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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND NYCEDC LAUNCH SIXTH ANNUAL NYC BIGAPPS COMPETITION —
CHALLENGING NYC’S TECH INNOVATORS TO FIND LASTING SOLUTIONS TO FOUR OF
THE CITY’S MOST PRESSING ISSUES**

NYC BigApps 2015 Will Address Challenges Identified in Mayor’s OneNYC Plan: Affordable Housing, Zero Waste, Connected Cities and Civic Engagement

Microsoft, AOL and More Than Two Dozen Tech and Civic Partners to Support Civic Tech Innovators with Prizes and In-Kind Support

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Economic Development Corporation announced the launch of NYC BigApps 2015, the City’s annual contest for all members of the tech and civic ecosystems to create web or mobile apps, devices, platforms and other technology products to address pressing City challenges. NYC BigApps 2015 asks entrants to make the City a better place for all New Yorkers by addressing four issues identified in Mayor de Blasio’s *One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City*: Affordable Housing, Zero Waste, Connected Cities and Civic Engagement.

Teams are encouraged to submit mobile and web apps, connected devices, platforms, games and other technology products that address these challenges, catalyzing collaboration between multidisciplinary teams of programmers, engineers, designers, marketers, entrepreneurs and civic professionals. Five winning teams, one from each category and a wildcard team, will receive cash prizes totaling more than \$125,000, as well as in-kind prizes and opportunities to collaborate with public and private partners to implement their products. Official competition rules, as well as additional information and updates, can be found on the competition website: www.NYCBigApps.com.

“BigApps is such an exciting challenge – it’s a collaborative effort between government and the tech community that takes immense amounts of data, combines it with bright talent and dedicated minds, and results in boundless innovation, creativity, and smart new ideas that help solve some of our most pressing problems,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “I can’t wait to see the sharp and innovative solutions our contestants come up with for these challenges, which address issues identified in OneNYC – our comprehensive plan for a strong, equitable, sustainable, and resilient city. Just like OneNYC, BigApps is an ambitious, forward-looking effort that requires collaboration and innovation to succeed.”

“New York City is the global capital of innovation, and technology is a core component of that story as we turn the page to the next chapter of our economic history,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen**. “We are leaders in the ‘hyphen-tech’ economy: fin-tech, bio-tech, fashion-tech, media-tech, and manufacturing-tech, to name a few. The BigApps Competition allows us to add civic-tech to that list, empowering the sharpest minds to solve our city’s toughest challenges with the power of technology, data, and collaboration.”

“For the last several years, NYC BigApps has unleashed the power of New York City’s tech ecosystem to make the City a better place for New Yorkers,” said **NYCEDC Interim President Kim Vaccari**. “Now in its sixth year, BigApps will build upon that success, leveraging the ingenuity and diversity of our City to solve some of

the great civic challenges facing us today, while making New York City a more sustainable and equitable place. I look forward to the innovative and inspiring solutions that will be developed in the coming weeks and months.”

“BigApps 2015 is an opportunity for the best and brightest in New York City’s tech community to partner with the City to make it a better place for everyone,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “Because the Council is committed to advancing participatory budgeting through inclusive technology, we are especially thrilled about the civic engagement challenge this year and look forward to the possibilities this competition will generate for furthering democracy. I wish good luck to all of this year’s participants, and look forward to seeing great work that will make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers.”

OneNYC is the City’s comprehensive plan for a strong, equitable, sustainable, and resilient city, building on prior long-term plans and setting measurable goals for tackling core challenges in the coming years. This year’s NYC BigApps challenges address four goals that were identified in OneNYC:

Affordable Housing: Expand access to affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

Zero Waste: Equip New Yorkers with new tools to reduce waste at home and work, to help reach the City’s goal of zero waste sent to landfills by 2030.

Connected Cities: Use tech to improve the way we measure, map and manage New York City.

Civic Engagement: Develop a 21st Century model for civic engagement.

NYC BigApps 2015 officially began accepting submissions last night at a launch event at the headquarters of Civic Hall, located in Manhattan’s Flatiron District, where prospective contestants were able to connect, network and begin to collaborate on their projects.

NYC BigApps is open to individuals, companies and nonprofits. Submissions are due in mid-October. Following submission, a panel of BigApps evaluators will choose up to 20 finalists, who will have an opportunity to refine their products in advance of a judging event and final Award Ceremony in December. To assist teams, the competition provides access to more than 1,000 public data sets [on the NYC OpenData Portal](#), as well as data and APIs from dozens of private and academic partners.

In addition, each challenge category is being supported by a group of City agencies, civic organizations, and companies that will help teams ideate, design and build their products by hosting mentor office hours, events and tours. Participants will also have access to competition-wide events throughout August and September designed to encourage team formation and product development.

“The Mayor’s Office of Tech & Innovation is super-excited to present the first-ever BigApps challenge focused on the Internet of Things, a key component of the Smart City. New York City has the most diverse and vibrant urban landscape in the world, so the opportunity to leverage connected devices to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers is virtually unlimited,” said **Minerva Tantoco, Chief Technology Officer for the City of New York**. “We’re looking forward to seeing what creative people come up with around the connected self, connected city, and connected community.”

“When we helped launch NYC BigApps six years ago we envisioned a new level of engagement with the City’s burgeoning tech community,” said **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Commissioner Anne Roest**. “That it has grown into an engine for the development of solutions to significantly improve New Yorkers’ lives speaks to the best of what civic tech can offer.”

“I’m excited to be a part of this year’s BigApps competition,” said **Council Member James Vacca, Chair of the Committee on Technology**. “This competition brings the best and the brightest tech minds in our city to

come together and find innovative ways to solve the issues facing our city. When I participated last year, I was impressed to see such inventive ideas, and I expect this year's participants to up the ante!"

"This is a wonderful and exciting challenge, and highlights the importance of tech innovation to our city and to Staten Island. On a borough level, we see tech innovation as a driving force in our efforts to transform our North Shore into a vibrant hub of technology, entertainment, culture and tourism. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and his entire team for their work in crafting NYC BigApps 2015, and look forward to the innovative solutions that the best minds in this city can come up with...because in my opinion, the best minds in this city are the best minds in the world," said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**.

"Innovation is the key to growth, and this contest is a great way to showcase our New York City's place in the world as a leader in technology while also finding new solutions to longstanding issues faced by our city. I look forward to seeing what will certainly be many great entries in the BigApps competition, and I urge Bronx app developers to get involved in this contest," said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

"Open data is fuel for progress," said **John Paul Farmer, Microsoft's Director of Technology & Civic Innovation**. "Since its founding in 2009, NYC BigApps has shown an ability to catalyze innovators to use open data to solve real-world problems. These are problem-solvers hailing from all backgrounds and all boroughs. Microsoft is excited to once again partner with the New York City Economic Development Corporation to provide technologies and expertise to ensure that this year's BigApps is the most impactful yet."

"AOL is proud to call New York City home and we are thrilled to be a part of this year's competition," said **William Pence, Chief Technology Officer of AOL Inc.** "BigApps is the perfect example of our great city's potential for innovation and collaboration, and we are excited to work with the brightest tech talent New York City has to offer to find solutions to our communities' most pressing challenges."

"We are excited to partner with BigApps again this year to help kick off the 2015 competition. Over the years, this event has become a testament to the tech community's efforts to tackle some of New York's biggest challenges, as well as the City's support of the larger New York tech ecosystem," said **Serkan Piantino, Site Director of Facebook NY**. "I hope the BigApps teams get to experience what it's like to have thousands or maybe millions of people use their creations and find value in them. That is a truly rewarding and addictive experience."

NYC BigApps 2015 is administered by HR&A Advisors, Inc., in partnership with SUPER VISION, Supercharger Studio, Savvy Strategy, and Civic Hall, and supported by a broad array of program partners and sponsors, including:

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Originally launched in 2009, NYC BigApps has helped create over 500 apps and other tech products, and has engaged more than 500,000 New Yorkers. Last year's competition awarded seven grand prizes; winners included Heat Seek NYC, an Internet of Things technology that allows New York City tenants to track and report heating violations in their apartments, and Mind My Business, a web and mobile app that keeps small businesses updated about local happenings in their communities. Both products remain in development, and teams continue to work with New York City officials to integrate the technology with public data and services.

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