



**Department of Finance**

Final Five-Year Accessibility Plan

2024 to 2028

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## **Background**

Administrative Code (“Local Law 12”), codified as section 23-1004 of the NYC Administrative Code, requires agencies to prepare and publish 5-year accessibility plans outlining steps they plan to take to ensure that its workplace, programs, and activities are accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

## **General**

### **Mission Statement**

The Department of Finance (DOF) administers the tax and revenue laws of the City fairly, efficiently, and transparently to instill public confidence and encourage compliance while providing exceptional customer service.

### **Agency Background**

The Department of Finance is the central nervous system of the New York City government. DOF collects the revenues that make every city service possible. Public education, police and fire protection, hospitals and healthcare facilities, parks, and recreation centers. It all begins with DOF.

### **Executive Summary**

DOF will continue to regularly review the Agency’s Physical, Digital and Programmatic Access, as well as strive to always improve Effective Communications and Workplace Inclusion.

DOF will continue to provide reasonable accommodations to enable individuals under certain qualifying bases to perform the essential functions of the job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. All city agencies are required to provide reasonable accommodations to all program applicants and participants, employees, interns (paid or unpaid), and consultants that permit them to perform the essential functions of their job in connection with disability; religion; status as a victim of domestic violence, sex offenses, or stalking; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, including lactation needs (collectively, protected classes). Reasonable accommodations are for the requestor’s condition only.

## **Accessibility Statement**

DOF is committed to ensuring that our digital and physical properties are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive to all, including persons with disabilities. DOF has and will continue to strive to improve user experience to provide full accessibility to everyone, including but not limited to persons with disabilities.

## **Contact Information**

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## **Agency Links**

[Finance's Commitment to Diversity - DOF \(nyc.gov\)](#)

[Website Accessibility Statement - DOF \(nyc.gov\)](#)

[Your Rights \(nyc.gov\)](#)

## **Agency Plan**

### **Methodology**

To assess whether DOF is effectively meeting the needs of clients and staff with various disabilities, a physical survey was conducted across ten DOF locations, including the main headquarters, five payment centers, and four annex sites. The plan focuses on critical areas of physical accessibility, such as workstations, private offices, conference rooms, service counters, pantries, restrooms, staircases, signage, elevators, entrances, lobbies, as well as programmatic access. The study's methodology also involved interviews with Human Resources (HR) professionals, DOF's Finance Information Technology (FIT) team, and the use of the MOPD self-evaluation questionnaire.

Public comments on the draft 5-year accessibility plan will be reviewed and may be incorporated into future updates of the plan.

## **Physical Access**

DOF currently has business locations at:

- 66 John Street, New York;
- 59 Maiden Lane, New York
- 3030 Third Avenue, Bronx;
- 375 Pearl Street, Floors, New York;
- 144-06 94th Avenue, Jamaica,
- 210 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn;
- 350 St. Marks Place, Staten Island;
- 1 Centre Street, New York:
- 345 Adams Street, Brooklyn; and
- 30-03 Review Avenue, Long Island City

The Department of Finance currently has 2 locations that operate out of 2 City-Owned buildings: One Centre Street and 345 Adams Street. The Department of City Administrative Services (DCAS) is responsible for common areas in the city-owned buildings listed above. DOF is responsible for demised areas, including open areas; workstations; private offices; dedicated meeting rooms, pantries and kitchens; furniture and interior signage.

Beginning in May 2017, DOF began conducting accessibility assessments at all the DOF business locations. At each location, appropriate signage, building and restroom accessibility, customer service, and overall, ADA compliance concerns were assessed.

The Staten Island Business Center automatic entrance doorway was repaired to allow greater accessibility to people with mobility disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs. It is important to note that DOF is actively pursuing a new location for the Staten Island business location and anticipates relocation within 3 to 5 years.

Manhattan, Queens, Bronx, Business Centers, 345 Adams Street, and 375 Pearl Street have all been structurally altered and or renovated g in February 2017, to meet applicable accessibility standards.

## **Digital Access**

DOF assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

The Agency's website will be continually monitored and reviewed by the Digital Web and Web Productions teams to ensure compliance and to implement any changes necessary to improve our website's digital accessibility.

## **Font Standardization**

To enhance readability, DOF has standardized the use of large non-serif styled fonts with a minimum font size on our website of 16px with at least 1em. This ensures that text content is clear and legible for all users.

## **Contrasting Colors**

DOF has implemented color contrast best practices to ensure that text and interactive elements on the agency's website have sufficient contrast. This makes it easier for users with low vision or color blindness to read and understand the content.

## **Alt Text**

All images, charts, and other visual content on DOF's website are accompanied by descriptive alt text. This provides screen reader users with meaningful descriptions of visual elements, enabling them to access the information being conveyed through images.

## **Use of Proper Headings**

DOF utilizes heading tags appropriately to structure content and distinguish between headings, subheadings, and paragraph text. This ensures that the Agency's website is organized and navigable for all users, including those who rely on screen readers.

## **Form Field Labels**

All form fields on the website are equipped with clear and descriptive visual and programmatic labels, allowing those using access technologies to understand the purpose of each field and to fill out forms correctly.

## **Converting Infographics to Text**

Wherever possible, DOF has converted infographics and visual content into text-based formats to allow users, including those with vision disabilities, to access the information contained in the graphics.

## **Using White Space**

DOF has incorporated white space strategically in our web design to improve readability and comprehension. The use of adequate spacing between elements helps prevent content from appearing cluttered and ensures an improved user experience.

## Plain Language of Content

To make the website content more user friendly, DOF edited and optimized the content for readability. This includes breaking down complex information into digestible sections, summarizing lengthy texts, and providing clear and concise information.

## Programmatic Access

DOF has and will continue to provide the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities and all program applicants and participants. Those programs include: the Disabled Homeowners' Exemption; Disability Rent Increase Exemption; Disabled Crime Victim's Exemption; and Disabled Veterans Tax Benefits. The agency will make all necessary ADA and/or accessibility upgrades and adjustments to remain in compliance with the policies of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and the City of New York.

## DHE

The Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE) offers a property tax reduction for disabled New Yorkers who own one-, two-, or three-family homes, condominiums, or cooperative apartments with a combined annual income of \$58,399 or less. The benefit offers eligible disabled homeowners up to a 50% reduction in their home's assessed value. The property must be the applicant's primary residence, with a potential exception if you are receiving in-patient care at a residential healthcare facility. Applicants need to submit documentation of their disability, such as a disability award letter from the Social Security Administration, an award letter from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board or U.S. Postal Service, a certificate from the New York State Commission for the Blind, or a Veterans' Administration letter stating that they are entitled to a Veterans' Disability Pension. All the owners must be people with disabilities, unless the home is owned by spouses or siblings, in which case only one homeowner must have a disability.

## DRIE

Eligible tenants who have a disability and live in an eligible apartment in New York City may be able to freeze their rent and prevent future rent increases with the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). Upon qualification for DRIE, the Department of Finance will "freeze" a tenant's rent and issue a tax abatement credit to the landlord for most future rental increases, protecting the tenant from paying higher amounts. To qualify for DRIE, you must be at least 18 years old, the combined income of everyone living in the apartment must be \$50,000 or less, and you must spend more than one-third of your monthly combined household income on rent. You must live in and be on the lease of a rent-controlled, rent-regulated, or rent-stabilized apartment, or an apartment located in a building whose mortgage was federally insured under Section 213 of the National Housing Act and is owned by a Mitchell-Lama development, limited dividend housing company, redevelopment company, Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) incorporated under New York State's Private Housing Finance Law, Battery Park City or

certain former Mitchell-Lama developments. You must also have been awarded one of the following: Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI); Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs disability pension or disability compensation; United States Postal Service disability pension or disability compensation; or Disability-related Medicaid if the applicant has received either SSI or SSDI in the past.

### **Disabled Crime Victim /Good Samaritan Exemption Tax Benefits**

The Disabled Crime Victim's Exemption provides a tax exemption for a victim of a crime who became physically disabled because of the crime. This benefit is also for someone who becomes disabled by trying to stop a person who has committed a crime; trying to prevent a crime from happening; or trying to help a law enforcement officer make an arrest. To qualify, the crime victim or Good Samaritan must be the property owner, a resident of the property or a member of the property owner's household. Additionally, the physical disability caused by the crime must include a permanent physical impairment which greatly limits one or more major life activity.

### **Disabled Veterans' Tax Benefits**

The Alternative Veterans' Exemption is available on a veteran's primary residence and allows an additional reduction in the property's assessed value to veterans who incur service-connected disabilities, equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings (regardless of whether such veterans served in combat zones). An applicant will need to submit U.S. Veterans' Administration documents for service-connected disability rating to receive the disability benefits portion of the exemption.

The Eligible Funds Veterans' Exemption reduces the assessed value of a property purchased by a veteran with eligible funds. There is a further exemption that permits veterans who qualify for grants to purchase or to modify specially adapted houses to accommodate their serious disabilities, or the homes of their widowed spouses.

### **Effective Communications**

DOF is committed to and will continue to provide effective communications and accessible services to people with disabilities by implementing clear and appropriate signage, effective communication, and an accessible website. DOF will strive to ensure all sites are fully accessible, while making every effort to maintain and potentially enhance overall communication effectiveness. The agency currently maintains a policy and procedure regarding requests for reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Noticing and contact information relating to reasonable accommodations can be found [here](#) as well as on the agency website and program related publications add link (<https://nyco365.sharepoint.com/sites/DOF-FINANCENET/SitePages/EEO.aspx>).



DOF will explore the potential to enhance accessibility for individuals with hearing disabilities by adding more assistive listening technology.

The Agency's Disability Service Facilitator (DSF) acts as the point of contact and liaison for all requests for accommodations, inquiries, and issues raised by people with disabilities who wish to apply for or participate in the agency's various programs and services.

## **Workplace Inclusion**

DOF is committed to preventing discrimination and ensuring that all employees are aware of their rights and obligations under EEO. DOF will require all agency employees to complete disability etiquette and awareness eLearning training, offered by DCAS, every two years. DOF will encourage all agency employees to continue to work together to foster and maintain an atmosphere of diversity and workplace inclusion.

## **Budget and Resource Allocation**

DOF will continue to evaluate ways to improve accessibility and allocate resources and budget as deemed necessary.

## **Training**

DOF will strive to further improve overall agency accessibility and related knowledge by ensuring that current and new staff members complete DCAS available trainings including, but not limited to, "Disability Etiquette: Inclusive Workplace Strategies for People with Disabilities."

## Appendix

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