title II of the ADA and to provide reasonable accommodations to participants with disabilities.

Effective Communication

It is NYC Aging's policy to ensure that communication with individuals with disabilities is appropriate to their needs and preferences. NYC Aging's EEO Officer is responsible for coordinating the Agency's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under federal, state, and local laws concerning effective communications for persons with disabilities.

NYC Aging has in place the following policies and practices, among others, to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities:

- As required by law, the EEO Officer always engages in a cooperative dialogue with individuals requiring reasonable accommodations to assess their needs and provide reasonable accommodations, as appropriate, that allow employees with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their job. (35 New York City Administrative Code § 8-107(15) and (28); New York State Executive Law §§ 292(21)(e), 296(1))
- Employees are informed of the Agency's obligation to provide auxiliary aids and services and how to request them.
- All public-facing documents are written in plain language to ensure the information being conveyed is accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities.
- Primary consideration is given to the choice of aid or service requested by the person with a disability.

NYC Aging will take the following steps to make communication with individuals with disabilities more effective:

- Beginning in 2024, create an ongoing schedule to train staff on policies and procedures for accommodation requests to ensure continued awareness among current staff, and to inform new staff.
- Explore mechanisms or resources for providing documents in braille. NYC Aging hopes to obtain resources to implement this by 2025.
- In 2024, develop a communication card to aid in-person interactions with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Workplace Inclusion

NYC Aging strives to make its workplace disability inclusive. This goal is embedded in the Agency's policies, procedures, and practices. The Office of Human Resources, the EEO Office, and the Office of General Counsel all work to ensure that the Agency is in compliance with legal mandates and guidelines for making the workplace inclusive to individuals with disabilities.

Recruitment

All NYC Aging job descriptions are reviewed to ensure that they focus on the duties required for the job and that they do not contain language that might exclude individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are hired by NYC Aging and promoted at all levels of employment, not just for entry level positions. Interviews can be arranged on a platform suitable to a candidate with disability, if needed. Structured interviews are always used to safeguard against possible bias toward persons with disabilities.

NYC Aging also participates in the 55-a Program, which is designed to provide employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities in competitive civil service positions without having to take a test (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcas/employment/55-a-program.page>). NYC Aging is committed to supporting its 55-a employees to succeed and advance in their careers, and in keeping with this commitment, the 55-a Program Coordinator encourages such staff to take promotional tests and to pursue other opportunities for advancement in the workplace. Participants in the 55-a program provided valuable input in the development of this plan.

Retention and Accommodation

NYC Aging's social and recreational activities are accessible to all employees. When events are being held offsite, employees with disabilities are informed of available accommodations, including transportation.

The Agency's reasonable accommodation process follows DCAS's "Reasonable Accommodation Procedural Guidelines." Reasonable Accommodation guidelines can be found at: [Reasonable Accommodation Procedural Guidelines 2021 \(nyc.gov\)](#). Accessible tools, technology, and workspaces are provided to employees. Upon request, and if practicable, NYC Aging will provide separate services, programs, or activities for people with disabilities. The EEO Officer also provides employees with the option of discussing reasonable accommodations in a forum that is most comfortable for them (e-mail, in-person, over the phone, or virtual meeting).

Employment and personnel notices are in an accessible format on the Agency's internal and external websites, including on JobsNYC, the City's Official Careers Website.

In addition, all employees complete the mandated Disability Etiquette & Awareness Training as part of the onboarding process.

Fire and Life Safety

NYC Aging's Fire and Life Safety Team is comprised of at least eight individuals from each floor occupied by the Agency, and at least one per floor is assigned to ensure that individuals with disabilities are assisted during fire or any other emergency.

NYC Aging will increase its efforts to make its workplace more inclusive by implementing the following measures:

- Provide ongoing trainings to relevant staff.
- Between 2024 and 2028, recruit more staff with disabilities to participate in the implementation of the Proposed Plan.

Appendix A

NYC Department for the Aging

Policies Prohibiting Discrimination Against People with Disabilities in Access to Services

It is the policy of the New York City Department for the Aging (“NYC Aging”) 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. NYC Aging 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 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy which can be found at:

nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/agencies/nyc_eeo_policy.pdf

Any member of the public who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures (involving matters other than employment) in order to participate in NYC Aging’s programs, services or activities, is invited to direct their needs and preferences to **Sandy March/Heava Lawrence-Challenger**, Disability Service Facilitators, by email, phone or mail:

Disability Service Facilitators: Sandy March/Heava Lawrence-Challenger

Accessibility@aging.nyc.gov.

(212) 602-4143

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 NYC Aging’s Disability Service Facilitators.

If you believe that you have been denied an auxiliary aid or service, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures in order to participate in NYC Aging’s programs, services or activities, please see the agency’s Grievance Procedure below.

NYC Department for the Aging

Grievance Procedure for Members of the Public Alleging Discrimination Based on Disability

Any member of the public with a claim of discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the New York City Department for the Aging (“NYC Aging”) may file a Grievance with NYC Aging. The Grievance 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, New York State Human Rights Law, or New York City Human Rights Law.

“Grievance” is the term for the allegation filed with NYC Aging 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:

Disability Service Facilitators

Mailing address: 2 Lafayette Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10007

Email address: Accessibility@aging.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 addresses; or
2. Upon request, by an alternative means and delivery, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, New York State Human Rights Law, or New York City Human Rights Law.

Timeline Following Filing of Grievance

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

Within fifteen (15) calendar days of this initial contact with the Grievant, the Disability Service Facilitators or designee will provide a written response to the Grievant. The Grievant may request the response in an alternative format accessible to them, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the Grievance, describe the agency's position, and offer options for substantive resolution of the Grievance, where applicable.

When and How to File an Appeal

The Grievant may appeal the agency's decision within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the agency's response to their Grievance.

The appeal should be mailed to:

Commissioner
NYC Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10007

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 and delivery, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, New York State Human Rights Law, or New York City Human Rights Law.

Timeline Following Filing of Appeal

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

All Grievances, appeals, and responses in connection with a Grievance made to NYC Aging will be retained by NYC Aging for at least three (3) years.

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

Appendix B

NYC Department for the Aging Website Accessibility Statement

The Department for the Aging (NYC Aging) is committed to ensuring its digital content is accessible to and usable for 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. It defines 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 NYC Aging's Disability Services Facilitators by emailing **Accessibility@Aging.nyc.gov**.

Assessment Approach

The NYC Aging assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

Date

This statement was created on 03/08/2023.