

**OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY**

FISCAL YEAR 2025 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

MARCH 8, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Gutiérrez and members of the City Council Committee on Technology. My name is Matthew Fraser, and I am the Chief Technology Officer of the City of New York. With me is Edwin Pemberton, the Office of Technology and Innovation’s (OTI) Deputy Commissioner for Management and Budget, and Chantal Senatus, OTI’s Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters. Thank you for the opportunity today to speak about OTI’s FY25 Preliminary Budget, our recent accomplishments, and our priorities for the coming year.

At the beginning of his administration, Mayor Adams signed Executive Order 3 to consolidate the city’s tech agencies into one entity, the Office of Technology and Innovation. Under the Mayor’s leadership, OTI convened the city’s information technology, cybersecurity, privacy, data and analytics, and 311 employees under one roof with a clear vision: to make government run better and bridge the digital divide. As the city’s Chief Technology Officer, I am proud to lead citywide projects that democratize access to technology, improve the public’s interactions with city government, and help our fellow government agencies leverage tech to accomplish their missions.

This past year, we also doubled down on our commitment to bridging the digital divide by expanding Big Apple Connect, the nation’s largest municipal subsidized broadband program. Today, we provide access to free internet and basic cable TV to 330,000 New Yorkers across 220 sites in NYCHA. Citywide, this program enjoys a nearly 80 percent subscriber rate. In addition to Big Apple Connect, we launched Gigabit Innovation Centers in Brooklyn and Staten Island. Now with one in each borough, the Gigabit Centers enhance access to free internet, tech devices, and digital skills training for students, older adults, and immigrant workers living in historically underserved communities.

This past fall, we released the nation’s first comprehensive municipal Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan. This broad plan provides city agencies the necessary framework to evaluate AI tools and associated risks, helps city government employees build knowledge and skills, and supports implementation of these tools to benefit New Yorkers. Within the first year, we expect to start or complete 29 of the plan’s 37 key items. As recently announced, we are moving full-steam ahead with crucial short-term foundational milestones of the AI Action Plan, including establishing both an interagency steering committee and an external advisory network, and unveiling key AI

definitions and terms as part of the beginnings of an AI governance policy. There is much more to come on this soon, and I'd be happy to continue sharing our progress with the Council.

One year ago this month, we launched the much-anticipated MyCity portal, a one-stop shop for essential city services and benefits, with a simplified childcare subsidy application that made it easier for working families to check eligibility, apply for, and track benefits online. Since MyCity's launch, over 50,000 accounts have been created and 32,000 applications have been submitted, resulting in more than 16,000 children potentially receiving subsidies that may have otherwise been difficult to attain or missed altogether. MyCity expanded with the redesigned JobsNYC website and the new Business site, which featured the first citywide AI-powered chatbot. To date, the chatbot has fielded approximately 12,000 inquiries in the City's 11 most common languages.

Our efforts to leverage technology to make government run better also included the launch of the NYC Smart City Testbed Program in October. This program streamlines and accelerates the process for piloting emerging technologies that tackle major challenges facing city government and New Yorkers. The initial testbed projects use drones to help lower greenhouse gas emissions in buildings and air quality improvement monitors to measure real-time air quality. We plan on announcing eight new pilots this year.

Behind the scenes, OTI is also providing spaces to upskill and reward our city's talented technology workforce. Within the past year, our Cyber Academy program has graduated city employees from 50 agencies, bolstering the city's cybersecurity workforce and cultivating closer collaboration between city agencies and NYC Cyber Command. Additionally, for the second year in a row, OTI has spearheaded the Hayes Innovation Prize, which celebrates excellence within the city government workforce. Last year, 15 city employees were rewarded with a \$1,000 cash prize for using cutting-edge technology to improve services across government. This year's winners will be announced next week.

Before I get into the budget numbers, I want to highlight OTI's success in promoting Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs). In FY 2023, OTI processed 315 M/WBE procurements totaling more than \$245 million in contracts. We also made the most frequent use of any agency of the M/WBE Noncompetitive Small Purchase method, capitalizing on the evolution of citywide policies and initiatives in recent years to diversify the businesses and business owners receiving contracts from city agencies.

Finally, I'd like to briefly summarize OTI's budget. OTI's Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget allocates approximately \$775.2 million in expense funds. Of this, approximately \$161.6 million

are for Personnel Services (PS) to support 1,504 full-time positions; and \$613.6 million are for Other than Personnel Services (OTPS).

This Preliminary Budget had a net increase of \$44.7 million for Fiscal Year 2024, which is largely attributed to OTPS Expense funding for capital related projects. Our Capital funding for Fiscal Year 2025 totals \$227.9 million for projects related to IT Modernization, Cyber Security, 311 and Emergency Communication system upgrades. The Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget revenue plan is approximately \$141.8 million for Fiscal Year 2025.

As you're aware, the Mayor recently announced that there will not be a PEG exercise in the Executive Budget and is lifting the full hiring freeze, which will allow OTI to continue hiring for agency needs. We are continuing to take proactive steps to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Last fiscal year, OTI launched a nearly \$6 million Telecommunication Savings Initiative to reduce monthly cellular rates and deactivate inactive wireless devices.

I thank the Council for your continued partnership on our ongoing efforts to leverage technology to build a more connected, equitable, and safe city for all New Yorkers. And I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will now take council members' questions.

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Testimony of New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC)
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

Submitted by Gregory J Morris, CEO

March 8, 2024

I'd like to thank Chair Gutiérrez for her leadership and the opportunity to provide testimony. I'm Gregory J Morris, CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC) - the largest city-based workforce development association in the country. NYCETC serves as the 'industry voice' of more than 220 workforce development providers in New York City who are counted on to provide job training to more than 500,000 New Yorkers each year —primarily individuals who live in under-resourced and underserved neighborhoods. The most recent survey of our membership indicated that the majority of providers were focused on meeting the needs of women, young adults, NYCHA residents, immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers, and justice-involved individuals. **It is our coalition that is relied upon to connect New Yorkers - of all ages - in every borough - to quality jobs and a living wage; and the services and support necessary to secure long-term, family-sustaining employment.**

To achieve an effective and sustainable workforce development ecosystem in NYC, NYCETC is called upon to take three actions: 1) Track the value/impact of the commitments that the Adams administration makes in support of job readiness and training; 2) Serve as resource to employers and employer intermediaries seeking talent; and 3) Advocate for the budgetary, legislative, and regulatory action items that maximize access and equity in the programs and services that our central to our efforts. These efforts include industry specific skill development, college and career exploration, internships and apprenticeships, reskilling/upskill options, as well as, employment placement, retention and advancement assistance.

New York City's tech ecosystem is a driving force for economic development across the entire city – offering high-wage opportunities for jobs that require less than a college degree. However, significant investments need to be made to bolster tech industry efforts to recruit more women and workers of color into these high-wage opportunities since there have been only slight improvements over the past decade in making the sector more reflective of the city's racial and gender diversity. Based on our analysis and reflection, we believe efforts to increase diversity within the tech sector cannot solely rely on accessibility to specific credentials and/or degrees.

While we applaud the commitment of the Adams administration to direct resources to the [CUNY 2X Tech Initiative](#) and its establishment of [public-private partnerships](#) that enhance tech career readiness through apprenticeships for public high school students, we have not yet observed the targeted approach required by the [Pathways to an Inclusive Economy: The Future of Workers Task Force Blueprint](#) to structure a tech talent development system. As noted in the report, this structure requires an analysis of *“employment and wage numbers; attributes of current workers including demographics and educational/certification attainment... understanding which of the occupations in the tech sector provide a living wage on day one, serve as a springboard to one, or are static; and the career paths these occupations culminate in or feed into.”* **It is the first recommendation of NYCETC that the Committee on Technology require the administration to report on the development of tech talent as identified in the Blueprint.**

It is important to note here that a successful credentialing and training program that provided a route to IT careers for HRA-enrolled program participants experienced significantly reduced funding in FY24. The program - identified as *Bridge to Tech* - provided a continuum of services and support, beginning with recruitment and following participants through basic instruction, advanced training, placement, and upskilling. Supportive services include laptops, hotspots, Metro Cards, Lyft codes, gift cards, educational resources, childcare, training vouchers, and clothing. Central to the program’s success is its academic remediation. Participants typically begin *Bridge to Tech* reading at a 9th grade level or below and doing math at a 7th-grade level or below. After *Bridge*, graduates see an average increase of 3 grade-levels in their math skills and 2 grade levels in reading and transition to advanced training programs at CUNY, PerScholas, and Pursuit. **It is the second recommendation of NYCETC that the Committee on Technology restore full funding for Bridge to Tech and support its expansion.**

As this committee knows, none of the above is possible without reliable broadband access. That hundreds of thousands of NYC residents continue to experience disadvantages socially, educationally and economically because of our City’s digital divide is an embarrassment. True, there are numerous local, state and federal complexities and channels that need to be navigated to achieve universal access to high-speed internet. But the simple reality is New Yorkers can no longer wait on the administration. *To use old school tech parlance, they are buffering, buffering-* **Our third and final recommendation is for the Committee on Technology to convene a working group of stakeholders (including NYCETC) to develop and champion its own plan to connect more New Yorkers to internet and broadband now.**

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on behalf of NYCETC.



**Joint Testimony to the NYC Council
for Preliminary Budget Hearing - Technology**

*RE: Staffing Shortages Stalling Dataset Automation – Cornerstone of NYC Open Data;
Council Should Fund 11 Full-Time Open Data Staff, Especially Software Developers*

March 8, 2024

This written testimony is being submitted jointly by Reinvent Albany, BetaNYC, Citizens Union, and Common Cause/NY for the Preliminary Budget Hearing on Technology regarding the staffing levels for the Open Data Program at the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI).

Thanks to the leadership of the City Council, New York City passed the world's first open data law, and our successes and failures are closely watched by governments everywhere. Unfortunately, as highlighted by OTI staff, [Reinvent Albany](#), and [BetaNYC testimony](#) at the Council's [February 27, 2024 Open Data Compliance hearing](#), a lack of staff – especially developers – is undermining the effectiveness of NYC's open data program, including the crucial, money-saving task of automating agency datasets.

Reinvent Albany's [hearing testimony](#) documented how OTI's Open Data Teams has a huge backlog of 437 datasets waiting to be automated, including some datasets first published in 2011. Automation is critical to the sustainability of Open Data because it ensures that new data is made available to the public automatically, regardless of agency staffing and scheduling issues.

We ask that the City Council support a budget increase to bring the Open Data Team's staffing levels back to pre-COVID levels, for a total of at least 11 full-time staff members, including at least three software developers.

Currently, the NYC Open Data Team consists of four people from the Office of Data Analytics: one program manager and three data coordinators. They are supported by

one OTI data engineer and one OTI business analyst, both of whom do not work on the NYC Open Data Program full-time. This is a relatively small number for a world-leading program with such a huge area of responsibility. NYC government is about five times bigger than the size of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in terms of staff and budget, yet the MTA currently has three full-time open data staff versus NYC's four+. Pre-COVID, there were five *additional* people working on Open Data, either full or part-time: one director of open data, one director of civic engagement, one open data project manager, and two additional data engineers.

Additional funding for the Open Data Team will strengthen NYC's Open Data Program in the following ways:

1. More staff for data management and coordination, including data quality review, automation, documentation, and responses to the open data help desk.¹
2. More staff for engagement programs, including open data ambassadors² to train the general public, and for open data week coordination.³ Staffing in this area will help agencies meet their civic engagement mandate, which is part of the technical standards manual.
3. More staff to ensure that data sharing and analytics practices are shared across agencies, and ensure that global best practices are baked into municipal operations.⁴

We thank you for your consideration.

¹ <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/engage/>

² <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/open-data-ambassadors/>

³ <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/open-data-coordinators/>

⁴ <https://www.nyc.gov/content/oti/pages/data-analytics/analytics-exchange>

To: NYC Council – [Committee on Technology](#)
From: Daniel Golliver, Founder of Maximum New York
RE: [Preliminary Budget Hearing](#)
Friday, March 8, 2024

Hello, everyone, my name is Daniel Golliver, and I'm the founder of the civics school Maximum New York. I want to thank the committee and the chair for hosting this hearing.

There's such a rapidly increasing role for this committee's work as we move into the 21st century. Not only are software-based capabilities expanding, but we seem to be entering a new era of American dynamism that's driving a faster pace of innovation in hard tech capabilities.

Well ok, so why am I here talking to you?

Because, in my professional role as a civics instructor and in my personal role as a citizen, I'm seeing a sea change within (and adjacent to) the tech world that I want to highlight for the committee.

Far more individuals are interested in learning how their city government works, more specifically: how this committee works, what the [Office of Technology and Innovation](#) does, and how they can bring their staggering amount of talent to bear to help the city.

Specific to this hearing: they have high interest in city spending and resource allocation in tech. In the previous committee meeting as well as this one, you'll notice interested members of the public more regularly attending.

A lot of them have taken time off work to be here, just to learn more, and they're going to keep doing it! How many committees can claim that kind of trend? I'm looking forward to the near future when this committee is standing room only—and to helping integrate a wider swath of the tech world into the work and needs of the committee and the Council. There are a lot of excited people out there who are interested in becoming productively involved in a highly informed fashion.

Thank you.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/8/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Fraser
Address: Chief Technology Officer,
City of New York
I represent: City of New York
Address: _____

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 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/8/24

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Name: Ed Pemberton
Address: Deputy Commissioner,
Management & Budget
I represent: OTI
Address: _____

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Date: 3/8/24

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Name: Chantal Senatus
Address: Deputy Commissioner
Legal Matters
I represent: OTI
Address: _____



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



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Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. n/a Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: March 8, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Golliber

Address: [redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11217

I represent: myself, Maximum New York

Address: same as above

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/8/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GREGORY J MORRIS

Address: 121 6th AVE NYC 10013

I represent: NEW YORK CITY EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Address: SAME AS ABOVE

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/8/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alex Stahl

Address: [redacted] Dumont NJ

I represent: self

Address: WMC