



February 16, 2024

Crystal Rivera
Disability Service Facilitator
New York City Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities
100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor
New York, New York, 10038
Email address: DSF@cityhall.nyc.gov
Filed At: <https://accessibilityplans.cityofnewyork.us/mo/>

Re: Draft of New York City Mayor's Office Proposed Five-Year
Accessibility Plan, Posted On Or About January 3, 2024

Dear Ms. Rivera,

Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Inc. ("DIA") submits these comments in response to the New York City Mayor's Office's ("MO") request for comments concerning its Proposed Five-Year Accessibility Plan ("Plan"), posted online on or about January 3, 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.

Workplace Inclusion:

We applaud the Mayor's Office for making Disability Etiquette and Awareness training mandatory for all the Mayor's Office employees.

Emergency Evacuation Plan:

The MO Plan needs to include an emergency evacuation plan for both employees with disabilities and visitors with disabilities. The inclusion of an emergency evacuation plan in the MO Plan should state that all MO staff need to be trained on what to do if a disabled person needs to evacuate in an emergency. We suggest that that MO Plan should state that employees should be allowed to self-identify if they require assistance and be sent an email from the Fire Safety person each day to account if they are physically in the office. That way, no one will be looking to help someone who is not there. The emergency evacuation plan in the MO Plan should state that all employees need to be trained on how to evacuate people with different disabilities in emergencies and trained on how to safely transfer a person to an evacuation chair and how to safely operate an evacuation chair.

The MO 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 MO occupies. The emergency evacuation plan in the MO 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.

Finally, the MO 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.

Physical Accessibility:

DIA has been asking for better access at City Hall for at least 20 years. We have some better access, but more needs to be done. Some of the door saddles going into rooms in the Mayor's Office are way too high and are dangerous. In this Plan the MO states that this is the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services' responsibility. Have you asked them to fix it? If yes, we submit that when the MO made such a request needs to be included in the MO Plan as well as whether there has been any follow up.

The other big access problem at City Hall is the dangerous upper plaza in front of the steps. An optical illusion is created that looks like the upper plaza and lower plaza are contiguous. They are not. There are several steps between them and in the past, two motorized wheelchair and scooter users have gone off the upper plaza, falling down the stairs and requiring emergency treatment. A barrier is needed immediately. Anything that is widely spaced will not do anything to create a barrier to make all New Yorkers safe while we are doing our civic duty to protest and advocate for change. This safety and accessibility issue needs to be addressed in the MO Plan, that is, when and how this will be rectified.

Assistive Listening Systems:

Assistive listening systems are helpful, but their availability needs to be publicized when meetings are set up with the Mayor's Office. It is helpful that on the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities website there is a list of assistive listening systems in City-owned and operated buildings. However, this list does not state how a person can request this and to whom such a request should be made to. People who need assistive listening devices need to be able to know they are available, how to request them and to whom such a request needs to be sent to. Thus, we recommend the MO Plan state all this necessary information or at least, state a time by which the list of assistive listening systems

in City-owned and operated buildings will be changed to include this information on how to request assistive listening devices and to whom such a request needs to be sent to.

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.

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

Very truly yours,

Jean Ryan,
President,
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Inc.,
Email address: info@disabledinaction.org