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City Programs To Assist People With Disabilities

City Commission on Human Rights:

- The City Commission on Human Rights' Equal Access Program provides disability access, assistance and education to people with disabilities and senior citizens. The program assists individuals by identifying available resources, advocating for the disabled in their dealings with landlords and/or service providers, and, if early intervention fails, assisting with legal actions. If you believe you have been the victim of discrimination in the City of New York, you may file a complaint with the Law Enforcement Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, located at 40 Rector Street, 9th Floor, in lower Manhattan or at any of its Community Service Centers. The law requires that the complaint be filed within one year of the last alleged act of discrimination.

Department of Consumer Affairs:

- The Department of Consumers Affairs revised its rules governing physical space in the more than 60,000 businesses it licenses to guarantee greater accessibility for individuals with disabilities to important goods and services. The new rules, which became effective March 28, 2003, include sanctions such as padlocking restaurants when cafés prevent access, or when the operations extend past the legal proximity resulting in obstruction of the sidewalk.

Department of Employment:

- The Department of Employment (DOE), the City's workforce development agency, provides its customers with access to employment, education, training and information services at the New York City Workforce1 Career Centers, as well as at community-based organizations and educational institutions located throughout the City. VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) is a partner in the City's One-Stop system and provides staff onsite at the New York City Workforce1 Career Centers.
- DOE works with its Summer Youth Employment Program contractors, including the Department of Education, to serve youth with disabilities. DOE has established the Youth Abilities Project, designed to increase the participation and success of youth with disabilities in the more than 100 existing employment and training programs for youth administered by the agency. The Youth Abilities Project works proactively with the service providers to increase their awareness and expertise to better recruit and serve youth with disabilities.

Department of Housing Development and Preservation:

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is actively engaged in the development of accessible and affordable housing.

- Since 1996, HPD has produced approximately 850 accessible dwelling units through its Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program, Neighborhood Redevelopment Program and Tenant Interim Lease Program.
- HPD sets aside 5% of its units for applicants with mobility impairments and 2% for applicants with hearing or visual impairments. HPD works closely with the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities (MOPD) to market broadly the availability of accessible housing units to people with disabilities.

Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications:

- In striving to enhance the City's customer service capabilities, the 3-1-1 project was launched earlier this year to ensure that all New Yorkers benefit from increased access to City government services and information. City services and information are available to the hearing impaired through the 3-1-1 TTY number at (212) 504-4115. Calltakers use the 3-1-1-customer service management system to refer callers to more than 100 pre-existing TTY hotlines around the City or, use call-conference to provide assistance. 3-1-1 provides quick and easy access to services and information helpful to those with disabilities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By September 2003, 3-1-1 will be available online via the City's official website, www.nyc.gov, providing New Yorkers with the ability to file complaints and/or retrieve information online thru the website. Software allowing people with visual impairments to access the nyc.gov portal will be provided in text only formats.

Transportation:

- Working with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and advocates for people with disabilities, MOPD help to establish a representative advisory body comprised of customers of Access-A-Ride (AAR) throughout the five boroughs and organizations serving people with disabilities to provide the MTA with recommendations to improve the overall quality of AAR operations and delivery of service.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) has worked with AAR to create and erect over 20 Para Transit stands in high ridership areas for AAR vehicles to park for easy identification. DOT continues to work with AAR to expand this effort.

Department of Youth and Community Development:

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) provides numerous resources for both youth and adults with disabilities.

- **DYCD Focus Groups:** In December 2002, DYCD sponsored three focus groups on providing services to children and youth with disabilities, including youth with severe physical disabilities, cognitive and developmental disabilities. Experts from various public, private and not-for-profit agencies attended the focus groups to examine service needs, service gaps, barriers, and appropriate program models for this population. DYCD has used, and will continue to use, this information to inform future Request for Proposals that incorporate programming for

children and youth with disabilities.

- The Networking Project and Summer Day Camp: DYCD funds the YWCA's Networking Project for Young People with Disabilities. This program helps young people, ages 13 to 21, identify goals and develop life skills to live as independent adults. The YWCA-NYC Summer Teens Inclusive Summer Day Camp, designed and operated in collaboration with the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and DYCD, provides the opportunity for participants to remain active and productive during the summer months. The primary goal of this project is to bring together teens with and without developmental disabilities to participate together in a summer day camp for 4 weeks during the summer.
- Workshops on Serving the Disabled: In collaboration with the YMCA, DYCD provided a series of workshops for the public entitled Integrating Youth with Developmental Disabilities Into Your Program: A DYCD Training Initiative Addressing ADA Requirements for More Inclusive Programming. A partial list of workshops conducted in the series include:
 - Integrating Young People with Disabilities into your Summer Camp...and Beyond
 - Hot Fun in the Summertime
 - Understanding the Needs of the Physically Disabled Child
 - Helping Emotionally and Socially Challenged Young People Manage their Behavior
 - Inclusive Programming for the Developmentally Disabled Youth.
- Directory for After-School Activities: This year marks the second publication of the Directory for After-School Activities, a joint collaboration with the Partnership for After-School Education. The new edition includes a separate listing of resources for children with special needs, color coded and organized by borough. This edition completes and fully complements the revised directory.
- Transportation Assistance: DYCD's transportation program provides specially equipped buses to serve programs that include, among their participants, youth with disabilities. This service is provided on an ongoing basis and is open to all of the agency's funded community-based organizations.

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