

The NYC Department of Sanitation



# Local Law 12 Five-year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028)

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## Background

Local Law 12 of 2023 (LL12) requires every New York City agency to develop and implement a five-year accessibility plan for the period between 2024-2028, in consultation with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. The legislation mandates that the accessibility plans outline the steps agencies are taking to “ensure that the agency’s workplace, services, programs and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities”<sup>1</sup> by improving physical, digital, and programmatic access, and providing effective communications for persons with disabilities. These efforts include, but are not limited to: any alterations or structural changes to facilities or premises that are owned and operated by the agency or 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; and additional steps to make the agency’s programs and services more accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

## Agency Mission

The NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) keeps New York City clean, safe, and healthy by collecting, recycling, and disposing of waste, cleaning streets, attacking the scourge of illegal dumping, and clearing snow and ice. DSNY collects 24 million pounds of trash, recycling, and compostable material every day. We operate 59 district garages and manage a fleet of more than 2,000 rear-loading collection trucks, 450 mechanical brooms, 705 salt spreaders, and several dozen bike lane operations machines. Under the Adams Administration, DSNY is aggressively cleaning more parts of the City than ever before, including over 1,000 long-ignored areas spread across every neighborhood. With the highest wintertime uniformed headcount in 20 years, we are more equipped than ever to remove snow and ice from the approximately 19,000 lane-miles of city streets.

## Online Resources

DSNY’s website contains useful information for individuals with disabilities, including:

1. The City of New York’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
2. DSNY’s Website Accessibility Statement
3. DSNY’s Five-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028)

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<sup>1</sup> Local Law 12 of 2023, available at: <https://intro.nyc/local-laws/2023>

To access DSNY's online accessibility resources, please visit <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/about>

## Accommodations Requests

Under Local Law 27 of 2016, every City agency is required to appoint a Disability Service Facilitator (DSF).<sup>2</sup> 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. DSFs are liaisons to New Yorkers with disabilities, connecting people with disabilities to City government. Employees and/or members of the public who need assistance accessing a particular program or service, should contact DSNY's DSF, Ryan David, at (212) 291-1380 or [OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov).

## Availability

DSNY's accessibility plan is publicly posted at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/about/about-dsny/accessibility-plan.page>

Individuals may request a copy of this document in an accessible alternative format by contacting the DSF at [OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov) or (212) 291-1380.

## Agency's Accessibility Statement

This proposed accessibility plan covers the work of the NYC Department of Sanitation to provide full access to services and information to persons with disabilities, a necessary component of the essential, universal service DSNY engages in each day. This plan, which includes full compliance with the ADA and LL12, was created in consultation with DSNY's Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (OEDI) which, through its role in answering disability-related inquiries and processing reasonable accommodations requests, has a strong understanding of past, present, and future accessibility issues. DSNY looks forward to incorporating feedback from the public comment period into this plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Local Law 27 of 2016, available at [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/local\\_law\\_27.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/local_law_27.pdf)

## Agency Plan (2024-2028)

### Physical Access

#### *Facility Improvements*

DSNY operates garages throughout the five boroughs of NYC, which are staffed by both uniform and civilian employees.<sup>3</sup> The Department continues to make investments to address the critical infrastructure needs at DSNY facilities that are owned by the City. DSNY is also reviewing leases at locations that are not city-owned and will work with the landlords of the leased locations to determine where accessibility improvements need to be made on an ongoing basis.

DSNY garages that are under new construction will be ADA compliant and readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. To the greatest extent possible, DSNY garages with major alterations will be ADA compliant when construction is completed. Specifically, the following new construction DSNY facilities will be ADA compliant:

- Bronx Districts 9, 10, and 11 Garage (New Facility)
- Queens West, District 1 Garage (New Facility)
- Brooklyn North, District 3 Garage (New Facility)
- Staten Island, Districts 1 & 3 Garage (New Facility)

As of the January Plan, the Sanitation Capital Budget provides \$487 million for design, construction, and construction management for a new garage including temporary space for Bronx Districts 9, 10, and 11, \$283 million for a new garage for Queens District 1, \$208 million (including funds already in contracts) for the new Brooklyn District 3 garage, and \$213 million (including funds already in contracts) for the new Staten Island Districts 1 & 3 garage. Several garage rehabilitation projects are also funded.

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<sup>3</sup> A list of all garages is available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/about/dsny-garage-locations>

## Digital Access

### *Website*

The DSNY website is a critical source of timely information on curbside collection service, non-curbside waste disposal opportunities, snow operations, and Department strategic initiatives.

Local Law 26 of 2016 requires agency websites to meet accessibility standards set out according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.<sup>4</sup> Standards are updated by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and agencies must remain compliant, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration in service or present an undue financial burden.

The Department's current website is partially conformant to current WCAG 2.0 level AA standards. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to current accessibility standard and fixing this would require a re-platforming of the agency website.

The Department plans to launch a rebuilt and re-platformed agency website in 2024. The new website will use the NYC.gov standard template and will adhere to the best practices of digital accessibility, including using coding that provides ease of use by screen readers, employing plain language where possible, a high-contrast color scheme, meaningful text descriptions on all images, and closed captioning on videos. The Department also plans to conduct additional quality assessment with user testing by individuals with different disabilities.

### *Social Media*

DSNY uses a variety of best practices to enhance the accessibility of its social media postings, including alternative text descriptions and closed captioning on all videos. To improve upon current accessibility, the Department plans to explore the use of audio descriptions for videos.

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<sup>4</sup> Local Law 26 of 2016, available at [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/local\\_law\\_26.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/local_law_26.pdf).

## Programmatic Access

### *Disability Etiquette & Awareness Training*

Accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities is a core value of DSNY. As an integral part of this commitment, DSNY will conduct Disability Etiquette & Awareness training for all employees beginning in 2024, and biennially thereafter. The goal of the training will be to help DSNY employees understand ways in which individuals with disabilities are made to feel safe, welcomed, supported, and comfortable to be their authentic selves. The training will also inform DSNY employees of the legal requirements of accessibility as it applies to people with disabilities under federal, state, and local law. OEDI will coordinate all employee trainings and maintain a log of training completions.

### *Accessibility to DSNY Services*

DSNY is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to persons with disabilities. Residents who have accessibility-related issues concerning services provided by DSNY, such as requests for assistance with disposal of large or hazardous objects, can make a request for auxiliary services to DSNY's DSF, Ryan David, at (212) 291-1380 or [OEDI@dny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dny.nyc.gov). The DSF reviews all requests and will coordinate auxiliary services, where appropriate, to ensure equal access to service delivery.

### *Waste Set-Out Times*

Effective April 1, 2023, DSNY implemented a new waste set-out rule to reduce the time that trash, recycling, and curbside composting will sit on sidewalks. Pursuant to the set-out rule, property owners must either place waste out on the curb after 6:00 PM in a container of 55 gallons or less with a secure lid, or place waste out after 8:00 PM, in either a hard-sided container or bags. Residents with disability related limitations that make it difficult for them to comply with the set-out rule can make a request for a reasonable accommodation to the DSF. If the request is approved, the resident may be permitted to place their waste out before 6:00 PM, but will be required to ensure that the waste is placed in a hard-sided container.

### *Containerization*

To remove the mountains of black bags on New York City streets, reclaim public space, and improve quality of life for all New Yorkers, including people with disabilities, DSNY has begun to implement a plan to require all residents and commercial businesses to containerize all trash. Containerization will remove obstructions from streets and sidewalks, which will benefit people with mobility issues and vision impairment. Effective

March 1, 2024, all businesses in NYC must use bins with secure lids when setting out trash for collection. Beginning Fall 2024, all residential buildings with one to nine units will be required to set out all trash in containers with secure lids at the curb for collection. In Fall 2024, for the first time, residents will also have the ability to purchase low-cost NYC wheelie bins from a vendor that DSNY has contracted with through a concession. The wheelie bins will be available for purchase online or via phone and will be delivered directly to the residents' homes.

After a successful pilot of large, wheeled containers on 10 residential blocks and 19 schools in Hamilton Heights, Manhattan, in February 2024, New York City and DSNY announced plans to pilot stationary on-street containers in Hamilton Heights, Manhattan, which will be serviced by a newly designed Automated Side Loading truck. Unlike the large, wheeled containers used in the current pilot, the stationary on-street containers are being designed to include accessibility features, such as use of a lightweight lid with multiple ways to open the lid such as foot pedals and accessibility levers located lower on the container body to make the containers more easily accessible to people that use wheelchairs. In addition, the containers are planned to have embossed pictograms and braille markings adapted for people with visual disabilities.

### *Snow Removal*

In the event of a winter storm, DSNY is responsible for removing snow from the City's 19,000 lane miles of roadways. DSNY plows push snow to the right of the street to avoid blocking oncoming traffic and/or intersections. DSNY is responsible for removing snow that accumulates around bus stops that do not have shelters. DSNY assigns Emergency Snow Shovelers and/or Sanitation Workers to clear bus stops and pedestrian ramps, when necessary.

Owners, lessees, tenants, or other occupants are responsible for clearing snow and ice from sidewalks. Corner properties are also responsible for clearing a path to the crosswalk, including pedestrian ramps. City law prohibits pushing snow and ice into a street or crosswalk. Residents with questions about snow removal should contact 311.



## Effective Communications

### *Language Access*

Local Law 30 of 2017 (“LL30”), the City’s language access law, which improves access to City services for all individuals, applies to DSNY.<sup>5</sup>

DSNY provides language translation in all designated citywide languages defined in LL30 during citywide outreach and education campaigns, including mailers, flyers, and service announcements. The Department also prioritizes image-based materials where possible, to make it easier for DSNY customers to understand the message. DSNY works with elected officials, community groups, and service organizations to disseminate critical information in the appropriate languages needed in the community. DSNY staff also participate in language specific outreach events and have access to telephone interpretation services with over 100 languages while in the field. DSNY also complies with Local Law 83 of 2021, in which the Department places at least 50% of our advertising budget in ethnic and community media outlets.

During major agency-related emergencies and weather events, DSNY works with NYC Emergency Management which is the primary conduit for urgent public notifications during emergencies. Press releases and alerts are posted on the DSNY website where they can be automatically translated into over 130 languages by selecting the “Translate” link at the top of the webpage and choosing a preferred language.

For more information on language access at DSNY, please visit:

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/about/about-dsny/language-access-plan.page>.

### *Telecommunications*

DSNY employees in the Customer Service Unit who field calls from the public receive training in Telecommunications Relay Service, which allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls.

### *Public Meetings, Hearings, and Events*

DSNY hosts both in-person and virtual public meetings, hearings, and events (hereinafter, “events”). All promotional materials for in-person and virtual events comply

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<sup>5</sup> Local Law 30 of 2017, available at

[https://www.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Local\\_Law\\_30.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Local_Law_30.pdf).

with Local Law 28 of 2016, which requires City agencies to include information about the accessibility of events and information on how to request accommodations.<sup>6</sup> DSNY schedules and hosts in-person events only at city-owned facilities that are confirmed to be wheelchair accessible and in compliance with the ADA. Effective March 2024, DSNY will begin hosting all virtual events using Microsoft Teams or Zoom to ensure that the meetings are accessible to all members of the public.

If a member of the public makes a request for American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation as a form of reasonable accommodation, DSNY ensures that ASL interpreters are available for the duration of an event, whether the event is held in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid environment.

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<sup>6</sup> Local Law 28 of 2016, available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/Local-Law-28.pdf>.

## Workplace Inclusion

### *Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints*

DSNY is committed to ensuring equity in the workplace and to fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The City of New York's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy ("City's EEO Policy") protects every individual who works for DSNY and within all Department workplaces, as well as applicants for employment.

DSNY Policy and Administrative Procedure 2022-04 ("Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints") provides clear and transparent procedures for the reporting and investigation of suspected violation(s) of the City's EEO Policy, in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

The City's EEO Policy and DSNY Policy and Administrative Procedure 2022-04 are available on the Department's Intranet and physical copies are distributed to employees during new employee orientation and biennial EEO refresher training. All employees are trained regarding their rights and responsibilities under the City's EEO Policy and are informed on how to make a complaint with OEDI. Managers and supervisors are also trained on how to refer to OEDI suspected violation(s) of the City's EEO Policy. To report discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace, an individual can contact OEDI at 212-291-1380 or [OEDI@dny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dny.nyc.gov). To the extent possible, OEDI will maintain the confidentiality of all complaints and resulting investigations.

### *Reasonable Accommodations*

Pursuant to the City's EEO Policy, DSNY provides reasonable accommodations to applicants, employees, interns, and consultants so they can perform the essential functions of their job in connection with disability; religion; status as a victim of domestic violence, sex offenses, or stalking; or pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, including lactation needs.

DSNY Policy and Administrative Procedure 2022-05 ("Reasonable Accommodations") provides clear and transparent procedures for individuals making requests for reasonable accommodation in accordance with the City's EEO Policy, and in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

DSNY Policy and Administrative Procedure 2022-05 is available on the Department's Intranet and a physical copy is distributed to employees during new employee orientation and biennial EEO refresher training. Employees are trained regarding the

reasonable accommodation process, including how to make a request for accommodation. Managers and supervisors also learn the procedure to refer employees who may benefit from an accommodation.

To make a request for accommodation in the workplace, an individual can contact OEDI at 212-291-1380 or [OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov). All information, including any statements made by the individual requesting an accommodation, related documentation or records, and the fact that the individual has requested or obtained an accommodation, will be treated confidentially by OEDI.

### *55-a Program*

Most New York City jobs requires that candidates take and pass a competitive civil service exam before they can be hired. Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law<sup>7</sup> allows a qualified person with a certified mental or physical disability to be hired into competitive civil service positions without having to take an exam. This equity and inclusion program is administered by DCAS. DSNY currently employs multiple individuals with disabilities through the 55-a program and has promoted employees to managerial positions. Individuals seeking consideration for appointment pursuant to the 55-a program can make a request to DSNY's 55-a Coordinator, Ryan David, at (212) 291-1380 or [OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:OEDI@dsny.nyc.gov).

## **Methodology**

DSNY is committed to increasing accessibility and inclusion for applicants, employees, and the community to which we serve. To remove and prevent accessibility barriers during the applicable period (2024-2028), the Department will review existing accessibility policies and procedures and make revisions and updates, where necessary. DSNY will obtain staff demographic data to determine the representation of people with disabilities and other diverse groups within the Department. DSNY will increase employment and other opportunities in underutilized job titles. DSNY will also commit to providing annual progress reports based on the stated deadlines under LL30.

This plan was prepared by OEDI due to its understanding and knowledge of the present access issues DSNY faces. OEDI interacts with individuals with disabilities through the reasonable accommodation process and also serves as the Department's DSF, ADA Coordinator, and 55-a Coordinator, and has both a historical and presenting understanding of DSNY's disability-related inquiries and needs. This information was

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<sup>7</sup> Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law, available at <https://www.cs.ny.gov/dpm/55a.cfm>.

critical in understanding the access issues that should be addressed as part of this proposed plan and will serve as a guide for future amendments and additions to the plan.

## Contact Information

### **Disability Services Facilitator, ADA Coordinator, 55-a Coordinator**

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