



**BOARD OF CORRECTION
CITY OF NEW YORK**

Local Law 12 of 2023 Proposed 5-Year Accessibility Plan

April 2024

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General

Disability Service Facilitator

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Accessibility Office: Administration

The Board of Correction's notice of nondiscrimination/notice of rights, grievance procedure and website accessibility statement are available here: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/boc/about/accessibility.page>

Mission and Background of Agency

The New York City Board of Correction ("BOC" or "Board") is a nine-person, non-judicial oversight board that regulates, monitors, and inspects the correctional facilities of the City of New York. BOC carries out independent oversight and enacts regulations to support safer, fairer, smaller, and more humane NYC jails.

It is one of the earliest independent oversight boards of custodial and detention settings in the United States. Its original Board members were appointed in 1957. In 1977, BOC's role was expanded, and it became more independent, gaining its own staff and budget.

The City Charter mandates BOC's five functions:

- Establish and ensure compliance with minimum standards "for the care, custody, correction, treatment, supervision, and discipline of all persons held or confined under the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction" ("DOC");
- Investigate any matter within the jurisdiction of DOC;
- Review grievances from person in custody and staff;
- Evaluate the performance of DOC; and

- Make recommendations on areas of key correctional planning.

Executive Summary

The Board identified multiple aspects of its digital access, workplace inclusion, and communications practices it can improve to further its commitment to ensuring all spaces are accessible and inclusive. Some of the most notable improvements the Board will commence are:

- Modifying the public meeting notice to include information about the building and auditorium accessibility features;
- Educating and training staff who create digital content on laws and standards relating to accessibility;
- Reviewing the Board’s website, social media, videos, and electronic documents to enhance its accessibility features;
- Transitioning virtual meetings from WebEx to Microsoft Teams to improve its accessibility;
- Improving agency services for people who are D/deaf;
- Enrolling the Board in disability-inclusive recruitment initiatives and events; and
- Developing accessibility tools to retain staff and augment the Board’s pre-employment and onboarding processes.

Accessibility Statement

It is the policy of BOC to comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), Rehabilitation Act, the New York State Human Rights Law and the New York City Human Rights Law. The Board does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of its programs, services and activities and strives to be welcoming to and inclusive of people with disabilities.

During the assessment of the agency’s current efforts to ensure its physical, digital and programmatic spaces are accessible and that its communications and workplace are inclusive, the Board identified many accessibility initiatives that are already in place, including:

- The selection of a Digital Inclusion Officer to spearhead our continued efforts to meet the goals of our 5-year plan.

- The Board posted a website accessibility statement in an easy-to-find location on the agency's website, which includes information on how to provide feedback on web accessibility issues.
- The Board has the capacity and can provide human-generated captions and American Sign Language ("ASL") interpretation to those who request them on the virtual platform used for virtual meetings. Artificial Intelligence ("AI") generated captioning is always available, whether requested or not.
- BOC engages in a cooperative dialogue with employees and external parties to handle requests for auxiliary aids and services and gives primary consideration to the choice of aid or service requested by the person with a disability. An agency and someone requesting an accommodation engage in a "cooperative dialogue" when they engage in a good faith conversation (written or oral) about the person's accommodation needs; potential accommodations that may address the person's accommodation needs, including alternatives to a requested accommodation; and the difficulties that such potential accommodations may pose for the agency.
- Relevant employees are aware of the agency's obligation to provide auxiliary aids and services and know how to arrange them.
- The Board has identified mechanisms for providing in-person sign language interpretation, video remote interpretation, Communication Access Realtime Transcription ("CART"), assistive listening devices, closed captioning of videos, and documents in braille, large print, and as audio recordings.
- When scheduling in-person events, including those arranged by contractors, BOC assesses the venue's accessibility.
- The Board's policy and procedure for accommodation requests includes that, if it is determined that providing the requested accommodation will pose an undue hardship for the agency, other accommodations will be considered to meet the requestor's needs.
- The Board reviews all job descriptions to ensure that they are disability-inclusive (i.e., that they focus on the essential duties of the job and do not include outdated/exclusionary language).
- The Board ensures that the agency's electronic job postings are accessible to those who use access technologies like a screen reader.

- The employment application process is accessible to (usable by) those using access technology.
- The Board has designated a 55-a Program Coordinator. Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law allows a qualified person with a certified mental or physical disability to be hired into competitive civil service positions without having to take an exam. This equity and inclusion program is administered by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services through the 55-a Program.
- The Board hires and promotes people with disabilities at all levels, not just entry-levels.
- The Board includes Equal Employment Opportunity (“EEO”) language in all job postings.
- The Board provides different options for the platform where interviews can be held (in person or virtual).
- Staff who organize interviews know how to arrange accommodations (know which spaces are wheelchair accessible—including bathrooms—and are able to reserve them; know how to request auxiliary aids and services, like ASL interpretation and CART).
- Structured interviews are always used, where all candidates are asked the same questions.
- Employees have taken the Disability Etiquette & Awareness Training on Citynet.
- The Board provides tools, technology, and workspaces that are accessible to all employees, such as ergonomic office equipment and the availability of access technology on request (magnification, voice recognition, screen readers, etc.).
- Employee social and recreational activities are accessible to all employees as needed.
- Trainings and professional development opportunities are accessible to all employees.
- BOC’s employee reasonable accommodation process follows the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (“DCAS”) Reasonable Accommodation Procedural Guidelines.
- BOC’s employee reasonable accommodation process provides the employee with the choice of meeting to discuss reasonable accommodations in person and over the phone (not just over email or online).

- The Board provides clear career pathways to ensure that employees, including those with disabilities, are given an opportunity to advance and realize their full potential.
- BOC staff stationed at the 2 Lafayette Street office have been trained on what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency with respect to staff and others with disabilities and functional needs.

The Board will continue supporting these existing efforts and strive to meet additional accessibility goals as described in the following section.

Agency Plan

Physical and Programmatic Access

BOC's Manhattan office is located at 2 Lafayette Street, 12th Floor, Suite 1221, New York, NY 10007. BOC's Rikers Island offices are located at 80 Construction Way, Rikers Island Correctional Facility, East Elmhurst, NY 11370 and 90 Construction Way, Rikers Island Correctional Facility, East Elmhurst, NY 11370. BOC expects to occupy an additional office on Rikers Island, located at 120 Construction Way, Rikers Island Correctional Facility, East Elmhurst NY 11370; however, this location is currently unoccupied. Lastly, BOC holds in-person and virtual public meetings nine (9) times a year at 125 Worth Street, 2nd Floor Auditorium, New York, NY 10007.

Due to the restricted nature of access to Rikers Island, BOC's Rikers Island offices are not open to members of the public and are only accessed by BOC staff, other City-agency employees, and vendors.

DCAS is responsible for the 2 Lafayette Street and 125 Worth Street buildings' common areas, including entrances, building lobbies, elevators, common hallways, stairwells, common area bathrooms and means of egress. DCAS is also responsible for the Worth Street auditorium where BOC holds public meetings nine (9) times a year.

BOC is responsible for the open areas, waiting area, workstations, private offices, dedicated meeting rooms, dedicated pantry and kitchen, furniture, and interior signage at 2 Lafayette Street. BOC interior offices do not have bathrooms or staircases.

BOC has identified three office entry doors that are not ADA-compliant because the doors require exerting more than five pounds of force to pull or push open. The Board further identified that the service counter in the office waiting area is 45 inches above the ground, rather than the accessible 36 inches. However, DCAS is responsible for the office's dedicated ingress/egress and the building structure such as the service counter.

125 Worth Street and the Worth Street auditorium where BOC holds public meetings is wheelchair accessible through its Lafayette Street entrance, elevator banks to the second floor, and has accessible restrooms on its second floor. The auditorium is not equipped with an assistive listening system. DCAS manages 125 Worth Street and the Worth Street auditorium.

Access issues, actions, and timelines

1. Within one year, the Board will modify the public meeting notice to include information about the building and auditorium accessibility features.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board's Digital Inclusion Officer will be responsible for this task.

Tracking determined outcomes

All outcomes will be tracked on an Excel spreadsheet created by the Board's General Counsel once the plan is in effect. The Board's General Counsel, Digital Inclusion Officer, Deputy Executive Director of Administration, and all other relevant staff will meet every two months to measure the plan's progress and adjust as necessary.

Digital Access

Access issues, actions, and timelines

The Board is committed to ensuring its digital content is usable and accessible.

Policies

1. Within one year, the Board will ensure that all employees who create digital content, specifically the agency's Intergovernmental Affairs and Communications staff, are aware of laws and standards relating to digital accessibility relevant to the content they create. This includes Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA, Local Law 26 of 2016, and ADA, Section 508.
2. Within one year, the Board will create specific policies and procedures related to the creation of accessible digital content.
3. Within one to two years, the Board will identify existing trainings on what makes digital content accessible and how to create content in an accessible manner. The target of these trainings will be all staff who create digital content.
4. Within two to three years, the Board will develop a process for the review of digital content to ensure its accessibility. The process will incorporate auditing mechanisms to ensure that it is consistently followed.
5. Within two years, the Board will assess its internal and external facing applications and digital products for compliance with the laws and standards relating to digital accessibility and identify replacements for applications as needed. The Board will ensure that newly acquired applications and digital products meet the relevant accessibility standards.
6. Within two years, the Board will incorporate provisions that address accessibility into performance evaluations of all employees responsible for digital content.

Website and Social Media

The Board's website is managed by the Office of Innovation and Technology ("OTI"). Accordingly, the Board does not manage accessibility features on the website. However, the Board does manage the content on the website, therefore we plan to implement the following actions:

1. Within three to four years, the Board will review all images posted on the website and social media to ensure they have been given meaningful alternative text descriptions which convey the information and purpose of the image using programmatic alt text.

2. Within five years, the Board will explore the enhancement of all videos posted on the website and on social media going forward to include closed captioning that is not just auto generated and include indications of significant background sounds and the names of those speaking.
3. Within two to three years, the Board will explore the enhancement of videos posted on the website and on social media to include audio descriptions, either as part of the original or as a separate version with a link to it from the original's page.
4. Within five years, the Board will explore the enhancement of all videos posted on the website and on social media to include audio descriptions, either as part of the original or as a separate version with a link to it from the original's page.
5. Starting immediately, the Board will avoid the use of American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) text on social media posts.

Electronic documents

1. Within one year, the Board will ensure that all creators of electronic records are aware of, and follow, the principles of accessible documentation as outlined by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities ("MOPD").
2. Within five years, the Board will implement a review process to ensure electronic documents are accessible prior to public distribution and a remediation process for documents previously created that are not accessible.
3. Starting immediately, staff who compose mass e-mails will use the Outlook 365 Accessibility Checker before sending the e-mails.

Virtual meetings

1. Within one year, the Board will change the platform used for virtual meetings from WebEx to Microsoft Teams to make the meetings more accessible.
2. Within one year, the Board will ensure those who run virtual, or hybrid, public meetings are aware of the accessibility best practices for virtual meetings.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board's Digital Inclusion Officer, Board procurement staff, and other relevant staff identified along the way will be responsible for these tasks. Board procurement staff include the Deputy Executive Director of Administration, General Counsel, and Office Manager.

Tracking determined outcomes

All outcomes will be tracked on an Excel spreadsheet created by the Board's General Counsel once the plan is in effect. The Board's General Counsel, Digital Inclusion Officer, Deputy Executive Director of Administration/Disability Services Facilitator, and all other relevant staff will meet every two months to measure the plan's progress and adjust as necessary.

Effective Communications

Access issues, actions, and timelines

Policies, Procedures, and Practices

1. Within one year, the Board will ensure that all relevant employees know which agency spaces are looped or equipped with other assistive listening systems.
2. Within one year, the Board will ensure that relevant employees are aware that it is inappropriate to request that family members or friends of people who are D/deaf serve as interpreters.

Specific Auxiliary Aids and Services

1. Within one year, the Board will create communication cards to aid in-person interactions with people who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Telecommunications

1. Within one year, the Board will ensure that employees and officials know how to respond to telephone calls made through a Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) so that the calls are responded to in the same manner as other telephone calls.

2. Within one year, the agency will enroll in the ASL Direct Program.

Plain language

1. Within one year, the agency will ensure that all public-facing communications (printed/electronic docs, webpages, videos, etc.) going forward are reviewed to ensure they are in plain, easy-to-understand language.

Public Meetings and Events

1. Within one year, when scheduling virtual or hybrid events, including those being arranged by contractors, BOC will make sure that the platform is accessible and that those responsible for running the event are familiar with its accessibility features and how to use them.
2. Within one year, the agency will ensure that all promotional materials for public events (social media, flyers, invitations, etc.) comply with Local Law 28 of 2016.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board's Digital Inclusion Officer, the Deputy Executive Director of Administration, and other relevant staff identified along the way will be responsible for these tasks.

Tracking determined outcomes

All outcomes will be tracked on an Excel spreadsheet created by the Board's General Counsel once the plan is in effect. The Board's General Counsel, Digital Inclusion Officer, Deputy Executive Director of Administration/Disability Services Facilitator, and all other relevant staff will set up meetings every two months to measure the plan's progress and adjust as necessary.

Workplace Inclusion

Access issues, actions, and timelines

The Board is committed to support and enforce the rights and protections afforded by the New York City Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Policy, the City and State Human Rights Law, and all other relevant laws, for all employees, applicants for employment, external contractors, consultants, and agency partners, and members of the public served by our agency. This commitment includes compliance with the City's reasonable accommodation program and strategies for recruitment and retention.

Reasonable Accommodation

The reasonable accommodation program requires all agencies to make reasonable accommodations for applicants, employees, interns, and consultants to permit each to perform the essential functions of their position and equally enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by similarly situated employees without disabilities.

1. The Board will continue to make available information about the reasonable accommodation process available on the agency's SharePoint site and via agencywide communication.
2. The Board will continue to make reasonable accommodation information available to hiring managers during the recruitment process. Within one year, the Board will include information for requesting accommodations in all interview confirmation letters/emails sent to candidates.
3. The Board will continue to make accommodations, whether through a change in environment, rule or practice, adjustment of materials, or provision of equipment, device, application, or service.

Recruitment

The Board is driven to maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

1. Within two years, the Board will ensure the agency participates in disability-inclusive recruitment events (e.g., DCAS and NYC: ATWORK recruitment events targeted to people with disabilities and/or Agency Spotlight Events).
2. Within one year, the Board will post open positions on the NYC: ATWORK job boards via the Job Submission Form.
3. Within one year, the Board will share job postings with State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies and other organizations that

work with people with disabilities, such as CUNY LEADS and Job Path.

4. When applicable, the Board will use the 55-a Program to hire people with disabilities for competitive positions. The majority of Board positions are non-competitive.
5. Within one year, the Board will provide internship and fellowship opportunities for people with disabilities through programs such as the Partnership for Inclusive Internships.

Within one year, BOC staff stationed at Rikers Island will be trained on what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency with respect to staff and others with disabilities and functional needs.

Retention

The Board strives to retain a diverse workforce reflective of the City's population.

1. The Board will continue to provide mandatory EEO training, including EEO and Diversity & Inclusion training and Disability Awareness and Etiquette training, to employees to create an inclusive culture of openness, tolerance, and cooperation.
2. Within three years, the Board will facilitate the creation of an affinity group/employee resource group (ERG) for people with disabilities, if requested.
3. Within three years, the Board will develop coaching opportunities to help ensure that everyone, including employees with disabilities, has the information needed to be successful (info on agency/office culture, guidance/support with office procedures, orientations, etc.).

Roles and responsibilities

The Board's Deputy Executive Director of Administration and other relevant staff identified along the way will be responsible for these tasks.

Tracking determined outcomes

All outcomes will be tracked on an Excel spreadsheet created by the Board's General Counsel once the plan is in effect. The Board's General Counsel, Digital Inclusion Officer, Deputy Executive Director of

Administration/Disability Services Facilitator, and all other relevant staff will meet every two months to measure the plan's progress and adjust as necessary.

Methodology

This 5-year accessibility plan was developed by the Board's General Counsel with the input of the Board's Digital Inclusion Officer and Disability Services Facilitator. The audit was conducted using documents provided by MOPD.

No persons with disabilities were consulted directly during the audit process, however, once our plan goes through the public comment process with partners in the disability community, we will implement all valuable input into our plan before beginning its implementation.

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Board of Correction Policies Prohibiting Discrimination Against People with Disabilities in Access to Services

It is the policy of the Board of Correction to comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Rehabilitation Act, the New York State Human Rights Law and the New York City Human Rights Law. The Board of Correction does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of its programs, services and activities and strives to be welcoming to and inclusive of people with disabilities.

Employment related complaints for employees and applicants for employment seeking a reasonable accommodation are covered under the City's EEO Policy which can be found at https://nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/agencies/nyc_eeo_policy.pdf

Any member of the public who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures in order to participate in our programs, services or activities (involving matters other than employment) is invited to direct their needs and preferences to the Board of Correction's Disability Service Facilitator by email, phone or mail:

Danielle Ortega
2 Lafayette Street, Suite 1221
New York, NY 10007
212-266-4395 | dortega@boc.nyc.gov

Requests should be made as soon as possible but no later than three (3) business days before the scheduled program, service or activity. Questions, concerns or requests for additional information may be directed to the Board of Correction Disability Service Facilitator.

If you believe that you have been denied an auxiliary aid or service or a reasonable modification of policies or procedures that you need in order to participate in programs, services or activities provided by the Board of Correction please see the Board of Correction's grievance procedure.

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BOC Website Accessibility Statement

The Board of Correction is committed to ensuring its digital content is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. We are continually improving the user experience for everyone and applying the relevant accessibility standards.

Conformance Status

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) defines requirements for designers and developers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. It defines three levels of conformance: Level A, Level AA, and Level AAA. Our digital content is partially conformant with WCAG 2.1 level AA. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to this accessibility standard.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the accessibility of our digital content. Please let us know if you encounter accessibility issues by using the [Website Accessibility Feedback Form](#).

If you need assistance accessing a particular program or service, please reach out to the Board of Correction's Disability Services Facilitator, Danielle Ortega, at (212) 266-4395 or dortega@coc.nyc.gov.

Assessment Approach

The Board of Correction assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

Date

This statement was created on 02/22/2023.

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Board of Correction Grievance Procedure for Members of the Public Alleging Discrimination Based on Disability

Any member of the public alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Board of Correction may file a grievance with the Board of Correction, which should contain:

- the name, address, telephone number and/or email of the grievant and
- information about the alleged discrimination, such as the location, date, and description of the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights Law, or NYC Human Rights Law.

“Grievance” is the term for the allegation filed with the Board of Correction by a member of the public.

“Grievant” is the term for the person alleging discrimination in the grievance.

When and How to File a Grievance

The grievance should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the alleged violation to:

Danielle Ortega

2 Lafayette Street

12th Floor, Suite 1221

New York, NY 10007

dortega@boc.nyc.gov (Please include “Grievance” in subject line.)

The grievance may be filed in one of two ways:

1. By submitting the grievance in writing by mail or email using the above address; or
2. Upon request, by an alternative means, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights

Law, or NYC Human Rights Law. A request for an alternative means of filing may be granted as an accommodation for a grievant with a disability.

Timeline Following Filing of Grievance

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the grievance, the Disability Service Facilitator or designee will contact the grievant to discuss the grievance and possible resolutions.

Within fifteen (15) calendar days of this contact with the grievant, the Disability Service Facilitator or designee will provide a response in writing. Grievants may request the response in an additional format accessible to them, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the grievance, describe the Board of Correction's position, and offer options for substantive resolution of the grievance, where applicable.

When and How to File an Appeal

The grievant may appeal the Board of Correction's decision within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the Board of Correction's response.

The appeal should be mailed to:

Jasmine Georges-Yilla
2 Lafayette Street
12th Floor, Suite 1221
New York, NY 10007
jgeorges-yilla@boc.nyc.gov

The appeal may be filed in one of two ways:

1. By submitting the appeal in writing and by mail using the above address; or
2. Upon request, by an alternative means, such as an in-person interview or an audio recording, describing the incident or alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, NY State Human Rights Law, or NYC Human Rights Law. A request for an alternative means of filing may be granted as an accommodation for a grievant with a disability.

Timeline Following Filing of Appeal

The Board of Correction's response to the appeal will be provided to the grievant in writing within sixty (60) days following receipt of the appeal. Grievants may request the response in an additional format accessible to them, such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. This response will address the appeal, describe the Board of Correction's decision, and offer options for substantive resolution of the appeal, where applicable.

All written grievances, appeals, and responses in connection with a grievance made to the Board of Correction will be retained for at least three (3) years.

Note: Upon request to the Disability Service Facilitator, this page can be made available in an alternative format.