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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES COVID-19 HEAT WAVE PLAN TO PROTECT
VULNERABLE NEW YORKERS**

City will provide over 74,000 air conditioners to low-income seniors and modify cooling centers for social distancing requirements; City urges Public Service Commission to provide further cooling assistance to vulnerable New Yorkers

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced a COVID-19 Heat Wave Plan to keep vulnerable New Yorkers cool and safe at home, create safer summer cooling options and prevent and respond to power outages.

“This summer will be unlike any that New York City has seen before,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “As the temperature rises, we must protect our most vulnerable from the dangers of extreme heat. We're providing tens of thousands of free air conditioners to low-income seniors and creating brand new spaces, both indoor and out, for New Yorkers to keep cool and stay safe.”

Vulnerable New Yorkers: Cool and Safe At Home

Every year, hot summers cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat-stroke – all outcomes that disproportionately impact older adults and vulnerable populations. The City is creating a \$55 million program to provide over 74,000 air conditioners to New Yorkers who are 60 years old and older and have income below 60 percent of the state median income, and do not have air conditioning at home.

Eligible New Yorkers will be identified by NYCHA, DFTA, HRA and HPD, and city case managers will reach out directly to income-eligible seniors. Approximately 22,000 of these air conditioners will go to NYCHA residents, and installations for these air conditioners will begin next week. The City is providing \$35 million in funding, including \$10 million from NYCHA, and the City thanks NYSERDA for committing another \$20 million.

The City is also petitioning the Public Service Commission (PSC) for \$72 million to help pay the utility bills for 450,000 vulnerable New Yorkers so they can afford to run their ACs and keep cool. The program would ensure that vulnerable New Yorkers can afford to use their air conditioners and protect families from preventable heat-related illness and death, including relief for COVID-19-discharged patients at greatest risk and NYCHA residents paying their own energy bills. As more families experience economic insecurity due to COVID-19, they may not be able to prioritize an air conditioner purchase or the corresponding utility bills, thereby increasing the risk of heat illness and death and compounding inequitable impacts of COVID-19.

Through the CARES Act, the Federal Government also allocated an additional \$900 million in funding for the nationwide Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The City is advocating for the State to allocate the use of its share in winter heating subsidy funds from the federal CARES Act for summer utility bill relief.

Creating Safe Summer Cooling Options

The City is identifying existing facilities that can be used as key cooling centers in high-risk communities, planning appropriate social distancing and providing personal protective equipment (PPE). The City is also looking to create non-traditional cooling centers in alternative sites, from sports venues and auditoriums to other large venues. During extreme heat waves, special non-congregate cooling centers and transportation will be made available for vulnerable New Yorkers who cannot stay cool at home and who are at high COVID-19 complication risk.

NYC Parks is also mapping spray showers with income inequality data to site alternative spray showers for kids and active New Yorkers, and will use misting equipment in sitting areas to create “oases” during extreme heat events. In addition, DEP is creating a plan for scheduled hydrant openings to ensure fairness and minimize strain on the water system. The GetFood meal program for vulnerable New Yorkers will also be delivering hydrating beverages with meal packages.

Preventing And Responding to Power Outages

Power outages occur most often during the summer months when power usage is at its peak. The City is in frequent communication with utility providers and will pre-stage generators across the city for rapid deployment if needed.

The City will also use hotels instead of congregate spaces for emergency shelter during prolonged outages and establish buses with proper PPE and social distance for emergency cooling during short outages.

The City is also identifying facilities with vulnerable populations for potential mitigation efforts, including adult care facilities and nursing homes. The City encourages New York State to mandate generator hookups at adult care facilities and communicate with nursing homes on critical preventative maintenance.

“Across the city, we are preparing for an unprecedented summer with a series of smart initiatives and adapted cooling strategies to match the situation we are in. We’ve built a brand new program to give out tens of thousands of air conditioners to the most vulnerable New Yorkers, and we’re making sure our cooling centers and outdoor spaces are ready for the New Yorkers who need them to stay cool - and safe,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**.

“As the COVID-19 response efforts continue, we remain mindful of the risks hazards like extreme heat can pose. The safety of our most vulnerable populations is of the utmost importance, and we are working closely with our local, state, federal, and private partners to adapt our plans to integrate new strategies like in-house cooling and social distancing into our emergency response,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell**.

“This crisis has shone a light on our ability to come together to ensure that those in need are taken care of,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “This heat plan prepares us to equitably address the impacts that climate change will have on us this summer, so that our city’s underserved will have some relief amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.” “Heat-related illness and death inequitably impact Black and Brown New Yorkers and our lowest-income communities,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “This initiative will save lives. Using air conditioning, even just for a few hours, can make all the difference. And as more people stay home through the COVID-19 crisis, we encourage New Yorkers to Be a Buddy, remotely check in on older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.”

“Older New Yorkers are especially vulnerable to the risk hazards of high temperatures and heat waves. This plan enables us to protect our most vulnerable older adults, from COVID-19 and heat hazards. We thank Mayor de Blasio’s leadership and all city agencies who are working together to protect and help our most vulnerable,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine A. Cortés-Vázquez**.

“As we continue to fight the spread of COVID-19, NYCHA and the City of New York are working to protect our most vulnerable residents. NYCHA is investing \$10 million to purchase and install air conditioning units for our seniors as a testament to our commitment, and we are grateful to Mayor de Blasio, NYSEERDA and Con Edison, who have come forward with resources to ensure our residents remain healthy and safe in the coming months,” said **Greg Russ, chairman and CEO of the New York City Housing Authority**.

“As the summer months quickly approach, the Human Resources Administration and the City of New York are committed to providing our most vulnerable residents with the resources and services they need to stay cool, safe, and healthy,” said **HRA Administrator Grace Bonilla**. “This innovative cooling plan highlights the best of local government, bringing together agencies from across the City to ensure that New Yorkers in need have a safe respite from the warmer weather ahead.”

“Protecting public health during the summer months will require providing ways for New Yorkers to safely stay cool while also maintaining adequate water pressure in the distribution system for our hospitals and fire fighters,” said **Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “Spray caps, which are available at all fire houses, allow for the safe use of fire hydrants as a way to stay cool and beat the heat.”

“Combatting climate change is intrinsically connected to combatting social inequality and confronting our recovery from Covid-19 as a community,” said **Mark Chambers, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**. “This requires us to be vigilant in ensuring all New Yorkers are protected from climate impacts like extreme heat as we transition out of the pandemic and recommit ourselves to a recovery that confronts the climate emergency.”

“We refuse to let the low-income communities and communities of color that have already been ravaged by COVID-19 suffer preventable deaths caused by extreme heat. This program will help protect vulnerable New Yorkers by keeping them safe and cool in their homes,” said **Jainey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Resiliency**. “In-home cooling is critical given that

New York State has again extended its PAUSE order, limiting access to the public spaces that typically provide relief from summertime heat."

"As we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that the most vulnerable New Yorkers remain safe and secure in their homes. The team at HPD will be conducting outreach to help at-risk households access the resources they need in order to be protected from extreme heat," said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. "I applaud the Mayor for his leadership throughout this crisis, and thank the everyday heroes across the city for pulling together to help those in need."

"As the summer months rapidly approach, we must have a comprehensive strategy for ensuring residents in low-income areas can remain safe and comfortable. This cooling plan is an important step to ensure we're prepared for heat waves while we continue to battle COVID-19. The summer is also a period where we see gun violence spike, which is why I've engaged with Cure Violence organizations throughout the borough to ensure we have a plan in place to ensure local youth also have opportunities to cool off. The coronavirus crisis did not place other crises throughout our city on hold, which is why we must employ a multi-pronged approach to keep New Yorkers safe and healthy during this challenging time," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"As we enter the summer months, it is critical that we develop new ways to keep seniors and vulnerable New Yorkers cool while also protecting public health. Traditional cooling centers that so many rely on will not be able to function as usual and I commend the city's response to provide AC units directly to those in need," said **Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair to the Assembly Social Services Committee**.

"The communities ravaged by COVID19 are the same communities most vulnerable to extreme heat. I am relieved that the mayor is taking action to ensure that our most vulnerable New Yorkers – those who are sick, elderly, and low-income – are protected, and to make sure we don't see an even greater loss of life this summer. The mayor understands this means not only about stockpiling AC units, but ensuring our power grid is equipped to manage the increased demand while the city continues to stay-at-home. Efforts like these demonstrate the type of leadership that's needed to both ensure we make it out of this public health crisis, and to adapt to the effects of climate change as we move forward," said **Council Member Justin Brannan, Chair of the NYC Council Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts**.

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