

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: NEW YORK CITY ANNOUNCES FREE AND  
LOW-COST BROADBAND ACCESS FOR 13 NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS,  
SERVING UP TO 30,000 RESIDENTS**

*Five vendors have signed agreements to offer high-speed internet access for up to 30,000 residents in 13 NYCHA developments, a major milestone in the City's implementation of the Internet Master Plan for Universal Broadband*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a major milestone in the City's effort to bring new internet connectivity options to residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and to create a shift in the local broadband market. As part of New York City's implementation of the Internet Master Plan for Universal Broadband, the City has executed license agreements with five internet service providers to offer high-speed internet access for up to 30,000 residents in 13 NYCHA developments. NYCHA is currently in the process of finalizing an agreement with a sixth internet service provider.

The five vendors with executed license agreements -- Starry, Sky Packets, Silicon Harlem, Flume, and NYC Mesh -- are finalists selected from the City's Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) issued in partnership with the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in June 2020. Three developments selected through this process will receive free WiFi on public grounds, while the remaining 10 developments will be wired for affordable in-unit internet access. This effort is part of the Mayor's commitment to extend broadband to New Yorkers in the hardest-hit communities identified by the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity.

"In this day and age, high-quality internet service is a necessity, not a luxury," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "By investing in broadband infrastructure, we drive forward a recovery for all of us—both by delivering much needed resources to NYCHA families and making significant progress on our commitment to close the city's digital divide."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the way we work, learn and connect to resources, and universal broadband access is essential for communities of color that were hardest-hit by COVID-19 to build back stronger," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "This historic investment will open the door for industry leaders to deliver innovative technology solutions that end the digital divide and ensure a fair recovery for all."

"Affordable broadband is critical for 21st century life," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**. "The Internet connects millions of New Yorkers to work,

education, healthcare, family and more. I'm thrilled these partnerships will bring high-speed connectivity to 30,000 NYCHA residents as we implement our nation-leading Internet Master Plan."

"A 21st century recovery for all of us means increasing access to critical infrastructure like broadband," said **Deputy Mayor Vicki Been**. "For too long, the digital divide has prevented many New Yorkers—including families, students, and seniors—from accessing the Internet where they live. The Internet Master Plan is our boldest investment in universal broadband to date, and I'm thrilled we've partnered with these providers to speed up access to this vital resource for 30,000 NYCHA residents."

"We have witnessed how transformational internet connectivity can be to the lives of New Yorkers. Now, 30,000 more NYCHA residents are gaining affordable broadband options through the City's bold and innovative approach. The Internet Master Plan is changing lives for the better by making education, opportunity, and healthcare more accessible. In addition, broadband creates opportunities to strengthen bonds with family, friends, and community," said **New York City Chief Technology Officer John Paul Farmer**. "Building on this notable progress, the City will continue to facilitate partnerships with internet service providers that share the goal of affordable, high-speed internet for all New Yorkers."

"New York City is closer to achieving its goal of becoming a fairer and equitable city with launching the Internet Master Plan for Universal Broadband," said **NYCEDC Acting President Rachel Loeb**. "Through this Master Plan, five vendors will provide access to affordable, high-speed internet options for 30,000 NYCHA residents. We're thrilled the City has reached a milestone to close the digital divide, which for too long has had a disproportionate impact in communities that need it the most."

"The Authority is committed to expanding the quality of internet service options available to our residents by leveraging emerging technologies and identifying innovative partnership opportunities," said **NYCHA Chair & CEO Greg Russ**. "We want to thank the City, MOCTO, and NYCEDC for working with us on this important milestone of making high-speed broadband service more accessible to public housing residents across New York City."

"Digital equity must be a priority and this initiative demonstrates our commitment to ending the divide. Free and low cost broadband access is crucial for NYCHA residents and communities of color to have equitable access to work, learning, healthcare, government services and other essential resources," said **Sideya Sherman, Executive Director of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity and EVP for Community Engagement and Partnerships, NYCHA**. "This gap existed before the pandemic and is even more critical now. This unprecedented investment, which accelerates the Internet Master Plan, demonstrates how the City can work creatively, across government, to meet the moment."

**About the RFEI**

This RFEI offered a unique opportunity for internet service providers, both large and small, to propose their plans and partnership ideas to use new access to NYCHA buildings and facilities to rapidly close the digital divide for this slice of New Yorkers. Respondents proved the City's theory: that when the City offers new assets -- including building common areas, facades, rooftops, light poles, and other physical structures that can be used for broadband installation -- a diverse set of companies will enter the market with lower cost service options that present competition to the large companies offering limited high-quality service options to New Yorkers. These new companies prove that you can bring new connectivity options to public housing communities and to low-connectivity neighborhoods to close the digital divide.

In the target neighborhoods, internet service providers charge anywhere from \$40/month to \$110/month. With this RFEI, vendors will provide free or low-cost internet service residents can sign up for no more than \$20/month.

"Today, broadband is an essential service. We at NYC Mesh are committed to working with the City and NYCHA to ensure universal and equitable internet access for all New Yorkers," said the **NYC Mesh organizers**. "We believe every community should have the opportunity and resources to own and manage their connection online, and look forward to scaling this collaboration -- already benefiting NYCHA residents -- to ensure our city's digital future benefits all people."

"Silicon Harlem applauds New York City for taking a bold Broadband commitment to ensure everyone is connected. We must continue to break down barriers to broadband access for lower income communities, knowing that doing so will enable multiple generations of all New Yorkers to become more fully engaged in the world," said **Clayton Banks, Chief Executive Officer for Silicon Harlem**. "Silicon Harlem is thrilled to provide new and innovative ways to deliver the internet to every home without having cost being a barrier. The RFEI creates an unprecedented opportunity for New York City to be the gateway to greater opportunity for all."

"Flume is honored to bring our fiber-to-the-home deployment to over 6,000 NYCHA homes as part of this RFEI," said **Prashanth Vijay, CEO of Flume**. "We believe high quality, low cost fiber broadband should be a right enjoyed by all New Yorkers and our mission is to accelerate towards that goal. We hope this project serves as an inspiration to other private-public partnerships and connectivity investment in affordable housing."

"Amid COVID-19, having broadband access that you can trust was a social determinant of good health and synonymous with economic stability," said **Henry Quintin, CEO of Sky Packets**. "Sky Packets managed Wi-Fi solutions serve as a catalyst in closing the digital divide. From virtual learning, streaming, and remote work, we are proud to partner with local community advocates The Red Hook Initiative, NYCHA, NYCEDC, and the Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Office to offer a much-needed utility to the residents of Red Hook, Brooklyn."

“Starry is proud to partner with the City of New York and the Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer to bring our high-quality, affordable broadband service to NYCHA residents,” said **Virginia Lam Abrams, Head of Government Affairs and Strategic Advancement for Starry**. “Broadband is more essential than ever, and every New Yorker deserves the ability to fully participate and engage in digital life – for work, for school and to connect with family and friends. But that can’t happen if the cost of broadband access is out of reach. We’re excited to bring our digital equity program, Starry Connect, to NYCHA and provide an ultra-low-cost broadband choice for residents, without credit checks or other eligibility strings attached. We thank Mayor de Blasio, CTO John Paul Farmer and the MOCTO staff for its work on this important pilot program and look forward to launching our service to NYCHA families.”

### **About the Internet Master Plan**

In January 2020, the City announced the New York City Internet Master Plan, a first-in-nation plan that provides the roadmap to universal broadband in New York City, and the steps the City will take to close the digital divide. Providing equitable broadband is vital to ensuring economic prosperity, digital inclusion, and full participation of all New Yorkers in the digital economy. Universal broadband will also pave the way for next generation technologies such as 5G to be fully accessible to all New Yorkers.

“Ensuring high speed and affordable Internet access is a critical component in our ability to fully reopening our city and helping families and communities build back stronger than before,” said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat**. “I commend Mayor de Blasio and city leaders who worked to make this effort a reality to ensure free and affordable access for more than 30,000 NYCHA residents, and thus ensure that no child, senior or family has to forego reliable Internet access because of their economic situation or background.”

“In the 21st century economy, having access to high-speed broadband internet isn’t frivolous: it’s an imperative. Delivering reliable internet service ensures that our children can access educational resources, that families and friends can stay connected to one another, that New Yorkers can receive healthcare resources and much more,” said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. “Without broadband access, New Yorkers are deprived of the tools they need to succeed. That’s why the investment promised by the Internet Master Plan—which will deliver that access to tens of thousands of NYCHA residents—has the potential to change lives. I’m thrilled for the many New Yorkers who will receive high-quality internet service and equally excited for the benefits our city will reap as we take this bold step to end the digital divide.”

“I applaud the Administration for expanding broadband to more NYCHA residents. As the pandemic has shown in stark terms, access to the Internet is critical for learning, working, socializing, and so much more. A 21st century city deserves a 21st century infrastructure, and we must be laser-focused on delivering universal broadband to all five boroughs and closing the digital divide as soon as possible,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

“Broadband has been a significant lifeline for so many as we have seen during the pandemic, providing opportunities for education and job training and access to lifesaving information.

While we have more to do to ensure universal broadband access, this is a big step and a significant investment towards filling the digital divide for NYCHA residents, making the Internet more accessible for all, and leading the way towards becoming a more connected city,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**.

“I am excited to see the city make progress to close the digital divide and advocate for digital inclusion with the Internet Master Plan for Universal Broadband. The pandemic has exposed many inequities—one of them being access to a reliable internet connection. The Bronx has the lowest broadband adoption rate in the city with 38% of residents without a home internet connection. These disparities are especially evident in low-income areas where many people are still struggling with internet connectivity for work, school, or just to access important documents and applications often found online. I applaud the Mayor for this effort that will help many of my constituents in the Bronx and throughout New York City,” said **Senator Luis Sepulveda**.

"Connectivity is required to fully participate in modern society. Especially during this COVID-19 crisis, education and life-saving information were best accessed via the internet. It is not too late to close the divide in this critical infrastructure and 30,000 residents is an exemplary start," said **Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Chair of the Public Housing Committee**.

"This is welcomed news, as the first tangible step in bridging the digital divide in the City of New York," said **Council Member Robert Holden, Chair of the Council's Committee on Technology**. "Connecting NYCHA residents to high-speed internet will help make many New Yorkers' lives easier and more productive, especially our children. Every student's potential should be based on how hard they work, not where they live. Our young people are our city's most precious resource, and they need all the help we can give them as we recover from this pandemic."

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