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**MAYOR ADAMS, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER FRASER
ANNOUNCE NATION'S LARGEST FREE MUNICIPAL BROADBAND PROGRAM
FOR NYCHA RESIDENTS**

'Big Apple Connect' Provides Free, In-Home, High-Speed Internet and Basic Cable to More Than 100 NYCHA Developments, Will Increase to More Than 200 Developments by End of 2023

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Matthew Fraser today announced the citywide launch of 'Big Apple Connect' — a landmark digital equity program that will make free high-speed internet and basic cable TV available to approximately 300,000 New Yorkers living in more than 200 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments by the end of 2023. Mayor Adams and CTO Fraser announced the program — initially piloted at eight public housing developments across the five boroughs, and which has now been expanded to more than 100 developments — at NYCHA's Langston Hughes Houses in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

"A 21st-century city like New York deserves 21st-century infrastructure, and, today, we continue our quest to bridge the digital divide with the landmark rollout of 'Big Apple Connect,'" said **Mayor Adams**. "For too long, lower-income communities, immigrant communities, and communities of color have been ignored when it comes to accessing the critical digital tools to help them succeed. Broadband is no longer a luxury, but a necessity that all New Yorkers should have access to. That's why by the end of next year, more than 200 NYCHA developments will have access to the free high-speed internet and cable TV — giving approximately 300,000 New Yorkers access to the essential tools to live productive lives. Something as simple as providing free, accessible Wi-Fi can change the life of a New Yorker, and 'Big Apple Connect' will link our city to the future."

"Big Apple Connect is an innovative program that will enhance the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers living in public housing by providing them access to necessary broadband," said **First Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo**. "I congratulate Chief Technology Officer Matt Fraser and all of our partners in the administration on achieving this milestone today to address the digital divide."

“‘Big Apple Connect’ is a game-changer for today’s New Yorkers living in public housing on par with the advent of utilities like heat or hot water,” said **CTO and Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) Commissioner Matthew Fraser**. “This citywide broadband initiative ensures that New Yorkers need not defer their dreams — or fail to meet basic needs — because they lack the resources to pay for internet or live in a pre-war building. Our city’s students, senior citizens, parents, and job seekers who need in-home, high-speed internet access the most will experience tangible day one benefits that enrich their lives for years to come. ‘Big Apple Connect’ stands as a testament to New York City’s national leadership in promoting digital equity under Mayor Adams.”

“The launch of Big Apple Connect represents the most significant investment to date in modernizing the Authority’s broadband infrastructure for the 21st century,” said **Interim NYCHA CEO Lisa Bova-Hiatt**. “The high-quality internet service enabled through this program will help ensure that young people have access to online educational instruction, working parents have access to vital career opportunities, and senior residents can continue to engage with their loved ones. We commend the mayor and the Office of Technology and Innovation for their continued investments in increasing digital equity for public housing residents and look forward to implementing this initiative across NYCHA campuses citywide.”

“In 2022, in the wealthiest city in the country, no one should go without access to the internet. It is vital to our daily lives, to succeeding in school and in work, and is how we stay connected as a society, which is why ‘Big Apple Connect’ is so exciting,” said **Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz**. “Bridging the digital divide is at the heart of building a more equitable city, and I want to thank Chief Technology Officer Fraser for putting NYCHA residents at the heart of this effort.”

Big Apple Connect will provide residents of NYCHA developments a free bundle that consists of in-home, high-speed internet connection, including a modem and router; basic cable TV service, including a cable box and remote control; and common area Wi-Fi hotspots, selected in consultation with NYCHA.

After requesting proposals earlier this year from existing New York City cable TV franchisees, the city entered into three-year agreements with Altice (Optimum) and Charter (Spectrum), which will collectively cover the majority of developments owned and managed by NYCHA. The city is continuing to negotiate with Verizon as a possible third franchisee. OTI will be billed directly for all residents enrolled in ‘Big Apple Connect’ for the three-year term.

NYCHA residents will not be billed anything for these services. Existing customers of Optimum and Spectrum living in NYCHA developments where ‘Big Apple Connect’ is active will be automatically enrolled in the program and will only be billed for additional services they choose to purchase directly. Residents will receive email notifications and mailers explaining why their bills were lowered, as well as information on ‘Big Apple Connect.’ Residents without existing service will have the opportunity to sign up directly through Spectrum or Optimum or may attend on-site enrollment events conducted by the companies in partnership with OTI.

An estimated 30 to 40 percent of NYCHA residents lack broadband, according to cable service providers. Once its rollout is complete, ‘Big Apple Connect’ is projected to be the largest

municipal program to cover the cost of internet for public housing residents in the nation. NYCHA residents enrolled in 'Big Apple Connect' will also be able to use the federal Affordable Connectivity Program benefit to save money on their cell phone bills. The Affordable Connectivity Program provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet or cellular data service for eligible households and is limited to one monthly service discount per month.

The site of Mayor Adams' announcement today — Langston Hughes Houses — has served as one of eight select pilot sites, where best practices on community engagement and promotion were assessed. Since the pilot's debut last month at Langston Hughes, more than 200 existing customers of Optimum have been automatically converted and 120 new subscribers have been added. Nearly 350 Langston Hughes units — or approximately two-thirds of households at the development — are already enrolled in Big Apple Connect.

In addition to the Langston Hughes Houses in Brooklyn, the other pilot sites in the five boroughs included:

- Bronx: Mott Haven Houses
- Bronx: Patterson Houses
- Brooklyn: Brownsville Houses
- Manhattan: Polo Grounds Towers
- Queens: Queensbridge Houses
- Queens: Woodside Houses
- Staten Island: Stapleton Houses

Information about current and future eligible NYCHA sites will be available on [OTI's 'Big Apple Connect' website](#).

“This program is wonderful,” said **Ciprian Noel, tenant association president, Langston Hughes Houses**. “As a single father of two kids in college, it helps me save money and provides essential internet service in my home. I encourage more NYCHA residents to sign up for Big Apple Connect because it helps us connect with people. I am grateful to Mayor Adams and CTO Fraser for thinking about the residents of Langston Hughes as they implemented this program.”

“Charter is pleased to join with Mayor Adams and his administration to deliver vitally needed broadband through ‘Big Apple Connect,’” said **Camille Joseph-Goldman, vice president, Charter**. “Mayor Adams’ commitment to creating this powerful public-private partnership will bring fast, reliable broadband, in-home WiFi, and TV service to tens of thousands of families in Housing Authority properties across the city — enabling residents to participate fully in today’s digital world for work, learning, entertainment, and staying connected.”

“Optimum is proud to be a founding partner of ‘Big Apple Connect,’ and we thank Mayor Eric Adams and CTO Matthew Fraser for their leadership and vision in championing this program and sharing our collective commitment to digital equity,” said **Matt Grover, executive vice president of consumer and business services, Optimum**. “Bringing high-speed Optimum internet and TV service to NYCHA residents at no charge represents a huge step forward in helping to bridge the digital divide and ensuring that all of New York City is connected. Through ‘Big Apple Connect,’ we have already connected thousands of residents, bringing new

households online for the first time and making services more affordable for all residents, and we look forward to Optimum's expansion of 'Big Apple Connect' to more NYCHA developments."

"From schoolwork to employment, telehealth, and social services, New Yorkers rely on access to the internet in invaluable ways every day," said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. "Far too many NYCHA residents, however, face tremendous barriers to high-speed, reliable internet and lose out on these benefits. Internet today is an essential resource, and inequities in access translate into inequities in everything from health care to education, to job opportunities, support services, and beyond. I commend Mayor Adams for beginning the process of addressing this disparity with free internet and cable TV for an increasing number of NYCHA residents throughout the year."

"The pandemic has amplified our city's need for digital connectivity," said **New York City Councilmember Julie Won**. "Wi-Fi has become essential to our daily lives to apply to government benefits, participate in remote learning, competing in the digital market, and staying connected to our loved ones. Our NYCHA neighbors who are at the highest risk of being disconnected due to high prices of internet, can now be guaranteed free connectivity for their cable TV, home internet, and cell service through the Big Apple Connect and ACP. This summer, I registered all three NYCHAs in my district for the ACP to ensure that our students will be connected prior to the new school year and am happy to have the Big Apple Connect Queens pilots at Queensbridge houses and Woodside Houses to make it even easier to receive government support for Wi-Fi. Big Apple Connect brings us one step closer to treating Wi-Fi as a utility instead of a luxury."

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