

CIDNY August 2026 Newsletter

Hello from CIDNY

Thank you for taking the time to read CIDNY's August 2026 newsletter.

If you know someone who would like to receive our email newsletter, please forward this or have them sign up here: <https://forms.office.com/r/5FCJP8Auiv>

Please note that the information in this newsletter is subject to change. If you have any questions, please call or email us. You can view this newsletter on our website at <https://www.cidny.org/cidny-quick-takes/> where you can access accessibility options such as changing font size, changing background color, and more through the Recite Me app (icon in the bottom-right corner of the CIDNY webpage).

Please Like/Follow CIDNY on social media if you have not already.

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If you would like to support CIDNY with a donation, you can do so here:
<https://www.cidny.org/donation/>

[Click here to view CIDNY's Rights and Responsibilities and Grievance Policy.](#)

CIDNY's Consumer Action Network (CAN) Meeting

Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 4 p.m. - 6p.m.

Join CIDNY's Consumer Action Network (CAN) meeting in August for a discussion on accessible transportation options and discount programs with Access-A-Ride, Reduced Fare, Fair Fares, and the Individual Disability Exemption Plan (IDEP). We will also provide one-on-one meetings in person with benefits counselors for enrollment of the programs. This event is hybrid with options to attend in-person at CIDNY's Manhattan office or online via Zoom.

If you would like to apply for any of the above transit programs, you will need to bring the following:

For any program:

- Copy of a valid government-issued photo ID (driver's license, passport, IDNYC, or state ID).

For AAR or Reduced Fare:

- Medical certification filled out and signed by a licensed physician/health care provider, or proof of receiving Medicare (non-age-based) or SSI for a serious mental illness.
- Provide a passport-type photo (1 ½" x 2") with this application. Write your name on the back of the photo and attach it where indicated on the front of this application. You are responsible for any fees for obtaining a passport photo.

For Fair Fares:

- Proof of income: Recent pay stubs, tax returns, or benefit award letters (such as cash assistance or SNAP details) showing household income guidelines.
- Proof of NYC residency: Utility bill, lease agreement, bank statement, or rent bill dated within the last 90 days.

For IDEP:

- Valid NY EZPass account.
- Access-A-Ride ID or Parking Permit for People with Disabilities (PPPD).

Please RSVP in advance at <https://www.tinyurl.com/CIDNY4All> or by emailing Mbacke Thiam at mthiam@cidny.org.

If you need accommodation like large print, American Sign Language (ASL), or materials in other languages, please let us know as soon as possible and at least two weeks in advance. For more information, please call [212-674-2300](tel:212-674-2300). Thank you!

Upcoming CIDNY and Public Information Events

Below are some upcoming CIDNY events and public events where you can speak with staff from CIDNY. Stop by and say hello to learn more about some of our programs. For all events, please visit <https://www.cidny.org/calendar>.

Career Workshops

Thursday, August 6, 2026, 3 p.m.

Thursday, August 13, 2026, 3 p.m.

Thursday, August 20, 2026, 3 p.m.

Thursday, August 27, 2026, 3 p.m.

CIDNY is offering no-cost workshops catered to people with disabilities to find employment and overcome barriers. Weekly interactive workshops will include: current job market, vocational skills, resume writing, interview preparation, mock interviews, job coaching, technology in the workplace, advocacy and reasonable accommodations/legal rights, and more.

RSVP: <https://forms.office.com/r/LXiN9bmbsq>

Settlement in Disability Advocates' Class Action Over MTA Elevators Includes Major Efforts to Improve Usability of Subway System for People with Disabilities

Great news! Regarding the latest elevator-related settlement, CIDNY's Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier said "The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) is pleased that city-wide disability advocates and their attorneys from Disability Rights Advocates were able to work with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to reach a settlement agreement in the case regarding elevator maintenance and notifications. All New Yorker should have access to transportation in New York City regardless of one's disability status. We must ensure accessible, safe, and reliable services to all riders. Public transit is a right to all residents who live or visit New York City."

You can read the full announcement below.

New York, NY—July 29, 2026—Today, a coalition of disability rights advocates announced a settlement of the long-running class action lawsuit against the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority regarding elevator outages in the New York subway system.

The settlement follows lengthy litigation in both the federal district court and court of appeals regarding what steps the MTA needs to take when elevators are out of service. **Read the settlement agreement.**

Most recently, in 2024 Judge Daniels denied Defendants' motion for summary judgment, finding that the MTA had not provided enough evidence for him to determine that its current elevator outage notifications or its training of MTA employees were enough to accommodate riders with disabilities who confront elevator outages. This settlement now resolves those issues. Among other things, the settlement requires:

Physical and digital signage, including:

- Alternate Accessible Travel Information signs posted directly on or adjacent to all Accessibility Elevators, indicating additional available routes, a QR code to the Elevator & Escalator Status Webpage, and information on how to contact a station agent for assistance.
- Real-time elevator status on digital Customer Information Center screens.
- Street-level physical signs indicating long-term elevator outage or those due to capital replacement projects at that station; and when NYCT elevator repair personnel are on site repairing a NYCT-owned and maintained elevator that is out of service for any reason.

Spoken announcements, including:

- Platform announcements every fifteen minutes indicating any long-term elevator outages (lasting 90 days or more) or those due to capital replacement projects up to one Accessible Station ahead in the direction of the trains arriving at the platform.
- On-board announcements on subway trains regarding Accessibility Elevator Outages confirmed to last longer than fourteen days at least two accessible stations ahead in the direction in which that train is travelling.

Telephone assistance, including:

- A 511 customer service phone number for information concerning Accessibility Elevator outages and accessible rerouting assistance.
- Real-time outage information on the MTA's website and mobile application regarding: (a) the status of all Accessibility Elevators at any given time; (b) all affected subway lines at the impacted station; (c) the reason for any Accessibility Elevator outage; (d) the estimated return to service time; and (e) possible alternate accessible routes from the affected Accessible Station.
- Email and text alerts advising subscribing customers of changes in the status of the customer's selected Accessibility Elevators.

The Settlement Agreement also requires Defendants to:

- Provide mandatory customer service training for all subway station agents on disability-related topics, including how to assist customers with disabilities in the event of an elevator outage, as well as mandatory annual accessibility training for all employees.
- Add information to the MTA's Elevator & Escalator Availability metrics webpage regarding all current elevator outages, including elevators out of service for capital rehabilitation work, which the MTA excludes from its metrics regarding elevator downtime and availability.
- Acknowledge customer complaints regarding Accessibility Elevator outages within one business day of receipt of the complaint, inform the complainant that the

issue has been directed to the appropriate personnel to address the elevator outage issue, and direct the complainant to real-time elevator outages information provided on the MTA's website and mobile application.

The class action lawsuit was filed in April 2017 on behalf of a coalition of disability rights organizations and individuals who use wheelchairs by Disability Rights Advocates and co-counsel Sheppard. The lawsuit targeted subway stations that have elevators and

was filed on the same day as a lawsuit targeting subway stations that did not have elevators, which led to the MTA's agreement to install elevators in 95% of subway stations.

Because it is a class action, the settlement must now be approved by Judge George B. Daniels in the Southern District of New York who has overseen the case. Plaintiffs anticipate taking the first step towards approval in the coming weeks.

"This settlement hones in on the issues that can provide immediate relief to people with disabilities trying to navigate the complex system that is the MTA while we continue to work towards 95% of stations being accessible under the first agreement," said Victoria Pilger, Staff Attorney with Disability Rights Advocates.

"We're extremely pleased that we were able to resolve this matter in a way that will substantially improve the ability for people with disabilities to use and navigate this system, and look forward to working towards official approval from the Court of this important agreement," said Dan Brown of Sheppard.

"Reliable elevator access is essential for people with disabilities to travel independently and participate fully in life across New York City. This settlement represents meaningful progress toward greater accountability and a public transportation system that people with disabilities can use with the same confidence as other riders. We are grateful to our fellow plaintiffs, attorneys, and advocates whose persistence helped make this agreement possible," said Yaw Appiadu, Executive Director of Plaintiff Harlem Independent Living Center.

"This case has had its ups and downs, but we're so pleased that all riders—disabled and everyone else—now will have a better chance of finding working elevators in the subways," said Joe Rappaport, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID), a plaintiff in the case since it was filed in 2017. "We applaud the MTA; the other plaintiffs and allies; and the attorneys representing us for their dedication in settling this crucial civil rights case."

"Bronx Independent Living Services is thrilled that we have reached a settlement with the MTA. We are grateful to all of the other plaintiffs in this case as well as our

attorneys and we look forward to what the outcome brings all individuals with disabilities,” said Brett Eisenberg, Executive Director of Plaintiff Bronx Independent Living Services.

“Disabled In Action is relieved to settle this lengthy lawsuit and we hope that it will bring meaningful elevator subway access to people with sensory and mobility disabilities. We all will need elevator access at some time in our lives,” said Jean Ryan of Plaintiff Disabled in Action.

“The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) is pleased that city-wide disability advocates and their attorneys from Disability Rights Advocates were able to work with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to reach a settlement agreement in the case regarding elevator maintenance and notifications. All New Yorker should have access to transportation in New York City regardless of one’s disability status. We must ensure accessible, safe, and reliable services to all riders. Public transit is a right to all residents who live or visit New York City,” said Sharon McLennon Wier, Ph.D., MEd., CRC, LMHC, Executive Director of Plaintiff CIDNY.

“NY StateWide Senior Action Council is pleased that some of the most vulnerable consumers, older New Yorkers and people with disabilities, were successful in having their voices heard, and were able to assert thier rights, achieving vast improvements in access to public transportation for what is now over one quarter of the city’s population,” said Maria Alvarez, Executive Director of Plaintiff NY StateWide Senior Action Council.

New CIDNY Support Groups: Family Dynamics and Support Systems Group and OVS Trauma and Regulation Support Group

CIDNY’s Family Dynamics and Support Systems Group is a group for navigating difficult family relationships and building healthier support systems. This group is for individuals struggling with family stress, boundary issues, or limited emotional support.

This group is for anyone experiencing conflict, guilt, emotional strain, or difficulty setting boundaries within family or close relationships.

What do we focus on?

- Understanding family patterns and roles
- Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries
- Managing guilt and emotional pressure
- Building stronger support systems

What can you expect?

- Guided discussions and skill-building
- Art-based reflection activities
- Practical tools for communication and boundaries
- A supportive, structured environment

Where and when is the group?

- Wednesdays, beginning July 1, 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.
- Group will be a hybrid of in-person and online
- Location: CIDNY's Manhattan Office, 1010 Avenue of The Americas, 3rd Floor, New York NY 10018 or online over video

OVS Trauma and Regulation Support Group

CIDNY's OVS Trauma and Regulation Support Group, is a supportive group is designed for individuals navigating the lasting effects of trauma, including emotional overwhelm, anxiety, shutdown, or difficulty feeling safe in relationships and daily life.

What do we focus on?

- Understanding trauma responses
- Learning grounding and coping skills
- Managing triggers and emotional activation
- Building emotional regulation and stability

What can you expect?

- Psychoeducation and practical coping tools
- Art-based and somatic exercises (no art experience is needed)
- A structured, supportive, trauma-informed space

When and where is the group?

- Thursdays, beginning July 2, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- Online over video

For more information about either group, reach out to us at info@cidny.org or 212-674-2300.

CIDNY's ADA Celebration

On July 22, CIDNY's hosted an ADA celebration to celebrate the 36th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It was great to host an event with so many community members including advocates and elected officials, and to discuss the not only the progress that we've made, but the work we still need to do. Happy birthday to the ADA!



Caption: Photo of a cake with candles spelling Happy Birthday.
(Photo credit: Krish Mandal)

You can view more photos from the event here:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DbWDOuCEnfj/>

Accessible Pedestrian Signals Town Hall

The NYC Department of Transportation is hosting two Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) town hall sessions to collect public feedback and provide an opportunity for Q&A. ASL and CART services will be provided. The next session is on Wednesday, August 5, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are devices generally attached to pedestrian signal poles to help blind and low-vision pedestrians cross the street. When someone presses the button at the crosswalk, the APS provides information using sound and vibration instead of sight. It uses beeps, spoken messages, and a vibrating button to let pedestrians know when it is safe to cross during the "Walk" signal.

You can submit questions ahead of the session by emailing APS@dot.nyc.gov.

Impacted By Extreme Weather? Share Your Story!

Have you ever been impacted by extreme weather? This year alone, New York City has faced heavy snow, flooding rains, and extreme heat. From Superstorm Sandy years ago to recent air quality alerts, extreme weather is not new to New Yorkers.

CIDNY is collecting information on how weather events and climate change is affecting the disability community. If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact Molly Senack at msenack@cidny.org or [917-415-3154](tel:917-415-3154).

Reminder: Extreme Heat Alert and Resources

This year we have seen extreme heat watches and air quality alerts issued for NYC. Even after outdoor temperatures drop, indoor environments can remain dangerously hot for up to three days. Each summer, on average, approximately 500 New Yorkers die prematurely because of hot weather. Dangerously hot weather is becoming more frequent and more severe due to climate change. Below are some tips and resources that may help during times of extreme heat.

Cooling Options:

If someone does not have access to air conditioning, they can:

- Visit someone with AC or find a free public place such as a coffee shop, library, or public atrium.
- Go to a cooling center. Cooling centers for the general public, older adults only, and people and their pets are available. Call 311 (or 212-639-9675 for Video Relay Service, or TTY: 212-504-4115) to find a cooling center or other cool option nearby at <https://finder.nyc.gov/coolingcenters/>.

Prepare for Power Outages:

Power outages can be life-threatening for those who rely on electric medical equipment such as a dialysis machine, nebulizer for asthma, an elevator for mobility issues, or medications and baby formulas that require refrigeration. Be prepared by having back-up batteries and registering your electronic medical device(s) with your utility provider to avoid interruptions in electricity access. To register your device with ConEd call: 1-800-752-6633.

To learn more about hot weather and your health, visit

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/emergency-preparedness/emergencies-extreme-weather-heat.page>

CIDNY 2026 Gala: Accessibility Transforms Lives

Join CIDNY for our 2026 Annual Gala, Accessibility Transforms Lives. For 48 years, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York has helped people with disabilities live with dignity and autonomy, last year directly serving more than 75,000 New Yorkers across all five boroughs. This year we honor Dr. Michael O'Dell for his service on CIDNY's Board, and welcome keynote speaker Jenna Bainbridge, actor and disability rights advocate, currently appearing on Broadway in Wicked. Join us for an accessible evening of connection and impact.

CIDNY's 2026 gala will take place on Monday, October 5, 2026, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC).

For more information and tickets, visit: <https://www.cidny.org/cidny2026gala/>

Wheelchair Cleaning and Maintenance Clinic

CP Unlimited is hosting its wheelchair cleaning clinic offering free cleaning, maintenance, and sanitizing for powered and non-powered wheelchairs, helping users

maintain safe, reliable mobility throughout the year. Last year's clinics supported hundreds of New Yorkers, including dozens served at community events and hundreds more through in-home repairs.

The next date is Sunday, August 16, 2026 in Brooklyn at Jewish Board (1358 56th St).

More info here: <https://www.cpunlimited.org/wheelchair-repair-and-cleaning-services/>

GABE: The Homebound Collegiate Initiative

Have you or someone you know always wished for a college education? SUNY Westchester Community College has a new service for people who are homebound because of illnesses and disabilities. It is called GABE: The Homebound Collegiate Initiative. See and hear your college professors and classmates daily as you study, learn, and participate in two-way conversations with professors and classmates, like a Zoom call. Earn a college degree.

If you are interested, please contact George Smith, MSW, at gsmith898@myyahoo.com or [9734-87-8095](tel:9734-87-8095).

SCANs Compensated Study

The folks at Northwell Health are seeking participants with an intellectual or developmental disability for a study about communicating better with your care team.

To qualify, you must have:

- Have gone to a Northwell Health facility in the last year.
- Have an intellectual or developmental disability.
- Be 18 years or older.
- Have a cell phone/tablet to use our app.
- Be able to understand English.

For participating in the study, you will receive:

- A small payment for answering questions 3 times in 1 year.
- An app that may improve your experience at doctor visits.

For more information about this study, visit

<https://redcap.northwell.edu/surveys/?s=CCNMHCJ3WDNPXHLJ> or contact
Pedsresearch@northwell.edu or 516-387-2052.

Queens Lung Screening Event

Get a lung screening on Wednesday, August 8, 2026 between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. at the Queens Borough President's Office Men's Health Fair at Roy Wilkins Park Recreation Center 177-01 Baisley Boulevard, Jamaica, Queens 11434. A lung screen is painless, safe and easy — taking less than 5 minutes. Pre-screening and appointment required. No insurance? Options are available for you.

A lung scan can show early signs of trouble with blood flow to your heart, and a low-dose CT scan can detect lung cancer before you feel sick and when it is easier to treat. Lung screening is recommended—and usually fully covered by insurance—if you meet all of these criteria:

- Age 50–80 (or 50–77 for Medicare)
- Current smoker OR quit within the last 15 years
- 20 pack-year history of smoking or more (help is available to calculate this)

Please note this is not a CIDNY run event. For more information, visit

<http://www.getcheckedny.org> or call 646-962-5864.

Accredited Continuing Education Courses For NYS Licensed Mental Health Professionals

New continuing education courses are now available! CIDNY is currently offering accredited Continuing Education (CE/CEU) courses for mental health professionals licensed in New York State (NYS). The courses, instructed by New York State licensed professionals at CIDNY, will count towards satisfying the 36-credit-hour continuing education credits that are required by the New York State Licensure Board for triannual renewal of licensure. The program currently offers accredited courses to NYS licensed practitioners holding LMSW, LCSW, LMHC designations, with selected courses available for licensed psychologists. Each course is three hours and three units.

If you or someone you know is a licensed mental health professional in New York State, please visit our website to find out more about our upcoming courses and support a non-profit organization while getting your required CE credits.

For more information and available courses, please visit: <https://www.cidny.org/ce/>

2026 NYSILC Needs Assessment Consumer Survey

NYSILC wants to hear from you! The statewide needs assessment helps us know what matters to disabled New Yorkers. Your answers tell the Independent Living Network what you need and how to improve independent living services statewide. At the end of the survey, you may enter to win one of five \$50 Amazon gift cards.

The New York State Independent Living Council, Inc. (NYSILC) is a statewide organization that develops a plan for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to serve people with disabilities in New York State. The plan is formed based on the data collected from the statewide needs assessment.

Complete the survey using this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HLPMSD6>

Jobs at CIDNY – Come Work With Us!

We have a few open jobs at CIDNY. Below is a list of our current open roles. Please visit <https://www.cidny.org/jobs/> for more information, full job descriptions, and our

most up-to-date job listings. Come join our team, help fellow New Yorkers, and get great benefits!

- Administrative Assistant
 - Benefits Counselor - Queens
 - Bilingual Mental Health Counselor
 - Director of Mental Health Services
 - Home Based Crisis Intervention (HBCI) Crisis Interventionist
 - LTCOP Ombudsman Advocate Brooklyn/Queens Nursing Homes
 - NY Connects Benefits Counselor – Bronx
 - NY Connects Benefits Counselor - Brooklyn
 - OHS Housing Specialist
 - Transition Specialist
 - Veteran Direct Care Independent Living Specialist
-

CIDNY In The News

Check out some of our recent media coverage, linked below. You can always see CIDNY in the news stories at <https://www.cidny.org/media-coverage>.

- MTA settles lawsuit with disabled New Yorkers, commits to better access, working elevators (NY Daily News)
- MTA settles suit to make subway elevators more reliable (Gothamist)
- MTA Settles With Disability Advocates as Subway Elevators Improve (The City Reporter)
- Arming social workers with panic buttons for home visits (The Capitol Pressroom)
- How much progress has been made in the disability rights movement? (Caribbean Life)
- Faster buses, more reduced fares goal of New York city, state agreements (Smart Cities Dive)
- Department of Justice Memo sparks backlash from Bronx elected officials and disability advocacy groups (Bronx Times)
- Your go-to guide for voting in New York's 2026 primaries (Epicenter NYC)
- Disaster Preparedness (Still) Isn't Accessible in Rural America (Disabled Journalists Association)