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

**FISCAL YEAR 2027 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

**MARCH 18, 2026**

Good morning, Chair De La Rosa and members of the City Council Committee on Technology. My name is Lisa Gelobter, and I am the Chief Technology Officer and Commissioner of the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI). With me are Edwin Pemberton, OTI's Deputy Commissioner for Management and Budget, Chantal Senatus, OTI's Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters, and Ruby Choi, OTI's Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity today to speak about OTI's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget, our recent accomplishments, and our priorities for the coming year.

It is a pleasure to appear before this Committee for the first time. In the two weeks I've been at OTI, I've learned a great deal, and I'm looking forward to collaborating with my colleagues at OTI, this administration, other agencies, and you all - City Council, in addition to engaging directly with New Yorkers. Though I have not been here long, I'm quickly coming up to speed on the vast extent of OTI's critical role in how this city operates, enabling agencies across the city to deliver services that millions of New Yorkers rely on every day.

At this moment, we are at an inflection point in technology, where the pace of change is accelerating and digital tools are shaping almost every aspect of daily life. But not everyone has equal access to the tools and the ability to benefit from them. I want to take the opportunity to build on the strong foundation that already exists at OTI and supercharge it — using technology to make government more accessible, more effective, and easier for New Yorkers to navigate. For most of my career, I have focused on a simple idea: using technology to expand access to information, to opportunity, and to systems that were previously out of reach for many people. I hope to continue to apply this throughline to my work as CTO of New York City.

As I've learned, I am fortunate to inherit a great number of program areas within OTI that are positively impacting the public-at-large, our city workforce, and our agency customers. I am proud to highlight a few accomplishments of the work that have had great outcomes already.

One example is Big Apple Connect. This Committee will be familiar with the nation's largest municipally subsidized internet program serving 330,000 public housing residents across 220 city-owned developments. Last year, OTI entered into a three-year extension of the Big Apple

Connect contracts with Charter and Altice, which included a \$1.2M private investment by both companies to support digital literacy programs targeted to NYCHA residents.

OTI's wider digital equity strategy was laid out in the Digital Equity Roadmap a year ago. Since then, the city has launched the Neighborhood Tech Help program with the library systems to provide one-on-one technology support, the "Liberty Link" pilot to provide free internet access to 2,200 households in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan and established a Digital Equity Working Group with 43 participating agencies. For these creative initiatives, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance has recognized New York City as a "Digital Inclusion Trailblazer!"

We will continue to extend our work in this space by creating a Citywide Broadband Adoption Plan, in support of Local Law 153 of 2025 – for which we have received a Regional and Local Assistance Grant from the New York State ConnectAll Office.

OTI also supports and enhances popular citywide public-facing platforms that serve as the conduit between New York City residents and their municipal government. Just last year, OTI redesigned and built new infrastructure for nyc.gov, the city's front page that serves 7 million users annually. According to an external survey, customer satisfaction increased by 13 points, which demonstrates the impact a focus on usability and access can have across all city websites and applications. I'd love to hear from the Council if they've used it and have any feedback.

NYC311 is another key way OTI makes government more accessible and accountable to New Yorkers. Last week, Mayor Mamdani visited our 311 call center in recognition of "311 Day" to thank team members for their above-and-beyond work, dedication and perseverance during the recent blizzard. Our NYC Call Center Representatives consistently outperform both public and private industry benchmarks with a 93 percent customer service satisfaction rate. OTI continues to strategically invest in NYC311, allocating capital funds for enhancements to improve systems integration with other agencies' platforms, language access and accessibility requirements, and improvements to the mobile experience.

Another of OTI's imperatives is to collaborate with other agencies to ensure the city's systems and sensitive data are safeguarded. For example, NYC Cyber Command implemented a citywide cybersecurity and awareness program on basic best practices, that includes how to identify and report a phishing attempt – a leading cause of cyberattacks. This program has resulted in a 50 percent reduction in the number of employees who click on phishing simulations over the last three years. In alignment with Executive Order 10 of 2022, NYC Cyber Command has trained 84 agency cyber liaisons in our specialized Cyber Academy focused on incident response, network security, and cyber threat intelligence.

To support Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order 13 of 2026, the Office of Information Privacy is actively partnering with the Mayor's Office to provide updated Identifying Information Law compliance training to all Agency Privacy Officers by April 7<sup>th</sup>. These timely trainings recognize the critical role of our city's privacy workforce in maintaining public trust so those in need can safely and confidently seek city services.

I would also like to share some of the projects OTI has supported in collaboration with other agencies. This is but a small sample of the vast suite of services and expertise provided. On the backend, we build and operate mission-critical applications and shared technology platforms that enable city agencies to deliver efficient and trusted services at scale. OTI's Applications and Infrastructure Management teams have recently completed the modernization and migration of legacy applications to cloud-based technology, which will improve system uptime and reliability and New Yorkers' access to important data and services. This transition resulted in the decommission of 86 servers that hosted more than 40 outdated applications. In collaboration with our agency partners, we will continue to look for programs with opportunity for improvement.

OTI's Office of Data Analytics (ODA) implemented the Common Business Index to match and link city data records from multiple agencies. One successful outcome already is that NYC Small Business Services used it to create a portal for business owners to view licenses, fees, and violations all in one place. As we work to support Mayor Mamdani's childcare initiatives, ODA has also been working with the Office of Early Childhood Education to consolidate multiple sources of public childcare site information into a single unified locator map for families.

Before I get into the budget, I also want to call your attention to the Open Data Week Festival, March 22 to 29, that celebrates the power of data and government transparency. If you weren't already planning to, I'd like to personally invite Council Members and staff to participate!

Finally, I'd like to briefly summarize OTI's budget. OTI's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget allocates approximately \$702.5 million in expense funds. Of this, approximately \$178.5 million is for Personnel Services (PS) to support 1,538 full-time positions; and \$524 million is for Other than Personnel Services (OTPS).

This Preliminary Budget had a net increase of \$28.8 million for Fiscal Year 2027. The increase is reflected in the OTPS Expense budget, which was largely attributed to the funding received for Microsoft ELA Azure spend, and the intra-city funding that OTI received from agencies that utilize OTI contracts. Our Capital funding for Fiscal Year 2027 totals \$145.6 million for projects related to IT Modernization, Cyber Security, 311 and Emergency Communication system

upgrades. The Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget revenue plan is approximately \$140.6 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will now take Council Members' questions. Please bear with me as I rely heavily on the team's knowledge and expertise while I am still getting ramped up.

**To:** NYC Council – Committee on Technology  
**From:** Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director of BetaNYC



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

Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Dear Chair De La Rosa, fellow Council Members, and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the Preliminary Budget for the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI). This testimony is submitted on behalf of BetaNYC as we prepare for Open Data Week and the NYC School of Data.

While New York City led the way with the world's first open data law, a lack of staffing—particularly in technical roles—continues to undermine the program's effectiveness and the vital work of automating agency datasets. To ensure OTI meets its potential, we urge the Council to adopt the following structural and budgetary recommendations:

## 1. Structural Reform for Accountability

Based on Reinvent Albany's analysis of the City's technology management<sup>1</sup>, we recommend moving away from a centralized "Tech Czar" model toward one defined by agency-level empowerment:

- **Restructuring for Oversight:** Better resource and then consider moving OTI's specialized offices, such as Open Data, Data Analytics, and 311, under the Deputy Mayor for Operations to better integrate technology across agency management.
- **Modernizing Procurement:** Fund reforms to tech contracting that lower barriers for smaller, agile vendors, reducing reliance on expensive, long-term incumbent contractors.
- **Prioritizing Service Design:** Reallocate budget from speculative projects toward the essential work of improving the digital user experience for services like 311 and other constituent-facing front-ends, while enhancing information flow within agencies. OTI must ensure that digital front doors are easy to use, accessible, and secure. Within Agency operations, digital and data services also need to be easy to use, accessible, and secure.

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<https://reinventalbany.org/2025/12/government-watchdog-mamdani-must-harness-city-tech-for-everyday-new-yorkers/>

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BetaNYC, New York City's Public Interest Technology, Design, and Data Community.  
Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director • [noel@beta.nyc](mailto:noel@beta.nyc) • <http://beta.nyc> • [@BetaNYC](https://twitter.com/BetaNYC)

## 2. Modernizing Digital Service Delivery

OTI requires a clear mandate and resources to improve how New Yorkers interact with their government.<sup>2</sup> We recommend the following priorities:

- **Scale NYC Digital Service:** Fund service design roles embedded within line agencies to ensure digital tools work for all residents.
- **Modernize 311:** Invest in 311 as the city's "front door" by unifying intake, status tracking, and feedback loops.
- **Establish an Open Source Program Office:** Adopt secure, reusable code citywide to ensure every "tech" dollar builds local capacity and avoids proprietary lock-in.
- **Standardize Data Plumbing:** Fund the creation of shared schemas and APIs to ensure agency data is interoperable and efficient.

## 3. Investing in Digital Equity and Literacy

Technology is only effective if it is accessible to all New Yorkers. We urge the Council to:

- **Advance the Internet Master Plan 2.0, aka "Broadband Adoption Plan":** Provide the funding necessary to close the digital divide and ensure privacy-by-design in all city infrastructure.
- **Fund Literacy Partnerships:** Support digital and data literacy programs in partnership with community groups, including proven citywide initiatives such as NYC Open Data Week and the NYC Open Data Ambassadors program. These initiatives provide free, accessible training that helps New Yorkers engage with public data, understand city services, and participate in civic life.
- **Expand Apprenticeships:** foster programs that develop the next generation of public-interest technologists and build civic literacy programs. We want to see apprenticeships target CUNY students and help us collect vital data on public-realm assets.

## 4. Restoring the Open Data Team

The current NYC Open Data Team consists of only four data analysts/coordinators supported by two CUNY fellows. This is a critically small number for a world-leading program.<sup>3</sup> Pre-COVID, the team included five additional staffers, including a director of civic engagement and additional data engineers.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.beta.nyc/2025/11/18/dear-mayor-elect-8-gov-tech-ideas/>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://reinventalbany.org/2026/03/fully-staff-nycs-world-leading-open-data-program-reinvent-albany-beta-nyc-testimony-to-council/>

We ask the Council to:

- **Fund 11 full-time staff members:** This must include at least three software developers to return the team to pre-COVID levels.
- **Hold an Oversight Hearing:** The Council should hold a hearing on Open Data Compliance to understand the obstacles the program faces, similar to the February 2024 hearing.

## 5. Clearing the Automation Backlog

Staffing shortages directly impact the City's efficiency. Currently, out of 978 datasets eligible for automation, 353 remain in a backlog. Additional funding and staff will strengthen the program by:

- **Improving Data Management:** Increasing capacity for data quality reviews, automation, documentation, and help desk responses.
- **Meeting Mandates:** Adding staff for engagement programs like NYC Open Data Week and NYC Open Data Ambassadors to help agencies meet their civic engagement mandates.
- **Scaling Best Practices:** Ensuring that data sharing and analytics practices are shared across all agencies and baked into municipal operations.

By investing in these structural reforms and restoring essential staffing levels, the Council can ensure that NYC's technology infrastructure is transparent, efficient, and accountable to all New Yorkers.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Noel Hidalgo

Executive Director

BetaNYC, a partner project of the Fund for the City of New York

## **THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL - Committee on Technology**

Carmen N. De La Rosa, Chair | Members: Jennifer Gutiérrez, Shahana K. Hanif, Kevin C. Riley, Julie Won

Hearing: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 | 11:30 AM 250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 2

Agenda Item: T2026-1364 — Budget and Oversight Hearing - FY27Preliminary Budget

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Chair De La Rosa and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mauricio Delfin, and I am speaking on behalf of the **Culture & Arts Policy Institute**, which I co-direct with Gonzalo Casals.

Your Committee oversees the digital infrastructure that shapes how New York City measures progress, allocates resources, and serves its people. And increasingly, the information systems behind that infrastructure shape what government can see, what it can understand, and what it can act on. **That is why today we know that data is not just a technical issue. It is a question of visibility, opportunity, and equity**

Over the past year, our Institute studied open data practices in New York City's culture and arts sector. **What we found is not a lack of information—but a lack of access.** Data on Culture and Arts is largely missing from the City's open data ecosystem. While the NYC Open Data portal hosts thousands of datasets, only a handful — 12, to be exact — come from the Department of Cultural Affairs.

**At the same time, the City already collects incredibly valuable information.** The Cultural Development Fund, for example, gathers detailed information from about 1,200 cultural organizations across the five boroughs—one of the most comprehensive snapshots of New York's creative economy. Yet this information is not available through the Open Data portal.

**And that matters. Because when cultural data remains invisible, so do the communities, workers, and creative ecosystems it represents.** Open data about culture helps us understand how the creative economy actually works in our neighborhoods—who is creating, who is hiring, who is being funded, and who is still being left out. It shows whether public investment is reaching the artists and cultural workers who sustain New York's cultural life, especially in BIPOC communities and organizations that drive cultural innovation but remain under-recognized in policy.

This becomes even more important as the City expands the use of artificial intelligence. AI systems learn from the data we make visible. **If cultural life is missing from that data, the creative economy—and the communities that power it—risk being left out of systems that will shape future policy and investment.** By strengthening data on culture and arts in the Open Data portal, New York can ensure that the creative economy, cultural equity, and social justice are part of the city's digital future.

We respectfully encourage the Council to support three actions. First, ensure that DCLA strengthens compliance with the Open Data Law by publishing more datasets. Second, support dedicated data stewardship and analysis capacity within DCLA. And third, encourage collaboration with culture and arts organizations to identify datasets most useful for policy, research, and public accountability.

When data about culture and the arts is open, the benefits ripple outward: better cultural policy, stronger creative economies, more innovation, and more effective public services for New Yorkers. **This is not just about data. It is about ensuring the artists, communities, and cultures that shape New York are visible and able to engage with the systems that guide decisions, drive innovation, and deliver services across our city.**

Thank you.



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

*Council Should Fund 11 Full-Time Open Data Staff,  
Hold Regular Oversight Hearing on Open Data Compliance*

March 18, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Preliminary Budget as concerns funding for the Office of Technology and Innovation. This testimony is being submitted on behalf of Reinvent Albany and BetaNYC.

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, a lack of staff – especially developers – continues to undermine the effectiveness of NYC's open data program, including the crucial, money-saving task of automating agency datasets. This was highlighted by Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) staff, [Reinvent Albany](#), and [BetaNYC testimony](#) at the Council's last [Open Data Compliance hearing in February 2024](#).

To ensure that the New York City's Open Data efforts remain strong, we ask the City Council to do the following:

- 1. The Council's Preliminary Budget response should bring the Open Data Team up to 11 full-time staff members, including at least three software developers.** This would bring them back to pre-COVID levels.
- 2. The City Council should hold another oversight hearing on Open Data Compliance, as it did last in February 2024.**

Currently, the NYC Open Data Team consists of four data analysts/coordinators from the Office of Data Analytics. They are supported by one CUNY TEC fellow working on the team as part of a three-year training program, and a data engineering CUNY TEC fellow that mostly works on open data. This is a relatively small number for a world-leading program with such a huge area of responsibility. Pre-COVID, there were

five *additional* New York City staffers 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.<sup>1</sup>
2. More staff for engagement programs, including open data ambassadors<sup>2</sup> to train the general public, and for open data week coordination.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

Currently, of the 978 datasets that have been established as eligible for automation per the [public data asset inventory dataset](#) on the open data portal, 581 have been automated to date, and there are 353 in the backlog to automate. More staff for OTI would help facilitate this automation, and an oversight hearing by the City Council would help you better understand the obstacles to these datasets being made more current, efficient, and useful.

We thank you for your consideration.

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

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

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

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edwin Pemberton, Deputy Commissioner, Management & Budget

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OTI

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: Samantha Wright, Associate Comm. Strategy & Partners

Address: 2 Metro Tech

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: Joe Morrisroe, Deputy Commissioner, 311

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Lisa Gelobter, CTO (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 15 MetroTech Center

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: Chantal Senatus, Deputy Commissioner, Legal (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Matters

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

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Name: Robert Barbera, Deputy Commissioner, Public (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Safety

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: Ruby Choi, Deputy Commissioner Strategic Initiatives

Address: 2 noho Tech

I represent: OTI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cathy Hung

Address: 340 East 46 St. NYC 10017

I represent: Making Books Sing dba New York City children's theater

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

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I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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