



Department of Consumer and Worker Protection

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

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General

Local Law 12 of 2023 (“Local Law 12”), codified as section 23-1004 of the NYC Administrative Code, requires agencies to prepare and publish a five-year accessibility plan covering 2024 through 2028. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is responsible for preparing and updating the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection’s (“DCWP”) five-year accessibility plan.

DCWP’s Disability Service Facilitator (“DSF”) is Patty Baez. Patty Baez can be reached at 212-436-0269 and via email at PBaez@dcwp.nyc.gov. Her mailing address is 42 Broadway 5th Floor New York, NY 10004. DCWP’s Accessibility Plan is publicly available on [DCWP’s website](#).

Agency Mission

To protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities.

The NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, formerly the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) protects and enhances the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities. DCWP licenses more than 45,000 businesses in more than 40 industries and enforces key consumer protection, licensing, and workplace laws that apply to countless more. By supporting businesses through equitable enforcement and access to resources and, by helping to resolve complaints, DCWP protects the marketplace from predatory practices and strives to create a culture of compliance. Through its community outreach and the work of its offices of Financial Empowerment and Labor Policy & Standards, DCWP empowers consumers and working families by providing the tools and resources they need to be educated consumers and to achieve financial health and work-life balance. DCWP also conducts research and advocates for public policy that furthers its work to support New York City’s communities.

Agency Background

The agency was created on April 29, 1969, when the City Council passed the landmark Consumer Protection Law that gave the agency its broad authority to protect the public from deceptive business practices, making it the first municipal agency of its kind in the country. It was at this time that the City’s Department of Markets, which included the City’s Weights and Measures division, merged with the Department of Licensing to form one unified Department of Consumer Affairs.

In 2006, DCA again evolved with the changing marketplace with the creation of its Office of Financial Empowerment (“OFE”), the first local government initiative in the nation aimed expressly at educating, empowering, and protecting those with low incomes. DCA’s OFE has emerged as a national leader in the field of municipal financial empowerment and model of local government offering residents consumer protection and financial empowerment has been looked to by the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) (“CFPB”) for national replication. In 2016, with the addition of the Office of Labor Policy & Standards, the agency pioneered the way that city government can protect and enhance the lives of all of players in the marketplace, including consumers, businesses, and workers, and how that work ultimately fosters stronger, more sustainable, and thriving communities.

Executive Summary

Local Law 12 of 2023 (“LL12”) requires every New York City Agency to develop and implement a five-year accessibility plan, in consultation with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (“MOPD”). This executive summary outlines the key components of DCWP’s five-year Accessibility Plan, as mandated by LL12. The plan focuses on enhancing accessibility for all stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity, and promoting compliance with accessibility standards. LL12 underscores the importance of accessibility in public services, emphasizing the need for government agencies to proactively address barriers and promote equal access for all individuals. DCWP, in alignment with this mandate, has developed a comprehensive five-year plan to enhance accessibility in its services, programs, and facilities.

Key Initiatives

1. Inclusive Service Delivery:
 - Implementing training programs for DCWP staff to raise awareness and understanding of accessibility issues.
 - DCWP has made the Disability Awareness and Etiquette training mandatory for all its staff members, which is expected to be completed by November 2024, and every two years thereafter. This training covers laws protecting people with disabilities and will provide staff members with guidance on how to best assist people with disabilities.
 - Integrating accessibility considerations into the design and development of digital platforms, ensuring online services are universally accessible.
 - DCWP will be developing a curriculum based on the lessons learned from the EmpoweredNYC financial counseling program to train financial counselors to tailor our services to the needs of people with disabilities.

2. Physical Accessibility:

- Conducting accessibility assessments of DCWP facilities to identify and address physical barriers.
- Implementing necessary modifications to enhance physical accessibility.

3. Communication Accessibility:

- Developing and implementing a communication plan that includes accessible formats for official documents and public notices, and information dissemination upon request.
- Providing resources and training to staff on effective communication with individuals with diverse accessibility needs.
- Pursuant to NYC Administrative Code section 20-699.97 movie theaters in New York City must provide open captions in some of the movie showings. DCWP will continue enforcing this by investigating complaints received via 311. Open captions are the written, on-screen display of what is happening in the motion picture. This helps moviegoers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

4. Technology and Innovation:

- Regularly updating and maintaining the DCWP website to meet or exceed accessibility standards.
- Exploring innovative technologies to improve accessibility, such as assistive devices and accessible applications for various platforms.

5. Compliance Monitoring:

- Establishing a monitoring framework to track and assess the progress of accessibility initiatives.
- Regularly reviewing and updating policies to align with evolving accessibility standards and best practices.

DCWP's five-year Accessibility Plan reflects our commitment to creating an inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. Through strategic initiatives, collaboration with stakeholders, and ongoing evaluation, we aim to not only meet but exceed accessibility standards, ensuring that our services are accessible and equitable for everyone in our community. This plan serves as a roadmap for fostering a more accessible and inclusive future for DCWP and the constituents it serves.

Accessibility Statement

DCWP is dedicated to fostering a fair and inclusive environment for all individuals, recognizing that accessibility is a fundamental right. Our commitment to accessibility is deeply embedded in our operations and activities, aligning with current regulations, and reflecting our long-term goals.

In accordance with prevailing regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), DCWP ensures that our digital and physical spaces are accessible to everyone. We recognize that accessibility is not merely a legal requirement but a cornerstone of our mission to safeguard the interests of consumers and workers alike.

In our digital landscape, we strive to provide information and services that are universally accessible. Our website undergoes regular accessibility audits, and we continually implement improvements to ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”). We prioritize the use of inclusive design principles, making certain that all users, regardless of ability, can navigate and engage with our online resources seamlessly.

In the physical realm, our commitment extends to public spaces and facilities. We strive to eliminate barriers to access, ensuring that our offices, events, and public forums are welcoming and accommodating to individuals of all abilities. This includes providing assistive technologies, sign language interpreters, and accessible pathways.

Beyond legal compliance, DCWP views accessibility as a catalyst for innovation and social responsibility. We understand that a diverse and inclusive approach enhances the effectiveness of our programs and services. By embracing accessibility, we not only fulfill legal obligations but also contribute to the creation of a more equitable society.

Our long-term goals are centered on proactive measures to go beyond mere compliance. We aim to establish accessibility as an integral part of our organizational culture, fostering awareness and understanding at all levels. We are committed to ongoing training and education for our staff, ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to champion accessibility in all facets of our work.

As we pursue our mission of safeguarding consumers and workers, we recognize that inclusivity is paramount. DCWP remains steadfast in its dedication to accessibility, striving for a future where barriers are eliminated, and everyone can fully participate in and benefit from our initiatives. Through these efforts, we reinforce our commitment to creating a more just and accessible society for all.

Agency Plan

Implementation Timeframe: 2024-2028

- **Physical Access** - DCWP leases office space located at 42 Broadway, New York, NY 10004. The building's entrance, lobby, elevators, hallways, doors and handles, service/reception areas, and bathrooms are physically accessible except the bathrooms located on the 11th floor which are under construction and will be accessible once the construction is completed. The EEO Officer and the Director of General Services will ask the landlord to install braille signage in places where there is directional signage. We will also explore installing assistive listening systems in DCWP conference rooms.
- **Digital Access** - DCWP is committed to ensuring its digital content including websites, social media, and online platforms are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. We are continually improving the user experience for everyone and applying the relevant accessibility standards. DCWP will continue to strive to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA for our websites. DCWP's [Website Accessibility Statement](#) is posted on the agency's accessibility webpage in compliance with Local Law 12. By the end of 2024, DCWP will designate a Digital Inclusion Officer ("DIO"), who will be responsible for tracking our continued compliance.
- **Programmatic Access** - DCWP will ensure that all technology used in programs and services is accessible to all individuals with disabilities. Over the course of the next two years DCWP plans to explore the feasibility in contracting a vendor to assist our current staff in conducting audits of digital platforms and online services to address any accessibility issues and use feedback to make adjustments and improvements.
- **Effective Communications** - DCWP plans to provide information in various formats to accommodate diverse needs upon request. Additionally, DCWP will continue to provide American Sign Language ("ASL") interpretation services to those who are deaf or hard of hearing. DCWP will also invest in Assistive Listening Systems and Devices which will improve sound transmission for people with hearing loss and open caption for those who do not use ASL and need support beyond assistive listening technology. DCWP's DIO will be responsible for exploring different mechanisms for providing these services and tracking its progress within the next two years.
- **Workplace Inclusion** - The EEO Officer and the Director of Human Capital will conduct a comprehensive assessment of DCWP's current workplace inclusion practices and identify areas where improvements can be made to foster a more inclusive environment. We will ensure that inclusion policies address various aspects such as recruitment, hiring, training, promotions, and accommodations.

Workplace Inclusion and Programmatic Access

Within the next five years DCWP will ensure that its physical workplace continues to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are granted to support employees with different abilities. The EEO Officer will collaborate with the Director of Human Capital to evaluate and adjust hiring practices to ensure fairness and equity in the selection process of candidates. We will also use employee feedback to identify areas for improvement and to gauge the overall inclusivity of the workplace. Training will be provided for DCWP employees on diversity, equity and inclusion, specifically Unconscious Bias training.

DCWP will explore ways to conduct a thorough assessment of the current state of programmatic access within the agency and identify areas where access may be lacking or where upgrades are needed. Within the next two years, DCWP plans to audit digital platforms, websites, and online services to address any accessibility issues. DCWP also plans to collaborate with experts and individuals with disabilities to gather input on programmatic issues and understand the evolving needs of the community. We will work on providing information in various formats to accommodate diverse needs.

It's essential to note that the steps and timelines within this plan may vary based on specific needs, resources, and evolving accessibility standards. Regularly reviewing and updating the plan will help DCWP adapt to changing requirements and continue to improve accessibility over time. Over the next five years we plan to identify areas where improvements are needed.

Methodology

DCWP did not consult with people with disabilities in preparing this plan. However, through the reasonable accommodation process, the EEO Office engages with individuals with disabilities. The information obtained through the reasonable accommodation process is crucial in informing the agency of the necessary adjustments or modifications necessary to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to enjoy the benefits of equal opportunity. DCWP eagerly awaits public comments on this plan and is committed to achieving its goals by acknowledging and addressing concerns raised by the public.

Training

The Disability Awareness and Etiquette training is mandatory for all DCWP staff members and is expected to be completed by November 2024, and every two years thereafter. This training covers laws protecting people with disabilities and will provide staff members with guidance on how to best assist people with disabilities.

Comments

DCWP received two comments, one internal and one external, during the comment period which ended on February 16, 2024. The internal comment was made by a DCWP staff member regarding the availability of accessible bathrooms, signage, and whether their entry path is wide enough for wheelchairs. The second comment was posted on the accessibility plans website on February 15, 2024, by a member of the public. The comment suggested that DCWP provide captions for those that do not use ASL and need support beyond assistive listening devices.

Appendix I - DCWP Website Accessibility Statement

DCWP's Website Accessibility Statement can be found at [DCWP - About - Overview - Website Accessibility Statement \(nyc.gov\)](#).

The New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection ("DCWP") is committed to ensuring its digital content is accessible to and usable by 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") defines 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 DCWP's Disability Services Facilitator by email, phone, or mail at the information below:

Patty Baez
Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
42 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Tel.: 212-436-0269
Email: DCWPADACoordinator@dcwp.nyc.gov

Assessment Approach

The New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation. The Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion will be responsible for the 5-year accessibility plan.

Appendix II - Grievance Procedures/Accommodations

Information regarding grievance procedures the process of reasonable accommodations can be found at [DCWP - About - Contact Us - Accommodations \(nyc.gov\)](#).

Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (“DCWP”) formerly the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in providing services, programs, or activities. You have the right to access all of DCWP’s public programs and services.

To request a disability-related accommodation in order to obtain a license or engage in any other service, program, or activity at DCWP, please complete the [Accommodation Request Form](#). You can also email DCWP’s ADA Coordinator at DCWPADACoordinator@dcwp.nyc.gov to request the form.

You can submit the completed form along with documentation (e.g., medical records) in person, by mail, or email. The form includes contact information. If you are unable to submit your request in person, by mail, or email, please call 212-436-0269.

Note: If you need to request a reasonable accommodation for a scheduled event, for example a test, please submit your request in advance of the event so that we can accommodate you.

For employment-related information, please visit [our Jobs page](#).

Complaints?

You have the right to file a formal complaint if you feel that a program or service is not accessible to you. You can submit complaints to:

Attn: ADA Coordinator
NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
42 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Tel.: (212) 436-0269
Email: DCWPADACoordinator@dcwp.nyc.gov

Upon request, DCWP will make available for persons with disabilities alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or tape recording the complaint. Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator (or designee) will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Coordinator (or designee) will respond to the complaint, in a format accessible to the complainant. The response will explain DCWP's position and offer options for resolution of the complaint.

When and How to File an Appeal

The grievant may appeal DCWP's decision within thirty (30) calendar days of having received a response from DCWP. The appeal should be mailed to:

Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga
Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
42 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10004

DCWP will provide the grievant with a response in writing within sixty (60) days. This response will address the appeal, describe DCWP's decision, and offer options for substantive resolution of the appeal, where applicable.

Five-Year Accessibility Plan

DCWP's Five-Year Accessibility Plan can be viewed within the accessibility website at [DCWP - About - Overview - Website Accessibility Statement \(nyc.gov\)](#).