



February 16, 2024

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Filed At: <https://accessibilityplans.cityofnewyork.us/hpd/>

Re: Draft of New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Proposed Five-Year Accessibility Plan, Posted On Or About January 2, 2024

Dear Ms. Willis,

Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Inc. ("DIA") submits these comments in response to the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development's ("HPD") request for comments concerning its Proposed Five-Year Accessibility Plan ("Plan"), posted online on or about January 2, 2024.

DIA is a fifty-one (51) year old, 501(c) (3), grassroots, civil rights organization run by and for people with disabilities. DIA's mission is to eliminate discrimination for people with all kinds of disabilities.

**Physical Accessibility:**

HPD sounds terribly inaccessible with things like bathroom access and signage that could have been dealt with years ago but were neglected and ongoing. We are sure people complained about it but no one in charge did anything. Finally, we are glad that something will be done and that the findings of the survey are included in the plan here. However, the HPD Plan does not state when each location's work will be completed. Thus, the HPD Plan should state when it is expected that each item listed in the HPD Plan will be corrected and made accessible.

**Web Access and Communication:**

One of DIA's members who is bilingual and who has dyslexia needed housing and went to your cluttered website. It is poorly organized. He needed a phone number to call and could find none. A phone number should be prominent on your site. Making people call 311 is adding to the bureaucratic nightmare that people face when trying to get affordable accessible housing. Thus, the HPD Plan needs to include that the HPD website will be reformatted to make it easy to navigate and state a date by which this work will be done.

**Fire and Life Safety:**

It is good that you have a fire and life safety emergency evacuation plan. Is there signage for what visitors with disabilities should do in case of an emergency? If not, the HPD Plan should state that signage instructing visitors on what to do in the case of an emergency will be posted in an easily seen location in large print and Braille and the date by which this will be accomplished.

**Assistive Listening Systems:**

It is good that HPD plans to familiarize staff with the locations of all assistive listening systems. However, the HPD Plan should state when is this expected to be done as well as the Plan should state when HPD staff will be trained on how to operate the assistive listening systems and when this will be done.

Further, HPD needs to have an evacuation chair in a location easily accessible and very near to the workstation/office of self-identified employees with mobility disabilities. An additional evacuation chair that could be used by other employees and visitors in an emergency evacuation should be located in a visible and easily accessible place on every floor HPD occupies. The emergency evacuation plan in the HPD Plan should state when evacuation chairs will be acquired, when all employees will be trained on what this is and how to properly operate it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Plan since equal access to all New York City's services, activities and programs is important to all New Yorkers. If you would like additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact DIA at [info@disabledinaction.org](mailto:info@disabledinaction.org) or [president@disabledinaction.org](mailto:president@disabledinaction.org).

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of all of us.

Very truly yours,

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