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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 2, 2021
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: NYC SECURE APP ADDS PHISHING DETECTION, GIVING ALL NEW YORKERS MORE PROTECTION ONLINE

NEW YORK – In New York City's continuing effort to keep New Yorkers safe in their digital lives and ensure we can securely rebuild our economy, Mayor de Blasio announced today the newest upgrade of the NYC Secure mobile app, which now guards against criminals who try to steal New Yorker's personal information via "phishing" attacks.

"Online commerce and communication has become a vital lifeline for so many during the pandemic," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio.** "With this upgrade, we're continuing our commitment to the safety of New Yorkers beyond the City streets and into their digital lives."

"Not only was New York City the first city in the world to provide such services to all residents and visitors free of charge, but we did it in a way that reflects our values—putting user privacy at the forefront," said **Laura Anglin, Deputy Mayor for Operations**. "More than one in five data breaches last year involved phishing. These upgrades will help our City, our residents and our businesses by avoiding attacks that could jeopardize their finances, livelihoods, or personal safety."

"New York City is democratizing cybersecurity with our NYC Secure program," said **Geoff Brown, Chief Information Security Officer for the City of New York**. "This is an equity issue: without NYC Secure, many would not be able to access enterprise grade cyber-defenses."

Phishing scams attempt to trick individuals into giving up sensitive information (like passwords, personal or account information), by appearing to be legitimate requests from trusted sources. As the COVID crisis unfolded across the globe, mobile phishing attempts have grown substantially.

NYC Secure's new phishing detection empowers residents, allowing them to check if a link might be an attempt to steal their data—whether received via email or text, posted on social media or other apps and websites. It also helps build awareness by providing educational resources on how to spot phishing attempts. The new capabilities build on existing features that issue warnings to users when suspicious activity is detected on the user's mobile devices, including connecting to unsecured Wi-Fi networks, compromised websites, and malicious apps.

Mobile devices account for more than half of all web traffic. And, according to the Pew Research Center, almost one in five Americans are smartphone-only users, with reliance on smartphones

for online access is particularly concentrated among younger adults, non-whites and lower-income Americans.

True to its founding principles, the NYC Secure app continues to provide security without accessing any personally identifiable information, and does not collect or transmit any private data.

Since its inception in 2018, the NYC Secure app has been downloaded almost 150,000 times. In addition, as part of the broader NYC Secure initiative, NYC Cyber Command has deployed world-class security and privacy protections on more than 2,500 public Wi-Fi hotspots across all five boroughs, adding an additional layer of digital security for anyone who connects to them.

"As New York City battles back against the coronavirus, digital infrastructure that allows our residents to thrive in the digital space is vital to a full recovery," said **Lorraine Grillo, Senior Advisor for Recovery.** "This is an example of the city's dedication to the comprehensive security of all New Yorkers, both in their physical and digital lives."

"At a time when many small businesses are relying on digital tools to stay connected and afloat, ensuring employees and employers have the necessary cybersecurity protections are all the more important," said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. "The NYC Secure Program will help bridge the digital divide and deliver services to protect our communities."

"Scammers often take advantage of vulnerable people during times of crisis and distress," said **Bitta Mostofi Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**. "This update to the NYC Secure app, available in multiple languages, is just one way New York City is working to ensure our communities have access to resources that can help protect them from fraud."

"As Chair of the Homeland Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection and Innovation Subcommittee, under the jurisdiction of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I am uniquely familiar with the need for increased measures to elevate our cybersecurity on the local, state, and national levels," said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke.** " The creation of this app is a concerted step to protect against fraudulent attempts to obtain sensitive information or data, such as usernames, passwords and credit card details or other sensitive details, by impersonating oneself as a trustworthy entity in digital communication. Commonly known as phishing, which disproportionately impacts our elders and immigrant communities. I support this measure and look forward to its implementation."

"As the Vice Chair of House Homeland Security Committee, as well as the sponsor of the local law codifying NYC Cyber Command, I commend the de Blasio Administration for making NYC, among state and local governments, a national leader in cyber defense. New York City's commitment to shoring up its cyber defenses comes at a critical time: we, as a nation, have been reeling from the far-reaching impact of SolarWinds, which has proven to be the worst cyber breach in the history of the United States government. I have a simple hope: as NYC goes, so goes the rest of America," said **Congressman Ritchie Torres.**

"It's far better to prevent a cybercrime than to prosecute it. Every time a New Yorker protects their device with NYC Secure, they've taken a step to reduce the chances they become a victim. NYC Secure is a vital tool in our community's fight against cybercrime, and I thank Mayor de Blasio and his administration for their strong collaboration and partnership to defend New York City against 21st-century threats," said **Manhattan D.A. Cy Vance, Jr.**

"The Global Cyber Alliance has been pleased to partner with New York City Cyber Command on its efforts to make New York's citizens more secure and its critical infrastructure better protected and more resilient," said **Megan Stifel, Executive Director of the Americas, Global Cyber Alliance**. "The increasing use and features of NYC Secure is just another indicator of how New York City is benefiting from having a state of the art organization like New York City Cyber Command to keep it safer."

###