



AccessibleNYC

2019 Edition The City of New York



An Annual Report
on the State of
People with
Disabilities Living in
New York City



Mayor Bill de Blasio

J. Phillip Thompson
Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

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Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

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Cover Photos:

(Top left) Photo Courtesy of NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission.

(Top right) Kadian Outar, Director of the DCAS Office of Citywide Recruitment.

(Bottom left) Photo Courtesy of the Department of Transportation

(Bottom right) Gisella working at her job from TWA Hotel. Photo courtesy of Jon Novick

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Letter from Mayor de Blasio

Dear Friends,

Over the past five and a half years, my Administration has worked to make New York the fairest big city in America.

The 2019 edition of our annual report – AccessibleNYC – outlines our vision for a more accessible future along with an overview of our initiatives in the areas of housing, transportation, employment, education, government, health, technology, and financial empowerment.

Disability rights are at the core of this agenda and the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities has led the way by ensuring that accessibility is at the forefront of all City policies and programs. I am proud of the progress we have made and this Administration will continue to advocate on behalf of all New Yorkers – including the nearly one million who self-identify as people with disabilities – to ensure that everyone is able to prosper in the greatest city in the world.

AccessibleNYC provides a robust blueprint for a more inclusive and equitable society. We will not rest until our bold progressive goals are fully realized so that all New Yorkers are able to live independently in their communities with the resources they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Letter from Deputy Mayor Thompson

Greetings,

Accessibility is crucial to building an inclusive society.

In New York City, we are fortunate that the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has worked to ensure that everything City government has to offer is accessible and inclusive.

AccessibleNYC is a summary of this work, reporting on the status of the nearly one million New Yorkers who self-identify as people with disabilities and describing all of the accessible programs and services available to them.

This 2019 edition of AccessibleNYC continues this progress and pushes forward even bigger and bolder ideas to improve the lives of the disability community. In recognition of the important impact that accessible technology can have as a bridge between an older physical infrastructure and our increasingly digital age, this report emphasizes this emerging sector and all the ways in which new innovations are leading with accessibility at the forefront of the design process.

Our ongoing work to ensure New York City is accessible to a highly diverse community of residents and visitors with disabilities reflects the De Blasio Administration's unwavering commitment to making our City as inclusive as possible.

By empowering the disability community and providing them with the tools they need to be fully included in every facet of life, we can help ensure our City is fair and equitable for all.

Sincerely,

J. Phillip Thompson
Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

Letter from Commissioner Calise

To all New Yorkers and our friends around the world:

The New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is excited to present the 2019 edition of AccessibleNYC. The agency and overall accessibility in the City have come a long way since the first edition was released in 2016. Over the years, MOPD has expanded in size and has had an even greater impact on City policies to ensure that the needs of the disability community are represented.

As MOPD Commissioner, I am incredibly proud of the de Blasio Administration's commitment to improving the quality of life for New Yorkers and visitors with disabilities. Through this work, we are steadily increasing access to transportation with even more wheelchair accessible taxis in the fleet. The City has also enacted first-of-its-kind rules to increase wheelchair accessibility in the for-hire-vehicle sector to ensure that companies provide equivalent service to people with disabilities. MOPD has also taken a proactive approach to address obstacles that the disability community faces finding work and managing their finances through the creation of the **NYC: ATWORK** employment initiative and EmpoweredNYC, a multi-partner collaboration. Together, these two programs help individuals with disabilities find jobs and answer questions about their finances and how salary can impact benefits.

We still have a long way to go before the city and world is fully accessible. The progress made thus far would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of MOPD staff and, most importantly, disability advocates—who continually hold us accountable to the vision of full inclusion that is outlined in this report.

Due to the advocacy and collective voice of the disability community, the City is improving healthcare options for people with disabilities; expanding accessible school choices; and ensuring the City's sustainability efforts address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

In the time left in this Administration, MOPD and our agency partners will continue to work to make New York the most accessible city in the world.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and am honored to serve the people of New York City!

Ciao,

Victor Calise
Commissioner

Executive Summary & Introduction

Since its creation in 1973, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has practiced the policies it advocates. The office has employed and been directed by people with disabilities, leading by example and promoting the values of inclusiveness and accessibility.

It is this commitment that provides the foundation for the work and partnerships MOPD creates with other City agencies, business groups, and community organizations to achieve the goal of making New York City the most accessible city in the world. To do this, we must engage the community of almost 1 million New Yorkers, or roughly 11% of the City's population, who have disclosed living with a disability.¹

By applying the World's population of people with disabilities of 15% to the 65.2 million people who visited New York City in 2018², we estimate that approximately 9.7 million visitors were individuals with a disability.

We have taken great strides to increase accessibility and make disability rights a key priority in its policy agenda. Disability Service Facilitators are strategically placed in City Agencies so that disability rights are at the forefront of day-to-day decision-making. **NYC: ATWORK** is a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership to connect a talent pool of people with disabilities to living-wage jobs and internships. The New York City Building Code goes above and beyond the ADA and the City is working with small businesses and places of public accommodation to adhere to these requirements. In transportation, the Taxi and Limousine Commission has steadily increased the number of wheelchair accessible taxi fleet along with a Citywide Accessible Dispatch program and

1 The 2014 American Community Survey

2 NYC & Company

just passed ground-breaking regulations to mandate wheelchair accessibility in the for-hire-vehicle sector as well. The bus fleet is fully accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities and we are working with our State partners at MTA New York City Transit to increase the accessibility and reliability of the mass transit and paratransit systems as well.

Our City is committed to equity and inclusion for our fellow New Yorkers with disabilities and to visitors with disabilities. The programs and initiatives in this report demonstrate the City's strong support for persons with disabilities and will benefit all New Yorkers, not only people with disabilities.

The fourth edition of AccessibleNYC 2019 is organized into eight sections: Transportation, Employment, Financial Empowerment, Housing, Health, Technology, Access and Education.

Transportation

This section analyzes the strategic ways to invest in our infrastructure to make the City more accessible to people with disabilities.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Taxis
- For Hire Vehicles
- TLC Office of Inclusion
- Access-A-Ride
- Subway Accessibility
- Buses
- iRideNYC

- Bike Share
- Pedestrian Ramps
- Porous Sidewalk Pilot Project
- Vision Zero
- Connected Vehicle Technology Pilot
- NYC Ferry
- Central Business District Tolling

Employment

This section examines how we are expanding opportunities for people with disabilities by working with businesses and government agencies while increasing access to skills and jobs.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Business Development Council
- Talent Coalition
- Job Seeker Engagement
- AbillTyAcademy
- 55-a Program
- Partners for Inclusive Internships

Financial Empowerment

This section describes the work that is part of EmpoweredNYC, an initiative that launched in 2018 to support New Yorkers with disabilities and their families increase their financial capability through broad engagement and education, one-on-one financial counseling enhanced with new expertise, outreach and tools, and specialized benefits support services for people transitioning to work.

- EmpoweredNYC financial counseling services
- ABLE Act

Housing

This section provides a review of the initiatives taken to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to gain accessible housing, increase accessibility to their current housing, increase availability of resources used to obtain housing, and ensure more housing opportunities are created.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Affordable Accessible Housing
- DSS Housing Resources
- Accessible Housing Survey
- HPD Building Assessment
- Housing Connect
- Real Estate Listings
- Rent Freeze
- Project Open House
- Homeless Services

Health

This section provides a review of the health programs, services, policies and initiatives for New Yorkers with disabilities.

Key topic areas discussed:

- Inclusive Health Care
- Health Insurance Enrollment
- Parks and Public Health

- Monday Mile
- NYC WELL
- Falls Prevention Coalition

Technology

This is a new standalone section taking innovative programs and emerging technologies from prior reports to focus on the progress being made while adding new ideas and programs.

Key issues discussed:

- Smart City
- Web Accessibility
- Digital Inclusion Conference
- Access and Employment Week
- Text-to-911
- NextGeneration 911
- Assistive Listening Systems

Access

This section provides a review of the programs, services, policies and initiatives that increase access for persons with disabilities to their neighborhoods as well as throughout the five boroughs.

Key issues discussed:

- ASL Direct
- Disability Service Facilitators
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness
- Interim Flood Protection Measures

- Small Business Services
- Inclusive Design Guidelines: Sports & Recreation, New York City
- Building Code Update
- Human Rights Law
- Plastic Straws
- Restaurant Access Program
- ASL Options Card
- Access HRA
- SNAP On-Demand
- Home Visit Needed Center
- Immigration Services
- Increasing Access to HRA Materials
- Access to IDNYC
- Arts and Culture in New York City
- CreateNYC: A Cultural Plan for All New Yorkers
- Equity and Inclusion in DCLA Funding Practices
- Promoting Disability Inclusion and Diversity in the Cultural Community
- Tourism

Education

This section provides a review of the process by which collaborative partnerships with other levels of government, academic institutions, and the private sector support people with disabilities, as well as efforts to educate others to better communicate and interact with people with disabilities.

Key topic areas discussed:

- National Convening of MOPDs
- CCHR Education and Outreach
- Civic Engagement
- DOE Transition and College Access Centers
- DOE Admission Policies
- Accessible Parking Campaign
- Disability Pride Parade
- AccessibleNYC

Transportation

New York City is the world's busiest and most dynamic city. Residents and tourists alike rely on the streets to be safe and depend on public transportation to get them to where they need to go. Of the nearly one million New Yorkers who have self-identified as living with disabilities, about 10% are estimated to use wheelchairs.³

Through the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) and collaboration from other city and state agencies working with MOPD, the City has made a concerted effort to ensure that all New Yorkers, including the more than 5.5 million people who use public transportation each day, are able to navigate the city.

While tackling and modifying a physical infrastructure that does not meet the everyday needs of people with disabilities, we as a city are examining and getting involved in new infrastructure as it is being built. During the design and development process, we pay attention to how individuals with disabilities can use and access the various spaces, technologies, or programs from the beginning rather than adapt later as an afterthought.

Taxis

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has steadily increased the number of accessible vehicles in the yellow and green taxi fleet for people who have mobility, vision, hearing, and cognitive disabilities. Additionally, the agency's newly enacted rules have helped to increase the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the for-hire vehicle (FHV) sector.

³ These numbers are based on the U.S. Census Bureau 2014 American Community Survey found on the MOPD Website, [NYC.gov/mopd](http://nyc.gov/mopd).



Photo Courtesy of Taxi & Limousine Commission

All of the approximately 15,000 yellow and green taxis in New York City have Braille and raised lettering to identify the specific taxi. In addition, all taxis are equipped with an Accessibility Mode that includes automated trip information, large print, adjustable volume and speed of speech, and screen-reader capabilities in order to assist passengers who are blind or have low vision as well as individuals with cognitive disabilities. All “Taxis of Tomorrow”—approximately 2,800 vehicles in New York City as of May 2019—include an induction loop system that transmits sound directly to cochlear implants or hearing aids with a T-coil in order to ease communication between drivers and passengers who have hearing loss.

Furthermore, there are over 2,700 wheelchair accessible yellow taxis in New York City as of May 2019, and the TLC is committed to reaching 50 percent wheelchair accessibility in the yellow taxi fleet. Additionally, there are approximately 210 wheelchair accessible green taxis in New York City as of May

2019 and a portion of Street Hail Livery licenses have been set aside for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Through the TLC's Accessible Dispatch program, residents and visitors can order a wheelchair accessible yellow or green taxi from anywhere in New York City with booking available via phone, by calling the dispatch center directly at 646-599-9999 or by dialing 311 (NY Relay: 711), online at [accessibledispatch.com](https://www.accessibledispatch.com), or through the "Accessible Dispatch NYC" mobile application. Once the request is made, the dispatcher sends a wheelchair accessible taxi to the pick-up location and passengers pay the metered fare when they reach their destination with no extra fees. Drivers receive a dispatch fee payment from the TLC's Taxi Improvement Fund to compensate them for traveling to the pick-up location.

For-Hire Vehicles

In order to increase accessibility in the FHV sector—which transports over 500,000 passengers each day—the TLC recently passed and enacted rules that require each FHV base to either dispatch a minimum percentage of its annual trips, increasing each year, to wheelchair accessible vehicles or work with an approved Accessible Vehicle Dispatcher to service wheelchair accessible trips within certain wait times. These rules took effect on January 14th of 2019, and they provide every passenger with the ability to request a wheelchair accessible vehicle from their local car service, an app-based company (Uber, Lyft, etc.), or any other FHV base with a cost and service level that is equivalent to a comparable trip in a non-accessible vehicle. As of May 2019, there are over five hundred wheelchair accessible FHVs in New York City and the number of wheelchair accessible FHVs should continue to increase as

more bases come into compliance with the agency's rules. The TLC will issue public reports that will evaluate compliance with these new rules beginning in the summer of 2019.

TLC Office of Inclusion

Going forward, the TLC plans to build on its efforts to further increase accessibility. The newly-created Office of Inclusion will ensure that the riding public—including individuals with disabilities—receives equivalent and courteous service from taxis and for-hire vehicles. More specifically, this office will make sure that TLC-licensed drivers do not decline to pick up a passenger or complete a trip due to the passenger's destination, use of a service animal, or inclusion in a protected class such as the disability community. The agency is also in the process of developing new resources to further improve TLC-licensed drivers' disability etiquette, knowledge of wheelchair securement and ramp operations, and overall training on how to better serve passengers with disabilities.

Access-A-Ride

Access-A-Ride (AAR) is the largest paratransit service in the country, with over 31,000 trips on peak days and over 7.1 million scheduled trips in 2018. 44% of these trips were provided in accessible vehicles. The service operates 24/7 throughout the five boroughs of NYC, and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of NYCT fixed route services into Westchester and Nassau Counties.

These trips are provided to almost 154,000 registrants of whom 15% are passengers who use wheelchairs and 71% are over the age of 65.

The weighted average cost per ride for 2018 was \$58.

Average Trip Cost		\$58
Carriers		\$82*
Brokers		\$32
Taxi/Livery		\$18

*Does not include fuel, liability insurance and vehicles

In 2018 New York City Transit (NYCT) continued its strategy to enhance AAR service that included expanding the use of E-hail services, improving broker and dedicated services, enhancing GPS to improve monitoring and the accuracy of ETAs, and procuring a modern, state-of-the-art scheduling, dispatch and AVL system.

A unified paratransit app, myAAR, was developed and rolled out in December 2018. This app incorporates all aspects of customer service from scheduling rides and tracking vehicles to giving feedback and updating account information.

Since late 2017, AAR has been piloting two innovative E-hail service modes. The E-hail On-Demand service allows AAR customers enrolled in the pilot to request an “on-demand” trip on the day of travel via the Curb,

Arro, and Limosys apps. The on-demand pilot has been extended through the end of 2019 for current users.

In addition, the E-hail Advanced Reservation service allowed AAR customers who booked their trip prior to the day of travel to request an E-hail trip through the call center. The new enhanced broker service, which started to ramp up on

March 1, 2019 means that thousands of customers will have the ability to potentially get a taxi or for-hire vehicle (FHV) trip. It builds directly on the success of the Advanced Reservation E-Hail program and improves on that program in many of the ways that advocates and riders have requested during the past year, including more trips performed by taxis and FHVs as part of core AAR service, using taxis for door-to-door service, greater capacity to serve customers who use wheelchairs, more robust trainings for taxi and FHV drivers that do AAR trips, the ability to track broker trips on the myAAR app, and better tracking, and reporting of the on-time performance of taxi and FHV trips.

There are designated AAR pickup spots at busy locations to facilitate successful connections. These locations have AAR identification signs. For a list of designated AAR pickup sites visit mta.info/accessibility.

As of May 30, 2019, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) adopted a new rule that AAR vehicles with a seating capacity of four or more passengers would be allowed to use dedicated bus lanes. This policy change will assist in increasing the efficiency of paratransit trips and improve on-time performance.

Subway Accessibility

An accessible subway system benefits all New Yorkers. It increases travel, which among other things increases employment opportunities and community interaction, all helping our city grow. There are 554,000 New Yorkers with ambulatory disabilities, 1.23 million seniors and 553,000 young children, yet only 120 of the City's 493 subway stations have

vertical access via a ramp or elevator. While these stations represent 24% of the system and serve 48% of daily ridership, there is still work to do to achieve a fully accessible subway system.



Photo Courtesy of MTA NYCT

Of the 120 accessible subway stations, 55 are in Manhattan, 27 in Brooklyn, 20 in Queens, 13 in the Bronx, and 5 in Staten Island. Eighty-seven of the 100 Key Stations in the program mandated by state and federal law are complete, with the remaining 13 in progress. An additional 33 stations are ADA accessible, including Hudson Yards and the four stations along the Second Avenue Subway. The MTA has invested nearly 5 billion dollars in accessibility through its capital programs, including funding for new elevators and ramps, significant funding for replacing elevators that have reached the end of their useful life, and investing in additional accessibility features

such as tactile warning strips at the platform edge, braille signage, and AutoGates that allow customers with disabilities to use the system independently. For a list of accessible stations visit [mta.info/accessibility](https://www.mta.info/accessibility) or see appendix.

MTA New York City Transit's Fast Forward: The Plan to Modernize New York City Transit has four tenets: transforming the subway, reimagining the bus network, accelerating accessibility, and empowering employees to deliver world class service. Under the accessibility pillar, NYCT is committed to 50 more stations made accessible in the next five years, so that no customer will be more than two stations away from an accessible station. This goal requires commitment and support from city, state, and federal agencies, elected officials, and the public.

Through the cooperation of the MTA, community advocates, the New York City Council, key city agencies including DOT, City Planning and MOPD, all working together to utilize existing zoning tools, an expedited ULURP process and with help of developers, New York City now has twenty-five stations with ADA improvements in progress. When these 25 stations are complete, the system will be 29% accessible by count, and stations that serve 53% of ridership will be accessible.

One useful zoning tool is Zoning Resolution 37-40 which requires any new development or an enlargement constructed on a zoning lot of 5,000 square feet or more of lot area that fronts on a portion of a sidewalk containing a stairway entrance or entrances into a subway station located within certain Districts to relocate and rebuild the entrance from the street onto the zoning lot. The new entrance or entrances may require satisfaction of additional obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), including the ADA Accessibility

Guidelines per consultation with the New York City Transit Authority. We will continue investigating other zoning initiatives that can be used to increase subway accessibility to all individuals with disabilities. In addition, we are also looking at city agency projects that are being constructed near a subway station to identify areas where easements can be created for future installation of elevators.



NYCT is also focused on creating and distributing online and print resources that can help people with disabilities navigate the subway system. The Guide to Accessible Transit was recently updated to provide more information on the accessibility of subway stations, as well as buses and Access-A-Ride paratransit service. The Guide to Accessible Transit is available online at MTA.info/accessibility. NYCT is working daily to provide additional information regarding elevator outages and alternate route information on their website via kiosks, email, mobile app and text alerts. Useful tools include a link to verify an elevator's status or signing up for E-Alerts. Both of these tools are available online at MTA.info/accessibility.

Buses

Every city bus is wheelchair accessible, with either a lift or, on newer models, an easier-to-use ramp. Currently, DOT is conducting a citywide survey of all bus stops to identify those with physical accessibility challenges. The survey will help prioritize upgrades to bus stops in future years.



Photo Courtesy of MTA NYCT

iRideNYC

With funding from a federal grant, NYC DOT is issuing an RFP to redesign their iRideNYC application. iRideNYC currently provides real-time passenger information of trains, busses, and CitiBike availability. Recently, DOT has made some improvements to iRideNYC like adding spatial information for elevators and escalators throughout the subway system and adding high contrast capability for users to invert the colors or entirely change the color scheme of the information on display. The updated version of the application will be made available for both Androids and iPhones. It will sync with on street smart Bluetooth-low energy beacons identifying bus stops and a suite of public amenities and will also provide exact location

information. DOT will be identifying on street corridors and transit hubs with high volumes of pedestrians with low-vision or those who are blind.

Bike Share

Making bike share accessible to individuals with disabilities is a challenge. City street bike share programs around the country do not include accessible bikes. Many recreation-based bike lending programs have incorporated handcycles and tandem bikes. MOPD contacted a bike manufacturer in Queens, New York, Workman Cycle, to create a prototype handcycle that would be sturdy enough to withstand the NYC climate and sustain public use while also being able to utilize the docking stations.

Simultaneously, as part of Lyft's acquisition of Motivate, the parent company of CitiBike, NYCDOT asked Lyft to partner with the agency on the development of a true adaptive bike share program. Since the merger, the two entities have been researching prototype handcycles that could withstand the NYC climate and sustain public use. Parallel research has begun to solicit feedback from New Yorkers with disabilities on what it would take for them to feel safe riding a handcycle on the City's 1,200+ miles of bike lanes.



Quemuel Arroyo, Chief Accessibility Specialist and ADA Coordinator at the Department of Transportation, tests out a handcycle.

Pedestrian Ramps

DOT is currently conducting a detailed survey to evaluate the condition of existing pedestrian ramps using high definition, street level imagery and ground-based LiDAR data to extract measurements of each pedestrian ramp. We are taking various measurements for each ramp and will use this data to plan construction work accordingly. By the end of 2019, all pedestrian ramp surveys will be completed, an unprecedented achievement for the City of New York. This data will be combined with additional geographic and demographic information to determine where to begin work and prioritize locations in the five boroughs with the intent of addressing all 162,000 corners, or more than 320,000 ramps in the city.



Pedestrian Ramps with red Detectable Warning Surfaces.

All new and upgraded pedestrian ramps include a red (or white in special districts) detectable warning surface to help guide individuals who are blind or have low vision.

For more information on pedestrian ramps visit nycpedramps.info.

Porous Sidewalk Pilot Project

DOT will study the possible uses of permeable materials on sidewalks and crosswalks to determine if ponding at the base of pedestrian ramps will be alleviated. Two locations in Queens currently have porous surfaces. The pilot sites will be monitored to evaluate the usefulness of each installation type for future projects within NYC.

Vision Zero

Increasing accessibility for all New Yorkers is a key element of the de Blasio administration's Vision Zero plan, which was launched in 2014 with the overarching goal of reducing preventable traffic injuries and fatalities.

The City's commitment to providing accessibility for all New Yorkers continues with the introduction of raised crosswalks, which increase pedestrian visibility and encourage drivers to slow down, were piloted in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

DOT has installed Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) in all five boroughs by collaborating with the disability community on identifying priority corners. These devices provide information in non-visual formats, such as audible tones, speech messages, and vibrating surfaces, to alert individuals with vision disabilities when the "walk" phase is available at a given intersection. As of December 31, 2018, there were APS units installed at 371 intersections citywide. List of APS locations available at [NYC.gov/DOT](https://www.nyc.gov/dot) and search "APS." Pursuant to Local Law, DOT is required to install APS units at 75 intersections each year. Starting in 2019, DOT plans to install APS at 150 locations per year for the next 2 years, doubling APS installations annually.

Connected Vehicle Technology Pilot

Preparations for New York City's pilot of connected vehicle technology were completed in 2018, with the installation of sensors along Midtown Manhattan avenues, the FDR Drive, and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. This program will, over the next year, equip 8,000 vehicles (including 6,000 yellow taxis) with

technology that allows vehicles to electronically “communicate” with each other to identify roadway risks aimed at preventing crashes. The pilot will be the largest of its kind in the United States, and the first to test the technology in a complex urban environment. City agencies have partnered with the United States Department of Transportation and the NYU Tandon School of Engineering on the implementation and evaluation of the program.

In 2018, DCAS evaluated the functionality and effectiveness of vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure telematics systems. Thousands of units in the City’s fleet had this new technology installed in Spring 2019. This technology has the potential to alert drivers, through direct short-range communication, to take specific actions to avoid a collision or reduce collision severity if one occurs. Some of the applications of this technology are traffic signal change warnings, blind spot and pedestrian alerts, road hazards, pedestrian-oriented phone apps, and alerts about road restrictions such as weight and height maximums.

NYC Ferry

NYC Ferry is an accessible alternative for commuters with disabilities at the same cost as a subway ride—currently \$2.75.

At the end of August 2018, NYC Ferry launched the Lower East Side loop running from Long Island City to Wall Street with stops at 34th Street, Stuyvesant Cove and Corlears Hook. As the fully accessible NYC Ferry expands it will serve 11 million riders annually by 2023, up from 4.1 million today. Routes will be added to Staten Island and Coney Island, and a Throgs Neck/Ferry Point Park stop to the Soundview route.

The NYC Ferry offers reduced fare monthly ticketing passes at a 50% discount. Applications can be obtained at [Ferry.nyc/ReducedFare](https://www.ferry.nyc.gov/ReducedFare) or by calling 1-844-469-3377.

Central Business District Tolling

Central Business District Tolling is an effective method to manage demand on the city's busiest streets and will also generate revenue for the MTA. We are working with City and State agencies to ensure the needs of individuals with disabilities who drive into the regulated area are addressed since mass transit is not fully accessible. Congestion pricing is currently utilized in cities such as London, Stockholm and Singapore. Recommendations for New York City's congestion pricing program will be made by the Traffic Mobility Review Board to the MTA at the end of 2020.

Employment

The City is committed to improving access to good jobs and increasing the number of people with disabilities who are employed. We do this by ensuring that the administration hires people with disabilities; by providing training to employers on how to engage with the disability community; and by providing technical assistance and information on reasonable accommodations to employers and removing barriers to employment.

NYC: ATWORK

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only one in five New Yorkers with disabilities are employed. Our city and our economy have much to gain from achieving full employment for people with disabilities. MOPD is uniquely positioned to convene businesses, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), government agencies, workforce and vocational rehabilitation entities to work collaboratively to build a groundbreaking career pathways strategy and did just this in the ***NYC: ATWORK*** program.



Sonia works as an Administrative Intern in the Medical Records Department at Lennox Hill Hospital

NYC: ATWORK is a business-driven, person-centered initiative connecting New Yorkers with disabilities to meaningful living-wage jobs within high growth sectors across the five boroughs. We have addressed the challenges facing the business community including difficulty locating talent; limited staff and dedicated resources for recruitment; need for trainings on reasonable accommodations and disability awareness; lack of commitment from leadership; and lack of promotion/career growth opportunities.

We have responded to the needs of the business community through successful sector-based training including disability etiquette and awareness trainings to over 90 businesses and agencies, reaching over 2,000 hiring managers and HR specialists; organized 20 targeted recruitments to meet the needs of business partners; developed internship models to serve a range of companies; established greater collaboration between the disability and workforce development systems; and created a centralized talent pool of candidates with disabilities for businesses to recruit from including transitioning youth, college students and graduates, recipients of state vocational rehabilitation services, and those unemployed or underemployed who do not receive employment services.

NYC: ATWORK is funded by grants from the Poses Family Foundation (PFF), Kessler Foundation, the Institute for Career Development, Craig H. Neilsen Foundation and New York State Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR). **NYC: ATWORK** staff positions that are currently grant funded will be converted to permanent staff lines by the end of the City's 2020 funding cycle, ensuring sustainability for the program.

To provide long term support, MOPD has become a Social Security Administration Ticket to Work (TTW) Employer Network. TTW program offers beneficiaries with disabilities access to meaningful employment with the assistance of Ticket to Work employment providers. TTW is an outcome-based program offering participating service providers financial compensation for successfully assisting Social Security disability beneficiaries to enter, maintain and advance in employment.

Business Development Council

The Business Development Council (BDC) began as a 9-person advisory team and has grown into 90-plus members with representation from a variety of high-growth sectors including finance and business services, hospitality and related services, transportation, retail, technology and city government.



NYC: ATWORK jobseekers share their experiences seeking employment at the Business Development Council spring quarterly meeting hosted by Lenox Health Greenwich Village.

The BDC meets quarterly to report on recruitment and hiring; discuss best practices; meet job seekers who share their experience and employment goals; review employer engagement activities, including direct referrals, informational interviews, career mentoring activities; and provide employer led workshops.

Talent Coalition

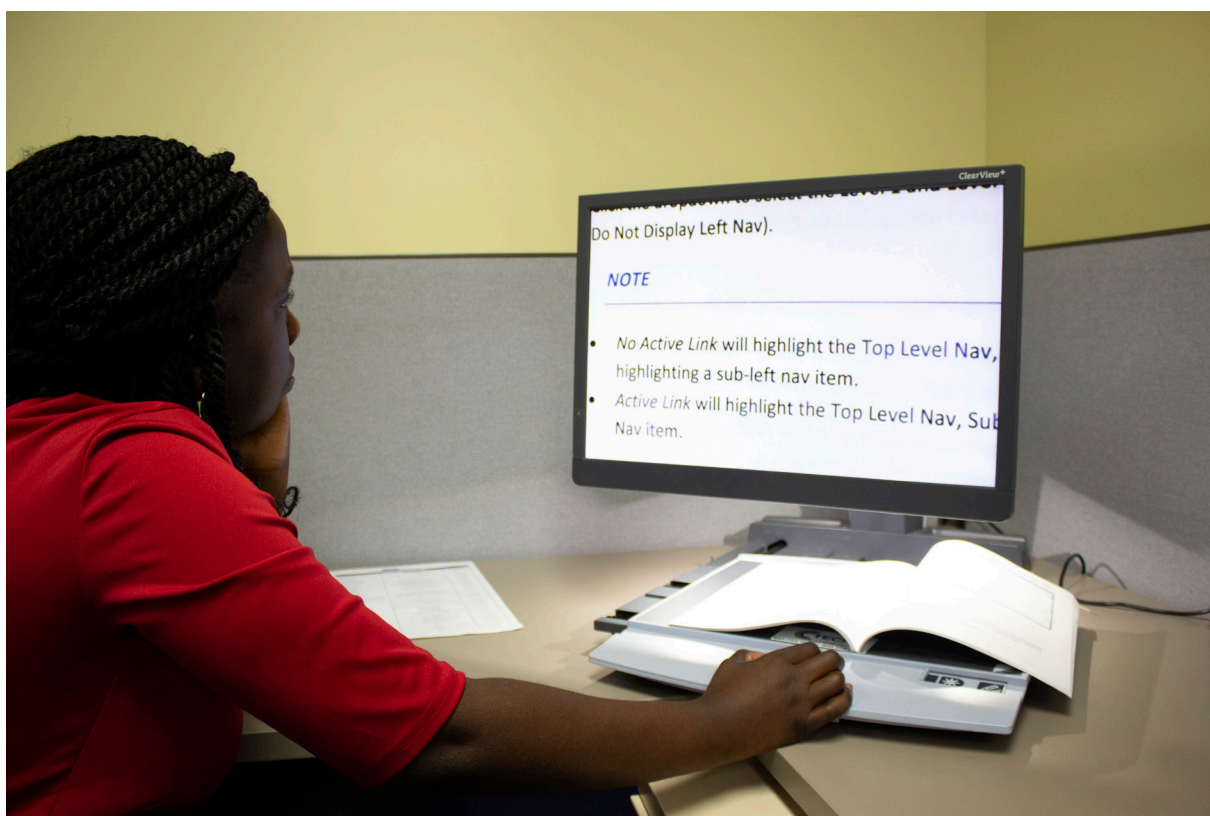
The talent coalition, entities that provide viable candidates seeking employment, has grown to over 60 members, including non-profit and community-based organizations dedicated to workforce development for people with disabilities. CUNY Leads and private colleges and universities such as St. John's, Fordham, NYU, Pace and Columbia participate in the coalition.

Scheduled to meet quarterly, members share business engagement updates, upcoming recruitments, appropriate resumes and cover letters, access to informational interviews, and the 55-a process. Staff also provides career readiness and 55-a workshops to agencies upon request. A best practices handbook is being created to share with coalition members.

Job Seeker Engagement

1,535 connected
1,200 enrolled
898 active job seekers
263 placements

Job seekers come to **NYC: ATWORK** through several channels: vocational rehabilitation agencies, provider and community-based agencies, schools and colleges, word of mouth and through the internet and social media. The process begins with a phone screening to determine job seekers' goals. (Accommodations made for participants who need alternative screening). Orientations occur twice monthly and include an overview of **NYC: ATWORK** and an in-person screening. Every participant is assigned to a relationship manager who maintains contact and provides guidance.



Domonique, part of the NYC Mayor's Office internship program, uses a screen magnifier to read printed instructions.

Staff assists with resume building and cover letters, researching positions posted on the **NYC: ATWORK** as well as other career information sites. Job matching, interview

preparation, employer-based activities and readiness workshops are available to our participants. We urge participants to check our job board regularly and maintain contact with their relationship manager throughout the job search process. We support participants during their hiring process and for one year of their employment.

In order to manage and facilitate the process both for the business community and job seekers, we created a Management System with the assistance of the Mayor's Office of Operations, Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DoITT) and our Management Information Systems staff. The System contains jobseeker profiles which provides up to date interactions and tracks participant interaction. The Matrix for our job seekers can be found in Appendix II.

We also created a customized Job Board that can be accessed by the public at **NYC: ATWORK**. The Job Board allows jobseekers to search for jobs by job type (part-time, full-time, internship) and by sector.

For example, one sector **NYC: ATWORK** continues to work with is arts and entertainment. Staff has presented disability etiquette and awareness trainings for many of the City's cultural organizations including Manhattan Theatre Club, The Frick Collection, and the Museum of the City of New York. As a result, these organizations have hired **NYC: ATWORK** participants in various positions and have hosted interns in performing arts and finance.

abilTy Academy



NYC: ATWORK, in collaboration with Institute for Career Development (ICD) launched the first Networking Academy or Netacad in IT and Cyber security for people with disabilities. The academy provides training and access to well-paying employment opportunities to people with disabilities in high growth areas of the technology field, starting with cyber security.

The six-month training program is tuition free for those enrolled in ACCES-VR services. A team of instructors deliver content adapted for different learning styles and in a classroom that meets all students' needs for accommodations.

Work readiness led by our business partners, vocational counselors, and the **NYC: ATWORK** team provides students with workshops and one-on-one consultation that address topics such as resume writing, networking, mock interviews, and workplace etiquette, often directly from potential employers.



Amar dissects a cable in class at the ability academy.

Following six months of training, students will obtain a marketable Cisco certification and utilize their skills with a paid internship which provide students the opportunity to apply their skills in the workplace.

The combination of highly valued Cisco certification, classroom instruction, and work experience position students for employment upon completion, with ongoing support from MOPD and partners.

The inaugural cohort opened with 16 students diverse in backgrounds, education, skills and disability. Classes have three certification options: CCENT; CCNA Security; CCNA Routing & Switching.



The first Ability Academy graduating class

The second cohort began in April 2019 with 20 students.

The ability Academy is made possible by the support of ACCES-VR, Institute for Career Development, the UJA-Federation, the JE & ZB Butler Foundation, Poses Family Foundation and the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC, with Corporate Sponsorship provided by BNP Paribas and Standard Chartered Bank.

55-a Program

New York State Civil Service Law Section 55-a authorizes the City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to identify a maximum of 700 positions with duties that can be performed by "physically or mentally disabled persons" who are qualified to perform such duties.⁴ People who wish to enter City government and have expressed an interest in being considered for the 55-a Program, may apply to competitive positions otherwise filled through exams and if qualified to perform the duties of the position, may be interviewed. If offered the position, they must apply to be certified by ACCES-VR or the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) as having a mental or physical disability and may be appointed to the position without taking a Civil Service exam. There are currently 381 employees throughout City government participating in the 55-a Program.

DCAS's Office of Citywide Recruitment (OCR), which conducts active recruitment and promotion of Civil Service jobs to ensure agencies have a diverse pipeline of candidates to fill their positions, became responsible for the 55-a program in 2018. The agency takes a proactive approach to recruiting

⁴ NY State Civil Service Law 55-A

people with disabilities for employment across all City agencies. MOPD and DCAS work together to educate, train and encourage City agencies to utilize the 55-a Program to fill their recruitment needs by hiring qualified persons with disabilities who may have encountered barriers to City employment.

As a direct result of the “Citywide 55-a Symposium” held in 2018, more agencies recognized the benefits of utilizing the program, and many participated in our 2nd “Diversity Career Fair” on June 14, 2018. Eleven City agencies and 86 qualified candidates participated with 21 qualified candidates hired to date.

NYC: ATWORK has become a recruitment vehicle for City agencies, providing direct referral for positions as well as holding targeted recruitment job fairs in partnership with DCAS.

On January 31, 2019 we held an agency-specific Diversity Career Fair for DCAS’s Human Capital Bureau where we identified, recruited, and pre-screened candidates for 10 job titles of which four titles were filled.



In addition, we recently held our third “Diversity Career Fair” on May 20, 2019 with nine city agencies recruiting for 106 job postings and 248 positions to fill. The **NYC: ATWORK** team identified, recruited and invited 124 candidates with 120 attending. Many will be invited to second interviews based on city agencies’ evaluation feedback.

Furthermore, we have streamlined the 55-a eligibility process through our collaborative partnership with the authorizing entities, ACCES-VR and NYSCB, upon employment offer. This occurred by establishing and maintaining regular communication with ACCES-VR Business Relations Representatives and with NYSCB to increase efficiency of eligibility verification. In addition to working with our state partners, we work with 55-a candidates to re-connect them to the respective state agencies or assist them in applying for first time services. In sum, we follow each candidate throughout the 55-a application process.

Because DCAS now proactively recruits for candidates with disabilities and our robust approach to building relationships and partnering with City agencies, the City has increased the number of new employees hired through the 55-a Program to to fifty-five since 2018 from four during the previous two years. This demonstrates the City’s firm commitment to ensuring our workforce remains diverse and inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

Partnerships for Inclusive Internships

The New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) and AHRC New York City (AHRC NYC) have formed a partnership to provide internship opportunities for New Yorkers with disabilities, helping create pathways to future employment,

thanks to a generous grant from The Taft Foundation.

The program, known as the Partnership for Inclusive Internships (PII), is a formal internship program within City government for people with disabilities, leveraging AHRC NYC's resources, experience, and success in finding employment for people with disabilities, and DSS' vast network of programs and services, to offer a wide variety of internship opportunities across the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and Department of Homeless Services (DHS). PII will place a minimum of 30 interns in the first year.

Qualified candidates for each individualized internship opportunity are being identified by partner organizations that, through their own unique programs, have experience and relationships with these individuals. Partner organizations in this initiative include the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), AHRC NYC, Yachad/Jewish Union Foundation, and the CUNY: LEADS program. Internship opportunities include, but will not be limited to, clerical, data entry, IT, accounting, and social service placements.

Financial Empowerment

Financial stability is crucial to the success of all New Yorkers. Understanding the financial implications of new opportunities, such as full-time employment, is key to making informed decisions.

EmpoweredNYC

EmpoweredNYC was launched in January 2018 to help New York City residents with disabilities and their families manage their finances and become more financially stable.

Co-developed and supported by Citi Community Development, EmpoweredNYC is a collaboration between the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection Office of Financial Empowerment, the National Disability Institute, The Poses Family Foundation, and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

EmpoweredNYC employs a multi-strategy approach to advance financial stability for people with disabilities and their families through broad engagement, educational webinars, and specialized financial counseling. Financial counselors have been trained about disability benefits in order to provide tailored, one-on-one financial counseling and coaching to individuals with disabilities and their families to help them become more financially stable.

During June and July 2018, the EmpoweredNYC team hosted Community Input Sessions to gain insight into the barriers that have made it difficult for New Yorkers with disabilities to grow financially. Feedback from the community informed the types of programs and financial counseling services that would be made available under EmpoweredNYC to New Yorkers with disabilities and their families.

Empowerment ED offers monthly free webinars for service providers: caseworkers, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, Workforce One staff, college career offices, offices for students with disabilities, and municipal staff. Topics include overview of SSI and SSDI, NY ABLE Act accounts, building and improving ones credit score, tracking expenses, preparing for tax time, and financial stability.



NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection sharing information at the NYC Disability Pride Parade

For approximately one year starting in the summer of 2018 and with support from the EmpoweredNYC partners, EmpoweredNYC attended more than 100 community outreach events.

Today, free and confidential financial counseling is available citywide through EmpoweredNYC to assist people with disabilities to manage their SSI and SSDI benefits, tackle SSA overpayments and transition to work. EmpoweredNYC identified targeted communities that have higher populations of people with disabilities. These neighborhoods include Bushwick, Williamsburg, Bedford Stuyvesant, East New York, Starrett City, Brownsville, Ocean Hill, Coney Island, Brighton Beach, Sheepshead Bay, Manhattan Beach, Chinatown, Lower East Side, East Harlem, Elmhurst, South Corona, Far Rockaway, Stapleton, Mid Island, Concourse, High Bridge, Mount Eden, Morris Heights, Fordham South, Mount Hope, Crotona Park East, East Tremont, Bedford Park, Fordham North, and Norwood.

EmpoweredNYC counselors provide services at sites familiar to individuals with disabilities and their families such as ACCES-VR's regional office; ARIVA; AHRC; CUNY (BMCC, Kingsborough, LaGuardia, Lehman), Grand Street Settlement, Goodwill GoodTemps, Henry Street Settlement, Institute for Career Development (ICD); Legal Hand Tremont & Crown Heights; NYLAG; Susan's Place; Transition College Access Centers (TCAC) and the Queens Public Library.

Through outreach efforts, including a citywide public awareness campaign, EmpoweredNYC aims to reach the nearly one million New Yorkers with disabilities, their families, and their communities.

ABLE Act

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 allows individuals with disabilities to save for qualified

disability expenses without the risk of losing their benefits from assistance programs like SSI and Medicaid. NY ABLE is an ABLE program designed specifically for New York residents and is administered by the Office of the State Comptroller. To learn more about the Able Act visit mynyable.org.

NY ABLE accounts give individual's earnings the ability to grow tax-deferred, while also allowing savings to be withdrawn tax-free for qualified expenses. Qualified expenses are any expenses related to an eligible individual's disability and are intended to maintain or improve the individual's quality of life.

Resources are available to assist individuals and families understand the benefits of the ABLE Act prior to enrollment. The ABLE National Resource Center (ANRC) is a collaborative that brings together the investment, support and resources of some national disability organizations in an effort to accelerate the design and availability of ABLE accounts to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. Founded and managed by National Disability Institute (NDI), the ANRC's goal is to provide consistent, reliable information concerning the benefits of an ABLE account. In addition, the ANRC aims to educate individuals with disabilities and their families, state government and legislatures, financial service companies and financial planners and attorneys - who focus on trust and estate planning - about ABLE's potential positive impact on the lives of millions of Americans with disabilities.

Housing

The City has worked hard to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to gain accessible housing. We continue to develop new accessible units, create new rules to obtain existing accessible units, discover new ways to identify existing accessible units and creating more opportunities to provide modifications in in New Yorkers' current housing units to improve and expand the supply of accessible housing.

Affordable Accessible Housing



Photo of 335 East 27 Street (Courtesy of Sandra Escobar)

We worked with HPD to develop a supplemental guide for marketing agents which provides them with resources on providing reasonable modification to applicants with disabilities. Also, marketing agents are required to attend a training on fair housing practices including working with people with disabilities.

DSS Housing Resources

To support staff in their efforts to identify appropriate housing opportunities for individuals in need, the Department of Social Services produced a housing resource guide. Entitled *Housing Resources for People Who are Aging or Have Disabilities*, the Guide offers information for staff on eligibility and the application process and identifies program contacts for a variety of specialized subsidies and direct placements. This tool also includes a listing of organizations that provide home modifications, as well as a guide to some important housing-related legal resources.

The DSS Source of Income Discrimination Unit works to prevent and prosecute instances of housing discrimination based on lawful source of income (including disability-related income and housing subsidies) through an approach that includes education and outreach, pre-complaint intervention, investigations, and filing and prosecuting complaints on behalf of the City alleging a pattern or practice of source of income discrimination.

In August 2017 New York became the first city in the nation to establish a program for universal access to eviction defense legal services in Housing Court and in New York City Housing Authority administrative termination of tenancy proceedings. Overseen by the Office of Civil Justice at HRA, this program is expected to provide legal assistance to 400,000 New Yorkers facing eviction and displacement each year when fully implemented in 2022. In 2018, 15 zones across the City were targeted for assistance because they include the most at-risk households for eviction and homelessness.

Accessible Housing Survey

Finding suitable housing in New York City is a difficult task, particularly for residents in need of an accessible building. Currently, there are few resources for those residents searching for accessible housing. There are buildings in the Affordable Housing stock overseen by HPD and HDC; buildings or building owners discovered through word-of-mouth; or through independent research online. For residents with disabilities, knowing whether a building is accessible is a critical decision point in the housing search process.

We are working with several City agencies to create a listing of residential buildings in New York City that are accessible to someone who uses a wheelchair and make this information available to the public on the MOPD website and links into listing services. For the purpose of this project, accessible means that a person who uses a wheelchair would be able to get into the building and get to all the apartments in an elevator building; or all the ground-floor apartments in a non-elevator building.

To date, we have created a survey tool and established procedures for its use, obtained a list of every residential building with four or more units in the five boroughs and created a database, and identified a random sample of five buildings in each borough to be surveyed as a pilot to test the efficiency and ease of use of the survey tool.

We were able to survey and evaluate 21 of the 25 buildings—the unevaluated buildings were due to blocked access, with one building not found. Five of the buildings were built in each of the following five date ranges: Pre 1900–1900, 1901–1950, 1951–1990, 1991–2008, and 2009–Present. These

ranges were selected to gain insight on the impact of building practices at different eras within the accessibility movement. Of the buildings evaluated, 4 were accessible; 4 were partially accessible; and 13 were inaccessible. The following table details the number of buildings based on level of accessibility broken down by era built relative to accessibility laws/codes.

Accessibility by Era

	Prior to FHA Guidelines	After FHA Guidelines	After 2008 Building Code
Accessible	1	1	2
Partially Accessible	1	1	2
Inaccessible	11	2	0

Accessibility by Borough

	Bx	Bk	Mn	Qn	SI
Accessible	1	0	2	1	0
Partially Accessible	1	0	0	1	2
Inaccessible	3	4	2	2	2

HPD Building Assessment

HPD's preservation loan programs now require building wide integrated physical needs assessments and resident surveys for individual apartment upgrades. Building wide improvements may include door hardware, handrails, condition/material of flooring, intercom system, and mail area. Inside apartment modifications may include grab bars, improved lighting, under counter pull out shelves, easy to grip to door handles, and slip resistant floors.

Housing Connect

NYC Housing Connect is a portal to search and apply for affordable housing opportunities in New York City and seeks to simplify the application process. The portal is available at [NYC.gov/HousingConnect](https://nyc.gov/housingconnect). The City of New York does not directly rent or sell housing but works with private and nonprofit developers and their affiliates to create and market affordable housing. NYC Housing Connect is a service provided by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

Real Estate Listings

We worked with the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) to add fields in its Residential Listing Service indicating accessible features. Accessibility fields added include if building is accessible, if a ramp is provided at entrance, if entrance is accessible, and if there is an elevator in the building. We are discussing additional fields to be added and training for agents on how to use the fields.

Rent Freeze

In Fiscal 2018 the number initial and renewed applications for Disability Rent Increase Exemptions (DRIE) and Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemptions (SCRIE) increased. Renewals for DRIE grew by 11.6% and 15% for SCRIE.

Project Open House

Project Open House uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to remove architectural barriers from the homes of New York City residents who have disabilities. The extent of the work depends on the needs of the applicant. Projects include grab bar installations, main entry components (ramp, lift, and door), and kitchen and bathroom modifications. Project Open House affords program recipients greater independence through greater accessibility of their living environment.



Left: Previous project where POH replaced a bathtub with a roll-in shower. Right: POH applicant, Dorothy, enjoying her new stair chair installed on her front porch

This past Fiscal Year, 63 completed applications were received, 22 applicants qualified for the program, 19 projects were approved and funded, while two applicants opted out of the program and we worked with the last applicant and her landlord who ultimately agreed to perform the work. The projects were located throughout all five boroughs as follows: six in Manhattan and Brooklyn, five in Queens, and one each in the Bronx and Staten Island.

Homeless Services

One way to improve access to housing for people with disabilities is to provide more supportive housing. Supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective approach to addressing the needs of people who are homeless and struggling with mental illness, substance use, and other barriers to independence. By providing tenants with permanent, rent-stabilized housing with access to onsite case management, alcohol and substance use programs, and other social services, supportive housing reduces the need for placement in higher-cost homeless shelters, hospitals, mental-health institutions, jails and prisons. In November 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced his landmark commitment to provide 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years to the most vulnerable New Yorkers. These units will house chronically homeless adult families, single adults, families with children who have serious mental-health disabilities and/or substance-use disorders. There are also units designated for young adults who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness that have high utilization of City services.

In order to improve access to Supportive Housing for eligible individuals and families with mental health conditions, HRA expanded the types of professionals allowed to complete a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation as part of the HRA

2010e AccessibleNYC 2019 Housing 65 application. For a list of required documents for the HRA 2010e Supportive Housing Application visit nyc.gov/HRA and search "HRA 2010e Supportive Housing Application."

DHS has refined its organizational structure so that it can more effectively address the challenges of homelessness every day. Currently, the shelter census numbers are flat over two years for the first time in a decade. DHS has accomplished this by helping more than 115,000 New Yorkers move out of shelters or avoid homelessness altogether through rental assistance and rehousing programs. DHS has helped nearly 2,200 New Yorkers come in off the streets via HOME-STAT, the nation's largest street outreach program. DHS brought online 23 new, high-quality borough-based shelters; with 11 already operating that include accessible units and beds to better address the needs of shelter clients with disabilities.

Based on the settlement of the Butler Lawsuit in 2017, DSS and DHS leadership have:

- Hired a Director of Disability Affairs for Homeless Services;
- Engaged an experienced consulting firm to assess shelter accessibility;
- Established a multi-disciplinary workgroup and several sub-workgroups to improve policies and procedures around the provision of reasonable accommodations; and
- Embarked on a process to develop training for all shelter employees on successfully serving people with disabilities.

As part of the training development initiative, DSS has already implemented an Introduction to Disabilities training

that promotes positive interactions/outcomes, explores the history of the disability rights movement, discusses related legal requirements, outlines reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette/culture, and addresses attitudes/perspectives that can be barriers to effectively working with people with disabilities. DHS new hires receive this training as part of the onboarding process. DHS is also continuing to train shelter staff on accommodating people who are deaf and hard of hearing and have produced a guide to support staff in these efforts. Further, Video Remote Interpretation is available at all DHS-run intake facilities and The Office of the Ombudsman. DSS and DHS are currently in the process of acquiring public videophones for DHS-run and DHS-provider run sites where clients who use sign language to communicate can make outgoing phone calls.

For more information on disability access at DHS and how to request a reasonable accommodation, visit [NYC.gov/DHS](https://nyc.gov/dhs) and go under 'About' and then 'Applicants and Clients with Disabilities.'

Health

Having a disability does not mean a person is not healthy. Being healthy means the same thing for everyone - getting and staying well in order to lead a full and active life. A key element to this is having the information and means to make healthy choices, knowing how to prevent illness and when in need of care able to obtain it from a location that is accessible and provides the care that meets the individual's needs.

Inclusive Health Care

For many people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, obtaining healthcare and working with medical professionals can be a big challenge. To address this, MOPD is working with organizations representing individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing along with health care providers to develop a forum to be held in the Fall of 2019. The intent of the forum is to provide information to health care facilities on the requirements of effective communication, policies for the provision of interpreting services, Video Remote Interpreting, Assistive Listening Systems, and other auxiliary aids and services.

Health Insurance Enrollment

Data has revealed that more than 35,000 people with disabilities are without any type of health insurance coverage, and most of these individuals reside in the borough of Bronx.⁵ To connect this population to healthcare, NYC MOPD is working with the Public Engagement Unit on NYC's official health insurance outreach and enrollment program called GetCoveredNYC. Visit [NYC.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) and search 'Get Covered.'"

5 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Created in 2016, GetCoveredNYC is a citywide outreach initiative that helps all New Yorkers enroll in health insurance and access primary and preventive care. The initiative is a partnership between the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit, NYC Health + Hospitals, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Human Resources Administration and MetroPlus Health Plan.

Parks and Public Health

For people with and without disabilities, there are many benefits to regular exercise. It can improve your mood, boost energy and combat health conditions and chronic diseases. In 2017, MOPD worked with the NYC Parks Department to reduce the annual Parks membership fee to just \$25.



As a result of this, there has been a steady increase on the amount of Parks membership enrollments for people with disabilities. In the 2017 Fiscal Year, 1,837 individuals with disabilities took advantage of this incentive, 2,231 in 2018, and 2,733 individuals enrolled in the 2019 Fiscal Year.

Learn more about Parks memberships or find accessible events and recreation facilities near you at [NYC.gov/parks](https://www.nyc.gov/parks).

Monday Mile

To increase the promotion of health and wellness, MOPD has partnered with an organization called Move It Monday! Whose mission revolves around evidence that the average person attempts to start a healthy habit on a Monday. One of their campaigns, “The Monday Mile” encourages folks to make a commitment to fitness by walking or running one mile every Monday.

To bring this to the community, we will be holding a Monday Mile launch event at Thomas Jefferson Recreation Center in August 2019. In addition to walking one mile around the park, we will have open enrollment for NYC Parks membership and information tables advertising other health and wellness organizations for people with disabilities.

NYC Well

In 2016, to create easier access to resources for mental health, NYC launched the free confidential counseling program NYC Well. Available in over 200 languages, NYC Well provides suicide prevention, crisis counseling, short-term counseling and assistance with scheduling appointments or accessible other mental health services.

If you would like to reach out to NYC Well:

- Voice Phone: 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355) Press 2
- Video Relay: 711
- Text “Well” to 65173
- Chat Online: nycwell.cityofnewyork.us

Falls Prevention Coalition

We participate in the Falls Prevention Coalition along with DOHMH, DFTA and other agencies to provide information and resources to reduce incidents and minimize the effects from falls. The Coalition also holds events in support of National Falls Prevention Awareness Day which is held the first day of Fall. For more information visit [NYC.gov/aging](https://nyc.gov/aging) and go under 'About' 'Partnerships' and then 'Falls Prevention Coalition.'

Technology

Smart City

Technology is rapidly shaping NYC urban ecosystems, and thus planning to make our city smarter and inclusive is increasingly becoming more important for urban stakeholders and tech futurists alike. While there is a local and global buzz about “Smart Cities,” there is no one definition of what it is. Public policymakers define a smart city as one that uses technology with the goal of program and service delivery as sustainable and efficient as possible. In that endeavor, NYC MOPD wants to ensure the technology in NYC government operations is a means to empower people with disabilities, is accessible and a tool for independence.

This year, NYC MOPD had participated in local and national as well as global discussions on inclusive and accessible smart cities. Additionally, the Office will undertake to build a public-private coalition of stakeholders who will examine the accessibility and inclusivity of relevant government programs and services for people with disabilities in NYC.

Web Accessibility

In 2016, NYC made a commitment to maintaining its websites to compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA. To accomplish this, we have been modifying existing sites while changing our practices and educating NYC employees on digital accessibility.

In 2019, our office released the second NYC Digital Accessibility Report, which expands the focus on not just websites but all of the City’s digital content. Since the first NYC Web accessibility report was released, the Digital Accessibility

Coordinator and web strategies team at DoITT have enhanced 102 websites for accessibility and updated 315 different forms to make them accessible. This scope of the work includes adding alt-text (image descriptions), improving heading structures, enhancing forms, color contrast and creating accessible alternatives for maps. The NYC Accessibility Report is available at [NYC.gov/MOPD](https://nyc.gov/MOPD) under 'About' and then 'Reports & Publications.'

To make digital accessibility a permanent fixture on NYC websites, MOPD and DOITT have successfully trained nearly 100 agencies in digital accessibility practices. In addition, mandatory accessibility fields have been added within content submission forms.

Digital Inclusion Conference

To continue our work in creating a culture of accessibility, MOPD and Mayor's Office Creative Communications Team put together the second ever Digital Inclusion Conference. The conference focused on inclusive communication and design, digital accessibility and assistive technology. Based on the overwhelming success of last year's conference this year we opened it up to the general public instead of just City Government.



Walei Sabry, Digital Accessibility Coordinator, addresses a crowd of people at the 2019 Digital Inclusion Conference

At the end of the conference we were able to update our digital accessibility toolkit to share with both City government as well as the general public. The toolkit goes over accessibility for websites, PowerPoints, print and electronic documents, social media and videos. The toolkit is available online at Blueprint.Cityofnewyork.us/accessibility.

Access and Employment Week

As more companies begin to value digital accessibility and assistive technology, it is important that they are connected directly to the disability community to both share this information and receive feedback directly from their user base.

During the week of October 20, 2019, we will be partnering with Microsoft to present Access and Employment Week. All week long we will be putting on events centered around education, employment, gaming and assistive technology as a whole. This week will not only serve as a showcase of the

technology and software that is available but will give the public the opportunity to provide direct feedback on how Microsoft can improve their tech to better meet the needs of the disability community.

Text-to-911

DoITT continues to work with the NYPD, FDNY, MOPD and other agencies to create Text-to-911 service. People who are unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1, including those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and those with speech disabilities will be able to communicate with NYC's 9-1-1 call takers for the first time ever via text. MOPD and DoITT continues to meet with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to keep the community apprised of the progress of the project.

NextGeneration 911

In addition, development is underway on the NextGeneration 911 project that will create a fully digital, state-of-the art emergency communications system capable of interacting with New Yorkers through text messaging, photos, video, social media, and more. A request for proposals has been issued for vendors to assist in building the underlying technological infrastructure that can support the IP-based NextGeneration 911 system which is currently projected to be available in 2023.

Assistive Listening Systems

For people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, communication can be a challenge every day. As we continue to become a more

equitable city, we must increase the amount of induction loop and assistive listening technology readily available within the community.

Per Local Law 51 of 2017, induction loop systems are required to be installed in certain capital work undertaken by the City, a list of City owned and operated facilities that contain assistive listening systems including induction loop systems, infrared and FM systems must be posted on MOPD's website annually. This list is available at nyc.gov/mopd under 'Laws' and then 'Local Laws.' Also on the website is a list the Hearing Loss Association of America has created that includes a full list of Induction Loops available in NYC. This list is available at nyc.gov/mopd under 'Resources' 'Disability Specific Resources' and 'Deaf/Hard of Hearing'.

Among the list of Induction Loops added within NYC, Community Board 7 in Brooklyn (The Ability & Access Committee) has been approved for funding to install an induction loop system in their regular meeting place. Creating a greater opportunity for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community to participate more regularly in civic engagement.

Access

ASL Direct

Last year, MOPD in partnership with the Department of Information Telecommunications and Technology (DOITT) launched ASL Direct. ASL Direct is a video conferencing line where constituents who prefer to communicate in American Sign Language can be directly connected to an information specialist fluent in ASL.

In the past year, ASL Direct has connected with nearly 400 constituents, providing them with resources and information in American Sign Language.



Tony Wooden, ASL Direct Project Supervisor, on a video call using ASL Direct

Since its inception, the program has grown to include an additional ASL Direct resource specialist located at HRA's

Infoline call center, where people can access information on all public benefits available in New York City, as well as a Program Director to oversee its expansion to meet the demand of information in ASL. For more information or to be directly connected with ASL Direct, visit [NYC.gov/asl](https://nyc.gov/asl).

Voice Call: 212-788-2964

Video Phone: 646-396-5830

ASL Direct staff worked with the Department of Homeless Services and Sorenson Communication to place videophones in homeless shelters for residents who are Deaf.

Disability Service Facilitators

Disability Service Facilitators (DSF) have been designated in over 45 agencies creating easy entry points for the public to obtain information, services, and assistance concerning issues related to disability. A list of the DSFs and their contact information can be found at [NYC.gov/dsf](https://nyc.gov/dsf).

MOPD convenes quarterly meetings for the DSFs to discuss disability topics important to their agency as well as potential collaborations across agencies and programs. This year, we created a Toolkit and Resource Guide to provide DSFs with quick links to information, guides, worksheets and other information available through national resources such as the ADA National Network.

For the third year, we are partnering with the ADA National Network and the New York City Department of Citywide

Administrative Services (DCAS) to provide the DSF Training Academy including information on compliance, guidelines, resources and other pertinent information specific to City governmental programs and services offered to New Yorkers with disabilities.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

We created the Disaster Resilience & Resource Network to connect federal, state and city agencies utilizing best practices, expertise, and communication to ensure that equal access to resources and services before, during and after emergencies. The Network meets quarterly.



Disaster Resilience and Resource Network Meeting in May 2019, led by Eli Fresquez

NYC Emergency Management (EM) in partnership with MOPD developed the Disability Access and Functional Needs

(DAFN) Internet Resource Guide that outlines DAFN resources for emergency personnel and individuals with disabilities. Through clear and concise display, the Guide can reduce time on information searches. Version 2.0 will be released by the end of Summer 2019. We also worked with EM and FDNY to develop guidance on evacuation devices entitled Considerations for Purchasing an Evacuation Device for Use in your Building which is available on MOPD's website.

Interim Flood Protection Measures

We worked with Emergency Management, DOT and other agencies to review public infrastructure plans and provide subject matter expertise on potential impacts to pedestrian path of travel.

Small Business Services

In the past year, we have partnered with the Small Business Services, various Council Members, and Business Improvement Districts to provide information on making a business accessible and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We provide information on barrier removal, tax incentives, web accessibility and compliance with Building Code provisions. Presentations took place in Council Districts 4, 6, 34, 39, and at the Chinatown Partnership offices.

We also collaborated with SBS, NYC BID Association and Public Policy Lab, a nonprofit innovation lab for government, to develop tools and policies to support small business owners with accessibility compliance which will be accessible at businessaccessibility.nyc.

Inclusive Design Guidelines: Sports and Recreation, New York City

MOPD completed the Inclusive Design Guidelines: Sports and Recreation, New York City, a resource book that features adaptive sports including wheelchair basketball, beep ball, sitting volleyball, goal ball and sled hockey. The book follows a template for each sport that includes equipment descriptions and illustrations as well as venue/field descriptions and illustrations.



Fig. 1112.12.3.2
Four Track Ski

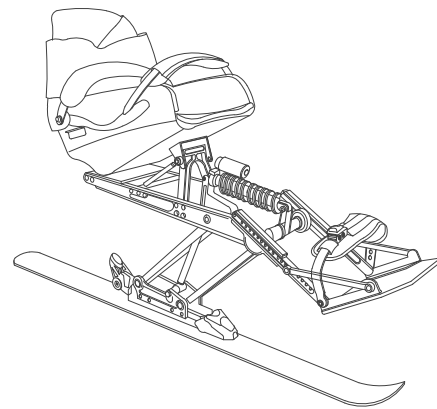


Fig. 1112.3.1(a)
Mono Ski

Drawings from Sports & Recreation Section

This book is being published by the International Code Council (ICC).

Building Code Update

The New York City Construction Codes protect public health, safety, general welfare, and the environment by establishing minimum standards for the design, construction, and occupancy of buildings. To ensure the City's construction

regulations are current, periodically the City's Construction Codes must be updated based on the latest version of the International Code Council Codes (I-Codes).

The Construction Code Revision Cycle is primarily intended to: introduce measures to update to the latest I-Codes with New York City modifications; adopt innovative new technologies by incorporating the latest national standards; improve construction safety; clarify the existing text; and to correct errors, typos and inconsistencies. All revisions to the Construction Codes must be incorporated into a local law that is approved by the New York City Council and signed into law by the Mayor.

To aid the process, the Department of Buildings organizes a series of Committees to review the technical and administrative provisions of the Codes. Technical Committee members are subject-matter experts in their respective committee. MOPD chairs the Accessibility Technical Committee.

Human Rights Law

The NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) is the City agency that enforces the NYC Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation, and requires that people with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations. If someone is facing discrimination on the basis of their disability or is not being given a reasonable accommodation in the workplace, in housing, or in public accommodations, they can contact CCHR by going to nyc.gov/humanrights, calling 311, or calling the CCHR directly at (718) 722-3131.

Access to buildings and services can be a life or death situation for people with disabilities in New York City, which is why the CCHR intervenes early when it learns of alleged acts of discrimination based on disability. CCHR's Project Equal Access works with housing providers to make facilities accessible to people with disabilities before the matter becomes a legal case, including installing ramps, renovating bathrooms and other areas to make them accessible, installing electronic doors, grab bars and handrails, and training staff on how to accommodate people with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 2018, CCHR achieved 90 modifications for people with disabilities without having to file a complaint.

The Law Enforcement Bureau of CCHR investigates claims of discrimination brought by members of the public and can obtain accommodations, monetary damages, and other relief for people who have experienced discrimination. In Fiscal Year 2018, disability discrimination claims represented the most common claim filed at the CCHR at 18% of all claims, totaling 243 claims filed (93 disability discrimination claims in employment; 98 in housing; and 50 public accommodations). CCHR also has the power to investigate discrimination cases without an individual coming forward. In Fiscal Year 2018, CCHR initiated 103 Commission investigations of disability discrimination (11 in employment; 32 in housing; 60 in public accommodations).

While most cases filed at CCHR resolve prior to the issuance of a final Decision and Order, CCHR issued three final Decision and Orders in disability discrimination cases in 2018 and early 2019. The full Decision and Orders are available on the CCHR's website, [NYC.gov/HumanRights](https://nyc.gov/humanrights).

- Commission on Human Rights ex rel. Thomas Gibson v. N.Y.C. Fried Chicken Corp. (September 28, 2018): Respondents were held liable for disability discrimination and failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, after telling Complainant that he was not welcome in their restaurant due to the presence of his seeing eye dog. Among other things, the Commission awarded Complainant \$13,000 in emotional distress damages, imposed a civil penalty of \$18,000, and ordered the Respondents to modify their policies and undergo training on the NYCHRL.
- Commission on Human Rights ex rel. Carol T. v. Mutual Apartments, (April 12, 2018): Respondents were held liable for failure to accommodate Complainants by refusing to permit them to reside with their emotional support dog. Among other things, the Commission awarded \$40,000 in emotional distress damages to the mother complainant and \$30,000 in emotional distress damages to the daughter, imposed a civil penalty of \$55,000, and ordered the Respondents to modify their policies, undergo training on the NYCHRL, and post several notices of rights.
- Commission on Human Rights ex rel. Rodriguez v. A Plus Worldwide Limo, Inc., and John Leonardi, (March 7, 2019): The Commission found Respondents liable for repeatedly denying the Complainant Access-A-Ride car services because of the presence of his service dog. The Commission ordered that Respondents pay Complainant \$13,000 in emotional distress damages, undergo training on the New York City Human Rights Law, and perform six months of community service or, in the alternative, pay a fine of \$15,000.

Plastic Straws



Mayor de Blasio announcing the reduction of City spending on single use plastic foodware

Unlike many other cities in the country, NYC reviewed policies around plastic straws with individuals with disabilities. Thus, rather than a ban on the single use plastic straw, the Mayor issued an Executive Order reducing the purchase of single use foodware items including straws and requiring each agency maintain a supply of single-use plastic straws and other foodware for individuals who request such items. Many individuals with disabilities need plastic foodware as current alternatives are not sufficient to accommodate their needs.

Restaurant Access Program

The Restaurant Access Program (RAP) has been underway for six years. Restaurant owners are provided a brief survey to self-identify if their restaurant is “wheelchair friendly”, meaning an individual with a mobility device can enter the restaurant, navigate the space to a table, and eat a meal. Full list of locations participating in the Restaurant Access Program available at [NYC.gov/RAP](https://nyc.gov/rap).

ASL Options Card

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has recently developed a new ASL (American Sign Language) Options Card to help facilitate communication between DHS and HRA staff and sign language users. Specifically, the card is designed to inform ASL-users of their options in obtaining sign language interpretation at HRA and DHS locations. DSS is currently training staff on how to use this tool, which denotes the availability of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), in-person interpretation and scheduling an appointment for a later date and time. DSS is in the process of developing a video in ASL that explains how to use the tool.

Access HRA

HRA continues to leverage technology to increase access and make it easier for people with disabilities to apply and maintain their public benefits. Through ACCESS HRA, a free, online-accessible portal, many people with disabilities have been able to apply for benefits and manage their cases without having to call HRA or come in person to a Center. It is also

available as a mobile app on any smart device. Through the site, clients can apply and re-certify for SNAP and Cash Assistance (CA) benefits and retrieve case information such as application status and EBT balance; view upcoming appointments and documents that need to be submitted; and update their contact information. Some newly released features include: instantly downloading a statement of benefits letter to show proof of receiving HRA benefits, SMS notifications of upcoming appointments, and document upload capacity using a device's photo gallery. HRA's ACCESS HRA Provider Portal which, with client consent, allows partnering organizations to view real-time case information. Currently, over 250 community-based organizations are utilizing the site to help clients with their cases. HRA's Mobile Document Upload app continued to allow individuals to electronically submit documentation for their SNAP or CA cases by taking pictures of the documents and uploading them for agency review.

SNAP On-Demand

Another technology-based initiative is HRA's newly expanded SNAP On-Demand. On-Demand is a new way for clients to complete a SNAP eligibility interview during their recertification or application period. On-Demand interviews for new SNAP applications and recertifications are available citywide. This allows clients to call HRA during business hours for their interview at a time most convenient for them, which reduces the uncertainty of applying for SNAP and gives clients more flexibility.

HRA has installed accessible kiosks at 14 locations across the City; these self-service check-in stations are used by individuals visiting the Center to receive a routing ticket.

The kiosk software searches for existing appointments and/or determines the program service area the individual is there to see.

HRA has made it easier for applicants and clients with disabilities to request the reasonable accommodations (RAs) that they need to access and maintain their benefits. The forms have been simplified, including the Request for Reasonable Accommodation form (HRA-102c), the Request for Medical/Clinical Information (HRA-102d), and the Request an Appeal of a Reasonable Accommodation (HRA-102). Each of these forms can be found on [NYC.gov/HRA](https://www.nyc.gov/hra) under 'I need help' and then 'Disability Access.' A new screening tool was created to help assess whether Cash Assistance clients need RAs so that appropriate accommodations can be offered and referrals made to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) program or other services designed to meet the needs of clients with disabilities. WeCARE provides a continuum of services to help Cash Assistance clients with medical and/or mental health conditions that affect their employability to attain their maximum levels of self-sufficiency. Individuals referred to WeCARE receive a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment to identify possible clinical conditions and social barriers that may affect their ability to participate in work-related activities. Based on the results of this assessment, WeCARE contractors determine an individual's functional capacity, develop a customized service plan, and provide a range of services tailored to meet a client's needs.

Home Visit Needed Center

HRA's centralized Home Visit Needed (HVN) Center provides home visits and processes applications and re-

certifications for those that are unable to come into a Center due to an illness or disability. Staff provides outreach to eligible HRA applicants and clients, and tracks and monitors cases to ensure that vulnerable populations are able to access and maintain their benefits. Applicants and clients are able to schedule Home Visit appointments directly through HRA's Office of Constituent Affairs by calling 212-331-4640. Additionally, HRA's Homebound Assessment and Referral Unit (HARU) provides individualized services that are centered on the needs of applicants and participants as needed.

Additionally, for SNAP recipients that started on April 18, 2019, there is currently a SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot that permits SNAP recipients in the Bronx to order online food from FreshDirect, ShopRite, Amazon, and other retailers in the Bronx for home delivery. The online purchasing pilot helps address the needs of people who are elderly or have disabilities, especially those who are homebound or lack access to convenient transportation. The program is particularly beneficial for those working long and inconvenient hours, those who act as caregivers, or those who live far from a grocery store with fresh produce.

Immigration Services

In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the New York Legal Assistance Group, HRA reached out to more than 10,000 immigrant clients with disabilities and select seniors receiving Cash Assistance who were identified as potentially eligible to become U.S. citizens. Over 2,100 unique appointments have been made and more than 660 citizenship applications completed with the assistance of free legal services at different HRA sites throughout the City. Almost 300 people

have already become citizens as a result of this project. Those who successfully naturalize go on to receive assistance through HRA with applying for Supplemental Security Income benefits.

Increasing Access to HRA Materials

HRA is working with a new partner to expand distribution of certain brochures and notices for select HRA programs in alternative formats, including Braille, Large Print, data and audio.

For notices available on ACCESS HRA, clients can use the site's accessible features to read or listen to their notices. HRA continues with its robocall program letting people who are blind or have low vision know that their Medicaid renewal or surplus payment is due and informing them that HRA can assist them by reading their recertification over the phone, arranging an appointment at a Medicaid center or arranging home visits.

Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) is now available at all Job and SNAP centers in New York City as a faster alternative to in-person sign language interpretation for people who are deaf. VRI was expanded to the Office of Child Support Services in Fall 2018.

Also, HRA is continuing its project to review all of its public-facing notices for Plain Language in order to improve readability for everyone, including people with cognitive and learning disabilities.

In order to improve the experience of people with disabilities who are applying for benefits, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) continues to provide day-long training

titled Introduction to Disabilities: An Overview of Disability Awareness, Etiquette and Culture. A training module for supervisors of front-line staff entitled: Access for People with Disabilities – Ensuring Success through Supervision has also been implemented. Both HRA and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) regularly offer Mental Health First Aid training for staff. In 2019, the Department of Social Services (DSS), which includes DHS and HRA, introduced a week-long Orientation for new employees that includes a module on Working with People with Disabilities and a module on Mental Health First Aid.

HRA has developed a Disability Screening Interview Tool to assist HRA workers in identifying individuals with disabilities that may need reasonable accommodations to apply for and maintain their Cash Assistance (CA) benefits. In 2018, HRA piloted an electronic version of this tool in five Job Centers across New York City. HRA is currently evaluating this tool and making updates to streamline the process before expanding to additional locations.

Access to IDNYC

The City's municipal identification card program IDNYC allow NYC residents aged 10 and up with physical, mental, intellectual, or developmental disabilities—regardless of possession of photo identification or proof of residency—to apply for an ID card if accompanied by a caregiver who has a photo ID and who can demonstrate proof of a relationship to the applicant. Visit the Residency and Caretaker Relationship page on [NYC.gov/IDNYC](https://nyc.gov/idnyc) under 'How to apply' and then 'Application Materials.'

Arts and Culture in New York City

New York City is known around the world for its diverse offering of arts and culture. Museums, concert halls, zoos, botanic gardens, theaters, festivals, and public art projects reach into every corner of the city. Visitors and residents alike can experience a variety of artistic offerings in virtually all genres and from numerous cultural perspectives. Venues range from large, internationally known icons such as the Whitney Museum, Carnegie Hall, Alvin Ailey, MoMA, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, American Museum of Natural History, and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, to more locally focused organizations including the Louis Armstrong House Museum, Flushing Town Hall, Weeksville Heritage Center, Sugar Hill Children's Museum, Alice Austen House, and Bronx River Arts Center.

The City's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is the largest municipal funder of arts and culture in the country. The agency provides support to over 1,000 non-profit cultural organizations for publicly accessible cultural programming across all five boroughs. In addition, DCLA pays general operating costs and energy expenses for the Cultural Institutions Group, 33 cultural institutions located on City property. Funds for hundreds of capital projects at arts and culture organizations are also provided by DCLA, addressing a range of structural and equipment needs, including improvements to increase venue accessibility. Other initiatives administered by Cultural Affairs include Materials for the Arts, which annually redistributes materials to more than 2,000 non-profit organizations, public schools, and agencies throughout the five boroughs; and Percent for Art, which brings permanent art installations to public spaces around the city.



Sidiki Conde, teaching artist at the Center for Traditional Music and Dance

DCLA believes that art and culture are for everyone. The agency works to help make participation in NYC’s cultural life – be it as artist, cultural worker, or audience member – as accessible, inclusive, and equitable as possible for all, including people with disabilities.

CreateNYC: A Cultural Plan for All New Yorkers



How can we work toward a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable cultural sector that serves all New Yorkers? There is no single simple answer, but in July 2017, Mayor Bill de Blasio launched CreateNYC, a comprehensive cultural plan that attempts to address the question from a variety of perspectives.

Months of public engagement using surveys, town halls, focus groups, and

other strategies led to a wide-ranging set of recommendations around a number of key focus areas. These areas include equitable cultural participation citywide; affordability of artist workspaces; access to arts, culture, and science education; and the role of public spaces in NYC's arts landscape.

The plan also expresses DCLA's commitment to supporting disability arts, artistry, and artists with disabilities at all levels of New York City's cultural life. Further, CreateNYC takes into account that barriers to access and inclusion for persons with disabilities are themselves threats to the health of New York City's cultural ecosystem.

CreateNYC signals DCLA's determination to foster full access to this City's extraordinary cultural offerings and opportunities. It is both practical and aspirational, with short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for achieving its goals. In concert with DCLA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative launched in 2015, CreateNYC has sparked a number of new practices and programs to help ensure that NYC's arts and culture landscape is welcoming to all New Yorkers and visitors alike, including those with disabilities.

Equity and Inclusion in DCLA Funding Practices

Fiscal Year 2019 was the first year that Cultural Development Fund (CDF) applications included questions about each applicant's efforts to hire diverse staff and reach diverse audiences.

To further increase accessibility for all qualified organizations to the extensive programmatic funding DCLA offers, Fiscal Year 2020 CDF applicants benefitted from enhanced support in their application submission process. This is in addition to the services already offered such as the twelve application seminars held annually in locations across the city. These enhancements included:

- An online version of the Fiscal Year 2020 CDF application seminar presentation, with closed captioning;
- Drop-off tables at cultural locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Upper Manhattan, from 10am to 2pm, on the application due date of February 11, 2019;
- Technical assistance for CDF applicants included extended hours of the CDF help desk. And finally, in-person drop-off at DCLA offices stayed open until 11:59pm on the evening of the deadline.

Announced as part of the CreateNYC, the members of the Cultural Institutions Group are being required to adopt full diversity, equity, and inclusion plans - making them among the first cultural organizations to do so in the U.S. The institutions have embraced this opportunity, and DCLA has worked closely with them to figure out how to produce plans that translate into concrete improvements toward cultivating a more inclusive cultural sector.

Promoting Disability Inclusion and Diversity in the Cultural Community



Left: Grant Recipient, Dance for PD, holding live dance performance. Right: DCLA Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl announcing additional grant awardees.

In August 2018, DCLA announced the grantees of the new **CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund**. The fund provides programmatic support for organizations deepening their commitment to people with disabilities as artists, cultural workers, and audiences. Twenty-two organizations in a variety of disciplines received grants of up to \$35,000 each. Projects ranged from the creation of new work featuring disabled artists, to re-examining collections through the lens of disability aesthetics, to training people with disabilities for employment in creative careers.

The City's **Theater Subdistrict Council (TSC)** invested \$2 million to expand opportunity in the theater workforce. TSC grantees included an apprenticeship program that will train disabled artists in arts administration careers

DCLA routinely hosts workshops focusing on access and inclusion for constituents in the cultural sector.

In February 2019, DCLA worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to host ***Disability and Inclusion in the Cultural Workforce***, an event for over 150 people representing over 90 cultural organizations. Attendees heard personal perspectives of people with disabilities working in the arts. They learned about local, state, and regional resources offering support in developing more inclusive recruiting, hiring, and retention practices. This was an expansion of a similar event held in March 2018 for a smaller group of cultural organizations.

In Fall 2018, DCLA partnered with the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library to conduct Tactile Tactics, a workshop for arts and cultural organizations who are interested in designing tactile graphics for patrons who are blind or have low vision. The workshop addressed effective design and implementation of such tactile representations and served as an introduction to the Heiskell Library's free tactile embossing and 3D printing services. Additional workshops in this partnership are planned for Summer 2019.

Tourism

The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) is partnering with GalaPro, a first-of-its-kind mobile app, to revolutionize the theatre-going experience, particularly for the deaf, hard of hearing, low vision, and blind communities. To foster greater access to theatrical performances for all New Yorkers, MOME is providing up to \$100,000 to cover the cost of installing GalaPro software in qualifying off-Broadway, not-for-profit, and independent theatres throughout New York City.



GalaPro uses voice recognition technology, developed specifically for theatre and live performances to provide real-time closed captioning, amplification, and translation on users' smartphones or tablets, ensuring that theater-goers from here and all over the world can simultaneously enjoy and understand the story unfolding on stage. For individuals who are blind or low vision, the app can deliver audio description.

Education

National Convening of MOPDs



We hosted a convening of MOPDs and similar offices around the country. Participants came from Chicago, Boston, Cambridge, Houston, Philadelphia, Portland, Oregon, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and St. Louis. Topics included financial empowerment for people with disabilities, accessible transportation, **NYC: ATWORK** initiatives, smart cities, accessible bike share, housing, and web accessibility. The two-day event was possible due to funding provided by Citi Community Development and partnerships with National Disability Institute, Shubert Organization, and the Whitney Museum.



We anticipate this to be the first convening as other cities are already discussing the location for next year's event.

CCHR Education and Outreach

In July 2018, the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) issued Legal Enforcement Guidance on Discrimination on the Basis of Disability that explains discrimination against people with disabilities in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation under the City Human Rights Law, including clarification on discriminatory policies and practices, best practices on how to assess and provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities, and model policies and template forms. The guidance, which seeks to provide clarity, transparency, and best practices to stakeholders and members of the public to make sure that every New Yorker has equal access in New York City, is responsive to questions and requests for clarification from employers, housing providers, and providers of public accommodation about how to meet their obligations under the Law. CCHR understands the contours of these protections can be broad and complex at times, which is why it issued legal enforcement guidance to assist employers, businesses owners, and housing providers on how to comply with the City Human Rights Law, avoid potential violations, and better accommodate people with disabilities.

The CCHR regularly provides workshops, trainings, and presentations to community members and employers, housing providers, and providers of public accommodations on their rights and obligations under the City Human Rights Law. CCHR organized two events in 2018 and early 2019 focused on the rights of people with disabilities.

On November 20, 2018, it hosted its first ever Disability Protections Symposium and Resource Fair at the offices of Independence Care System in Brooklyn, in partnership with Independence Care System, Disability Rights New York, and MOPD. The goal of the symposium was to engage disability rights communities and advocates in New York City in conversation regarding the protections for disabilities offered by the NYC Human Rights Law. Other community-based participant organizations included CEO Visions and Barrier-Free Living and over 50 community members were in attendance.

On April 16, 2019, it hosted its 6th Fair Housing Symposium, at the Manhattan campus of the Metropolitan College of New York. The theme of the 2019 symposium was "Invisible Disabilities" and focused on the rights in housing of New Yorkers living with mental health issues and other disabilities not readily apparent. The event was completely accessible and was attended by dozens of New Yorkers living with disabilities and local disability and housing rights advocates. The NYC MOPD, Project FIND, and Mobilization for Justice were participating partners.

Civic Engagement

We are working with the Democracy NYC team to engage local communities about voting, running for office, serving on community boards and other civic engagement tasks. We held forums in Harlem where we partnered with the Harlem Independent Living Center and African Communities Together and in the Bronx with Bronx Independent Living Services. We also invited advocates with disabilities to a roundtable discussion at City Hall where the community decided to divide into three groups each focusing on one of the following: ballot marking devices, early voting, and civic engagement.



Deputy Mayor Thompson providing opening remarks during the first meeting focused on Civic Engagement for People with Disabilities

We also worked together to create a list of 100 accessible polling locations to send to the Board of Elections requesting they provide a minimum of 100 polling sites for early voting to provide adequate access to individuals with disabilities since travel time and means can be an issue.

DOE Transition and College Access Centers

DOE is opening Transition and College Access Centers in every borough staffed with experts who can directly help students with disabilities plan for life after high school, while also training school personnel on how to guide families through the process. The plans can cover anything from the type of support services students might need to be successful in college to skills they should be taught in order to live independently. Currently, Centers are located in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island with the Manhattan Center opening in October of 2019.

Brooklyn

Boys and Girls High School
700 Fulton Street,
First Floor, Room G170
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Queens

90-27 Sutphin Boulevard
Room 152
Jamaica, New York 11435

Bronx

DeWitt Clinton High School
100 West Mosholu Parkway South
First Floor, Room 150
Bronx, NY 10468

Staten Island

715 Ocean Terrace
Building A, Room 204,
Staten Island, NY 10301

DOE Admissions Policy

Starting in 2019, students who have an accessibility need will receive priority in admissions to school buildings that are fully or partially accessible. This policy builds on the City's investment of \$750 million in new capital plan for accessibility needs, the largest capital funding investment to date.

Accessible Parking Campaign

Our annual campaign to prevent individuals from parking in spaces reserved for individuals with disabilities will include radio ads on WSKQ- FM, known on-air as Mega 97.9.

Disability Pride Parade

Since 2015, every July the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has worked together with DisabilityPrideNYC (DPNYC) to hold the NYC Disability Pride Parade. With our highest attendance on record being 7,500 people- this is the largest Disability Pride Parade in the world.

As our numbers continue to grow, last year in 2018 we were excited to continue to amplify the spirit and vibrancy of the parade by holding competitions amongst marchers. We gave awards in the category of best costumes, performance, float and spirit. As a result we had our most festive and celebratory parade yet.



Photos courtesy of FDNY Photo Unit

Since the inception of the parade, MOPD has been proud to partner with DPNYC. At the very beginning it was the intention of our office to work with the non-profit and help grow the parade into something sustainable that could be run by and for the community. Now, after five years we believe that we have reached this point. After the 2019 parade, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities will be stepping down from the Disability Pride Parade and relinquishing full control to the non-profit organization DPNYC. We have full faith in DPNYC to uphold and grow the NYC Disability Pride Parade and look forward to celebrating every year as we march alongside them.

AccessibleNYC

MOPD's work with the Mayor's Office of International Affairs and the Division for Social Policy and Development at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has helped us globally disseminate the information provided in AccessibleNYC. Government officials and disability rights advocates from countries and cities around the world continue to visit and reach out to MOPD to discuss the programs outlined in the report, including Germany, Australia, France, New Zealand, Israel, Singapore, Canada, Italy, and United Arab Emirates. Many countries and international organizations have invited Commissioner Calise to attend conferences in their countries to discuss access in New York City and the AccessibleNYC report including Germany, France, Canada, and Israel.

Conclusion

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities is committed to working on the programs, services, and projects outlined in this report and will continue to review new proposals for the City to implement, particularly as technologies to increase accessibility advance with the ultimate goal of making New York City a Smart, Equitable and Accessible City. As AccessibleNYC is an annual report on the state of persons with disabilities in the City, in 2020 MOPD will again report on the progress of the programs outlined here as well as new initiatives. For more information, please visit us online at [NYC.gov/mopd](https://nyc.gov/mopd).

Appendix



New York City Transit Office of ADA Compliance Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Phase
1	125 Street	4, 5, 6	Accessible
2	175 Street	A	Accessible
3	42 Street-Port Authority	A, C, E	Accessible
4	Pelham Bay Park	6	Accessible
5	Great Kills	SIR	Accessible
6	51 Street	6	Accessible
7	Grand Central-42 Street	4, 5, 6	Accessible
8	World Trade Center	E	Accessible
9	Simpson Street	2, 5	Accessible
10	Coney Island-Stillwell Ave	D, F, N, Q	Accessible
11	34 Street-Herald Square	N, Q, R, W	Accessible
12	34 Street-Herald Square	B, D, F, M	Accessible
13	Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall	4, 5, 6	Accessible
14	3 Avenue-149 Street	2, 5	Accessible
15	Borough Hall	2, 3	Accessible

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Phase
16	Dongan Hills	SIR	Accessible
17	Flatbush Avenue	2, 5	Accessible
18	Church Avenue	2, 5	Accessible
19	34 Street-Penn Station	1, 2, 3	Accessible
20	Woodside-61 Street	7	Accessible
21	Flushing-Main Street	7	Accessible
22	14 St-Union Square	N, Q, R, W	Accessible
	14 St-Union Square	L	Accessible
23	Inwood-207 Street	A	Accessible
24	66 Street-Lincoln Center	1	Accessible
25	14 Street	A, C, E	Accessible
26	8 Avenue	L	Accessible
27	Franklin Avenue	C	Accessible
28	Franklin Avenue	S	Accessible
29	161 Street-Yankee Stadium	4	Accessible
30	161 Street-Yankee Stadium	B, D	Accessible
31	Grand Central-42 Street	7	Accessible
32	Grand Central-42 Street	S	Accessible
33	34 Street-Penn Station	A, C, E	Accessible

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Phase
34	Flushing Avenue	J, M	Accessible
35	Prospect Park	B, Q, S	Accessible
36	72 Street	1, 2, 3	Accessible
37	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr	D, N, R	Accessible
38	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr	B, Q	Accessible
39	Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr	2, 3, 4, 5	Accessible
40	Howard Beach	A	Accessible
41	Marcy Avenue	J, M, Z	Accessible
42	Lexington Avenue/53 St	E, M	Accessible
43	Utica Avenue	3, 4	Accessible
44	DeKalb Avenue	B, Q, R	Accessible
45	West 4 Street	A, B, C, D, E, F, M	Accessible
46	Jamaica-179 Street	F	Accessible
47	Times Square-42 Street	N, Q, R, W	Accessible
48	74 Street	7	Accessible
49	Jackson Hts-Roosevelt Ave	E, F, M, R	Accessible
50	125 Street	A, B, C, D	Accessible
51	Euclid Avenue	A, C	Accessible
52	Fordham Road	4	Accessible

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Phase
53	Queens Plaza	E, M, R	Accessible
54	Times Square-42 Street	1, 2, 3	Accessible
55	Times Square-42 Street	7	Accessible
56	231 Street	1	Accessible
57	Junction Boulevard	7	Accessible
58	168 Street	A, C	Accessible
59	Pelham Parkway	2, 5	Accessible
60	233 Street	2, 5	Accessible
61	Bowling Green	4, 5	Accessible
62	Myrtle Avenue	L	Accessible
63	Wyckoff Avenue	M	Accessible
64	135 Street	2, 3	Accessible
65	Church Avenue	F, G	Accessible
66	St. George	SIR	Accessible
67	Kew Gardens-Union Tpke	E, F	Accessible
68	South Ferry	1	Accessible
69	47-50 Streets-Rock Center	B, D, F, M	Accessible
70	Chambers Street	1, 2, 3	Accessible
71	59 Street-Columbus Circle	A, B, C, D	Accessible

Accessible Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Phase
72	59 Street-Columbus Circle	1	Accessible
73	Jay Street-MetroTech	A, C, F	Accessible
74	96 Street	1, 2, 3	Accessible
75	Kings Highway	B, Q	Accessible
76	Far Rockaway-Mott Avenue	A	Accessible
77	East 180 Street	2, 5	Accessible
78	Bay Parkway	D	Accessible
79	Bleeker Street	6	Accessible
80	Broadway-Lafayette	B, D, F, M	Accessible
81	Forest Hills-71 Avenue	E, F, M, R	Accessible
82	Utica Avenue	A, C	Accessible
83	Hunts Point Avenue	6	Accessible
84	Cortlandt St	R, W	Accessible
85	Kingsbridge Road	B, D	Accessible
86	23 Street	6	Accessible
87	Ozone Pk-Lefferts Blvd	A	Accessible

Accessible Non-Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Remarks
1	50th Street	C, E	Southbound
2	Lexington Ave/63rd St.	F	
3	Roosevelt Island	F	
4	21 Street- Queensbridge	F	
5	Jamaica/Van Wyck	E	
6	Jamaica Center	E, J, Z	
7	Sutphin Blvd.	E, J, Z	
8	Middle Village- Metropolitan Ave	M	
9	Rockaway Park-Beach 116 St	A, S	
10	Park Place	S	
11	Borough Hall	4, 5	Northbound
12	Tottenville	SIR	
13	Canal Street Station	6	
14	49th Street	N, Q, R	Northbound
15	Rockaway Parkway	L	
16	Gun Hill Road	2, 5	
17	Jay Street-MetroTech	R	

Accessible Non-Key Stations List

Count	Station	Line	Remarks
18	Avenue H	Q	Southbound
19	Fulton Street	4, 5	
20	Court Square	7	
21	Dyckman St	1	Southbound
22	Aqueduct Racetrack	A	
23	Fulton Street	2, 3	
24	Fulton Street	A, C	
25	Fulton Street	J, Z	
26	34 St-Hudson Yards	7	
27	Wilson Avenue	L	Northbound
28	72 Street	Q	
29	86 Street	Q	
30	96 Street	Q	
31	Arthur Kill	SIR	
32	WTC Cortlandt	1	
33	28 Street	6	Southbound
34	86 Street	6	Northbound Local
35	New Utrecht Av	N	
36	62 St	D	



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities