



## **Kings County District Attorney**

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

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## General

### Communication and Outreach

The Kings County District Attorney's Office ("KCDA" or the "Office") has set forth below a proposed Five-Year Accessibility Plan (the "Plan"), which is maintained and updated by the Office's Designated Services Facilitator ("DSF"), Cynthia Aker. Inquiries may be sent to [accessibility@brooklynda.org](mailto:accessibility@brooklynda.org), (718) 250-2095, or by mail at:

Accessibility At The Brooklyn District Attorney's Office  
350 Jay Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11201  
Attention: Cynthia Aker.

The Office's public-facing website—brooklynda.org—includes:

- An [Accessibility Statement](#);<sup>1</sup>
- Identification of the Office's DSF and contact information;
- Identification of the Office's Digital Inclusion Officer;
- A City of New York [Web Accessibility Feedback Form](#) and City of New York Statement regarding the City's commitment to Web Accessibility.
- A Non-Discrimination policy and notice of rights;
- A grievance procedure, which will also be posted to the public-facing website upon completion.
- This five-year plan will be posted to brooklynda.org upon

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<sup>1</sup> It also contains the following statements regarding (1) Conformance Status; and (3) Assessment Approach:

- 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 2.2 level AA, with exceptions set forth at 28 CFR § 35.201. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to this accessibility standard.
- The Kings County District Attorney's Office assesses the accessibility of its digital content through self-evaluation.

completion as well as information about how to submit a public comment regarding said plan. A copy of the plan can also be obtained in an accessible alternative format by contacting the DSF at [accessibility@brooklynda.org](mailto:accessibility@brooklynda.org) or (718) 250-2095.

- As indicated in greater detail below, the Office also maintains internal websites for its employees that provide resources for individuals with disabilities and effective tools for their colleagues to ensure they are properly, effectively, and empathetically communicating with them.

The five-year plan will also be posted to these internal websites.

### **Mission Statement of District Attorney Eric Gonzalez**

A Brooklyn native and career prosecutor, DA Gonzalez has always approached his role as prosecutor with a deep commitment to justice and fairness. This commitment continues to drive him as the leader of one of the nation's largest, most diverse, and innovative prosecutors' offices. Under DA Gonzalez' direction, the members of the Office of the Kings County District Attorney work tirelessly to keep Brooklyn safe and strengthen community trust by ensuring fairness and equal justice for all. With more than 2.8 million residents, Kings County (Brooklyn) is the most populous county in New York State and, taken separately, the fourth-largest municipality in the country. The Brooklyn District Attorney's Office investigates and prosecutes crime, helps victims, and implements crime prevention strategies to improve public safety and the quality of life. Our staff of more than 1,200 employees is dedicated to serving with integrity, compassion, and an unstinting commitment to justice worthy of the public's trust.

### **Equal Access is Equal Justice**

A core principle of the Office of the Kings County District Attorney ("KCDA" or

“Office”) under DA Gonzalez’ leadership is “equal justice for all” and creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment. Accordingly, the goals of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (“MOPD”) and those of DA Gonzalez are the same, as equal justice is not possible without equal access. KCDA is committed to providing persons with disabilities with access to the Office’s services; to identifying, preventing and removing barriers to accessibility; and to meeting accessibility requirements in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

### **Agency Plan**

Pursuant to Local Law 12 of 2023, each New York City agency is required to develop and implement a five-year accessibility plan, in consultation with MOPD. In accordance with the law, the Office is to construct a plan that, at minimum, details (1) the steps the Office is *currently* taking and will be taking to ensure the agency’s workplace, services, programs, and activities are accessible to and accommodating and inclusive of persons with disabilities; and (2) ongoing and planned initiatives focused on the improved physical, digital, and programmatic access by improving physical, digital, and programmatic access, and effective communications for persons with disabilities.”<sup>2</sup> In accordance with LL12, the Office has and will continue to employ reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities and enable them to obtain, use, and/or benefit from KCDA resources and/or services;
- Persons with disabilities are given equal access to opportunities

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<sup>2</sup> Local Law 12 of 2023: <https://nyc.legistar1.com/nyc/attachments/c8d9553e-2c9e-4a53-b247-686a70bc7377.pdf>

given to others;

- Equal ability to obtain, use, and/or benefit from KCDA resources and/or services;
- Office communications are conducted in a manner that considers the person's disability and preferred method of communication;
- Implementation of technologies that will provide greater accessibility and access, including, but not limited to, text-to-speech other software that provides better access to computer resources for the visually impaired and assistive listening devices for those that are hearing impaired during Office events. so that persons with disabilities may use assistive devices to support access to Department resources and services; and
- Access for service animals, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

### **Areas of Focus**

In order to meet the requirements of LL12 and foster an inclusive community with equal access to opportunity, the Office has identified these areas of focus and improvement: (1) Physical Access; (2) Digital Access; and (3) Policies in place to ensure equity of access and opportunity.

### **Physical & Programmatic Access**

Implementation Timeframe: 2024-2028

**The Courts** - KCDA currently maintains space is 350 Jay Street (the main space for the Office), 120 Schermerhorn Street (Brooklyn Criminal Court), and 320 Jay Street (Brooklyn Supreme Court – Criminal Term). Space in both courthouses is largely governed by the New York Office of Court Administration and they have implemented measures to increase accessibility. Generally, New York State Courts maintain this statement regarding



[Accessibility](#).<sup>3</sup> Both locations are equipped to allow access to all publicly available areas, including elevator access to all floors, braille signage, and sufficient space to allow access for individuals who need to use mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Criminal Court is also undergoing renovations and this plan will be updated once renovations are completed to detail how said changes further enhanced accessibility—if applicable.

**350 Jay Street** – The main office of KCDA is leased space within a commercial office building in the heart of downtown Brooklyn. As such, certain elements already exist to enhance accessibility for the spaces users. For example: Every space within the office is accessible via elevator and doorways are large enough to accommodate mobility devices. Employee lavatories are equipped with Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliant sinks and stalls and there is at least one gender-neutral, single-occupant bathroom on each floor. Each of these are also equipped with ADA compliant features, such as railings, and sinks with sufficient underside clearance. Moreover, most general common elements on each floor are equipped with braille signage denoting floor numbers, lavatories, stairways, and other elements:



The following areas were identified for potential improvement:

1. Additional braille signage: As identified above, significant Braille signage already exists in the Office. However, there may be room to add it to

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<sup>3</sup> Information regarding Brooklyn Criminal Court located at [https://ww2.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/criminal/generalinfo.shtml#KINGS\\_COUNTY](https://ww2.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/criminal/generalinfo.shtml#KINGS_COUNTY) and Supreme Court – Criminal Term located at <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/courts/2jd/kings/Criminal/index.shtml> includes a link regarding accessibility that redirects back to the main accessibility statement linked above with additional information provided at <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/COURTS/2jd/ada.shtml>.

additional locations, such as employee break areas and signage indicating what departments/locations/services are available on any given floor. The Office will assess where such signage would be most useful and determine what and to what extent any additional signage is placed within the Office.

2. Accessible doors that automatically open and close: Given the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the Office and its members, accessibility has to be assessed concomitantly with security. While KCDA is open to the public during business hours and the entry doors are unlocked during that time. After hours, however, the entry doors are secured and can only be accessed through coded identification cards for KCDA employees. Moreover, access to most floors within the Office are also secured by the same coded identification. Accordingly, the Office will need to assess the feasibility in installing automatic doors that can also be secured via said coded identification for security purposes.

3. The Office has multiple spaces in which trainings and other instructive/informative programs are conducted. Additionally, the Office is also embarking on a buildout and/or renovation of at least four floors that are currently occupied or will be in the near future. During said buildouts and renovations, accessibility, particularly the use of Assistive Listening Devices (“ALD”) was contemplated and will be integrated into these plans.

### **Digital & Programmatic Access**

Implementation Timeframe: 2024-2028

1. Web Content: As indicated above, the KCDA public-facing website contains this [Accessibility Statement](#), which conforms with current standards of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Additionally, KCDA also uses and maintains an internal website that contains a section addressing diversity



and inclusion.

2. KCDA provides to each employee use of a computer with a Windows operating system and a full suite of Microsoft Office applications. Windows is equipped with an array of tools designed to aid individuals with disabilities better use their computers including a narrator (or text-to-speech) function, high contrast setting, and magnifier. These tools can be found at: Control Panel\All Control Panel Items\Ease of Access Center. Additionally, the Microsoft Office suite of applications include default settings regarding accessibility that alerts the user if there are any identified accessibility issues that may impact how an individual with disabilities may can make use of said document.

3. KCDA has also built a new case management program from the ground up, and included within it a transcription software that will assist those that are hearing impaired better and more easily review the content of media files with audio tracks and can, in essence, produce closed captioning for videos to not only show the content of audio but also the timing of when the statement was made in connection with the video.

### **Workplace Inclusion & Effective Communication**

Implementation timeframe: 2024-2028

Every legal and non-legal employee hired by KCDA is provided a manual, which includes the adoption of ADA standards for inclusion and discrimination and identifies the Office's 55-a and EEOC Coordinator. Pertinent text from the manual is reproduced below:

#### **Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (Act) prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. As District Attorney, I affirm that I will comply with the Act to ensure that reasonable accommodations will be made for a person with a "disability" who is otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job for which he or she has applied or presently holds, unless providing such accommodation would impose an undue hardship.

A "disability" under the Act means "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits 1 or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment," Title 42, Chapter 126 U.S.C. § 12102(1). By "reasonable accommodation" the Act describes reasonable accommodation as being:

- making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and
- job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices ... the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Title 42, Chapter 126 U.S.C. § 12111(9).

A full text of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and materials concerning its interpretation, can be obtained from the EEO Officer, Room 1918 or the EEO Coordinator, Room 1938. Employees who believe they are covered by the definition and who wish to identify themselves so that reasonable accommodations may be made may contact the EEO Officer or the EEO Coordinator.

#### **Issues Related to Disabilities**

Cynthia Aker is the 55-a Coordinator and is responsible for ensuring that the Office complies with laws designed to protect disabled employees.

#### **Temporary or Permanent Medical Accommodations**

The law requires that reasonable accommodations be made for disabled employees who are capable of performing the essential functions of the job in question unless providing such accommodation would impose an undue hardship. The law also requires that reasonable accommodations be made for employees' religious observances. Any employee who wishes to request an accommodation should contact Ms. Aker.

Additionally, on KCDA's internal intranet there is a section devoted to "Diversity and Inclusion" with sections devoted to articles and other resources devoted to a wide array of diversity and inclusion subject matter. For example, within the "news" section is an article from "Yes!" titled "Rights and Justice: Disability Advocates Blazing Trails", and linked within the Intranet and [here](#). Within the "resources" section there is additional information regarding accessibility and inclusion including an American Bar Association guide to "Implicit Bias & People with Disabilities", which can be read [here](#). There is an additional link that connects to ADA resources including "Communicating Effectively with People with Disabilities", which can be viewed [here](#).

KCDA also maintains an online evolving database of resources for its employees titled "The Brooklyn Book". On the front page of this site is a link

to the KCDA Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures, which adopts and codifies New York City's Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO") Policy and the ADA, explains how to file a complaint, and includes a complaint form.

## **Methodology**

KCDA reviewed [the Guidance & Resources Materials](#) posted by the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with the New York State Human Rights Law, New York City Human Rights Law, New York City's EEO Policy, and Title 42 of the United States Code.

The Disability Service Facilitator and Digital Inclusion Officer consulted with the Office's EEO Coordinator and her office to identify access issues described in this proposed plan as well as a walkthrough of the current physical space and additional space currently under renovation and/or construction.

KCDA's EEO Office, through the reasonable accommodations process, interacts with individuals with disabilities and has both a historical and a present understanding of disability-related inquiries and needs. Accordingly, the EEO office provided vital insight as to the issues that should be addressed as part of this proposed plan and will further serve as a guide for future amendments and additions to the plan.