Board of Education Retirement System (BERS)

Accessibility Progress Report

2024–2025

General

The New York City Board of Education Retirement System (BERS) provides retirement benefits for employees of the NYC Department of Education and other covered employers. BERS is one of the largest multi-employer, multi-tiered retirement systems in the country, serving a diverse membership through defined benefits and tax-deferred annuity programs.

Following the release of our 5-Year Accessibility Plan in 2023, this first annual Accessibility Progress Report highlights the steps we've taken to make our services, communications, and workplace more inclusive and accessible. While we've made meaningful progress—particularly in the areas of effective communications, physical access, and foundational digital assessments—we recognize that continued improvement is essential. In the coming year, we aim to deepen staff training, engage with external consultants, and complete ongoing digital content audits.

Statement of Commitment

BERS remains committed to ensuring that our programs, services, communications, and work environment are accessible to all, including individuals with disabilities. We will continue to meet and exceed legal requirements and follow best practices in accessibility and inclusion to ensure equity for all stakeholders.

Disability Service Facilitator and Other Key Accessibility Information

• Disability Service Facilitator (DSF): Sanford Rich, Executive Director
55 Water Street, 50th Floor, New York, NY 10041
Email: srich4@bers.nyc.gov | Phone: (929) 305-3939

• Accessibility Resources & Policies:
- Public Notification of Non-Discrimination
- Accessibility & Non-Discrimination Policy
- Website Accessibility Statement
- Social Media Accessibility Statement

Feedback Process

BERS welcomes feedback on accessibility from members of the public and employees. Feedback can be submitted through our Contact Form at https://www.bers.nyc.gov/site/bers/about/email-bers.page and may be submitted anonymously. All feedback will be reviewed and considered to help improve our services.

Physical Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Maintained barrier-free access at 65 Court Street and 55 Water Street.
- Confirmed ADA compliance through Facilities team assessments.
- Addressed accessibility concerns promptly.

By May 2026, we will:

- Reassess facilities for signage and emergency accessibility.
- Create a visitor accessibility guide for both locations.

Digital Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Began review of website documents for WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance.
- Implemented alt-text protocols and social media accessibility.
- Trained content creators on digital accessibility practices.

By May 2026, we will:

- Complete accessibility audit for all public documents.
- Engage consultant to assess Member Self-Service portal.
- Extend training to all digital content staff.

Programmatic Access

As of May 2025, we have:

- Assessed accessibility of outreach activities and services.
- Confirmed accessibility of Room 101 at 65 Court Street.
- Began review of outreach materials for compliance.

By May 2026, we will:

- Develop checklist for accessible events.
- Ensure all public events include captioning and accessible formats.
- Continue document updates and compliance reviews.

Effective Communications

As of May 2025, we have:

- Provided plain language guidelines to content teams.
- Ensured staff are informed of auxiliary aid procedures.
- Processed accommodations via EEO procedures.

By May 2026, we will:

- Offer refresher training on accommodations.
- Add visual aids to enhance in-person service.

Workplace Inclusion

As of May 2025, we have:

- Updated and published relevant non-discrimination policies.
- Facilitated cooperative dialogue for accommodations.
- Participated in citywide EEO/ADA trainings.

By May 2026, we will:

- Expand accessibility and inclusion training.
- Establish feedback channels for internal accessibility issues.

Consultations and Feedback

BERS consulted with Facilities, Member Services, and IT departments to evaluate accessibility and reviewed feedback submitted online. These efforts shaped current accessibility priorities. Future staff surveys and focus groups are planned.

Conclusion

BERS is committed to continuous accessibility improvement. We will build on this year's efforts by enhancing digital platforms, improving physical spaces, and expanding communication tools to ensure inclusive service for all stakeholders.

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