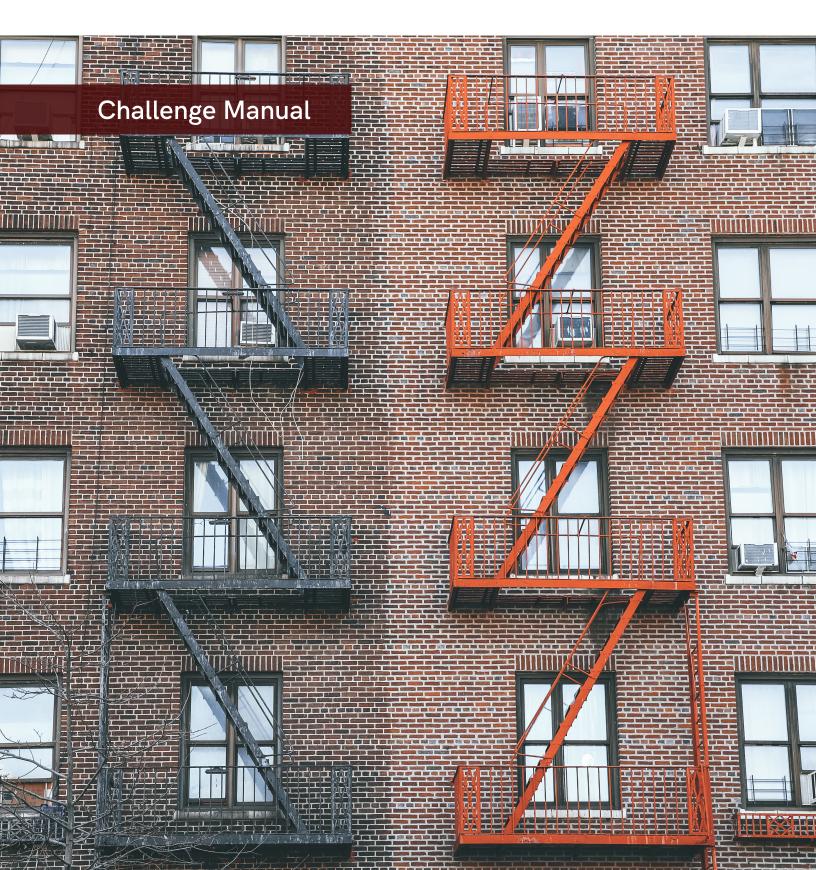


NYCx Co-Labs: Housing Rights

INWOOD & WASHINGTON HEIGHTS



February 2020

*Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the competition timeline is subject to change.

Please visit the challenge website for more information and sign up for updates here.









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Challenge Overview

Challenge Title

NYCx Co-Labs Housing Rights Challenge

Challenge Statement

How might we support the provision of more strategic, targeted, and tailored information to tenants about their housing rights, enabling them to take action?

The City of New York is seeking to test creative, tech-enabled solutions that advance any combination of the following outcomes:

- Increase tenants' understanding of their housing rights under the new rent laws by incorporating interactive, engaging, and culturally appropriate methods.
- Provide actionable pathways to support tenants in understanding, and claiming their housing rights.
- Improve the ability of tenants to identify the appropriate venues to claim their rights; how to file a complaint, what happens after a complaint is made, and how to track a complaint.
- Improve the ability of tenant organizers and community-based organizations to determine where, how, and through what means to most effectively deploy resources in particular geographies and buildings.
- Improve/support advocacy (strategies) for the existing CBOs that are already working with tenants in the provision of their rights.
- Increase real-time, scalable, and resourceefficient data regarding violations of New York State rent laws across vulnerable communities.

Purpose of the challenge

An estimated 68% of New Yorkers rent their apartments¹. Tenant laws in New York City and State Law protect renters from wrongful eviction, harassment and discrimination, and dangerous or unsafe conditions in the building. It is illegal for building owners to force tenants in rent-stabilized units² to leave their apartments, to pay abusive increases in rent, or to surrender their rights.³

However, some landlords in NYC harass and displace their tenants through a combination of illegal tactics. New York City's robust real estate market and specific provisions in the State's housing laws created incentives for landlords to harass and displace their low-income tenants. Harassment can take many forms, including cuts to essential services, mismanagement of building operations and construction, and neglect of necessary repairs. These tactics force tenants to suffer in their homes until they feel they have no option but to leave. In recent years, both City and State lawmakers have taken steps to protect tenants and strengthen tenants' rights in order to shield them from landlord abuses. In June 2019, the New York State Legislature passed the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 20194 (HSTPA), which significantly reduced the incentives driving tenant harassment and afforded tenants new legal protections. In addition to this legislative reform, New York City benefits from a strong network of tenant organizers and legal service providers, often supported through City programs (see pages 26-31, below), who aid tenants in combating harassment and displacement.

Despite these added protections, tenants are often ill-informed about their rights and how to access concomitant services and resources. They fear retaliation by their landlords, and their understanding of housing laws are often hampered by a lack of culturally competent outreach and education resources. The challenges that tenants face are

complex and numerous, and they can be difficult for tenant organizers and legal service providers to triage. Tenant organizers struggle in ensuring that tenants understand their rights and in connecting them with appropriate services. Tenant organizers are often under-resourced and understaffed. Because of the pervasiveness of harassment, their workloads are high, limiting the amount of support they can provide to individual tenants. Addressing tenant harassment will require new solutions that enable tenants to better understand and claim their rights and to help tenant organizers to better support and educate tenants at risk of harassment and displacement.

In that context, the City of New York is calling for innovative products, services, or practices to enable tenants to learn, understand, and claim their housing rights in order to prevent tenant harassment, abuse, and displacement in Inwood and Washington Heights. Solutions should aim to address the needs of tenants, tenant organizers, or community-based organizations that provide housing-related services. Challenges faced by these groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

Tenants

- Displacement through harassment, limited succession rights, preferential rent issues, and petty cash buyouts
- Lack of awareness of the appropriate venues and the process to claim housing rights
- Lack of awareness of legal council available through community based organizations
- Lack of clear, plain-language information on City and State policies and regulations
- Lack of basic information on rights leads to fears around immigration, losing housing subsidies, and being punished for exercising rights or asking for help
- Low digital literacy and language barriers prevent use of existing tenant resources

For solutions addressing tenants, the City welcomes projects that direct tenants to the appropriate venues to claim their rights, or that connect them with community-based organizations, resources, or relevant City services. We also encourage projects focused on tenant education and outreach, as well as initiatives focused on simplifying laws, regulations, and procedures.

Tenant Organizers & Community-Based Organizations

- Limited financial and human resources to tackle this issue
- New York State housing laws are difficult to interpret
- Lack of available data for rent histories
- Lack of transparency in housing developments and developer practices
- Difficulty deploying resources in the community and getting tenant participation

For solutions addressing tenant organizers and housing community-based organizations (CBOs), the City is looking for strategies that improve their ability to determine how, where, and through what means they can most effectively deploy resources in the target neighborhood. We also encourage solutions that enable organizers and CBOs to provide tailored, real-time information and resources to tenants based on their needs, improving and supporting existing advocacy strategies. Similarly, tools that could increase the ability of CBOs to train tenant organizers are welcomed.

Finally, solutions should be tailored to NYC's laws and regulations and should incorporate interactive, engaging, and culturally appropriate methods for tenants' rights education and outreach.

About NYCx Co-Labs

The NYCx Co-Labs is a civic innovation program managed by the NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO) and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC).

The program combines community building, participatory research, tech education and open innovation challenges to address urban inequality across NYC neighborhoods.

NYCx Co-Labs brings together a set of partners — from government, local non-profit organizations, technology companies, communities, and foundations — through various events, workshops, and community spaces to accelerate the development of new techenabled solutions to NYC most pressing issues.

¹ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/ NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs that approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).

² New York City has a system of rent regulations known as "rent stabilization." The system was enacted in 1969 when rents were rising sharply in many post-war buildings. The system has been extended and amended several times, and now about one million apartments in the City are covered by rent stabilization. Rent-stabilized tenants are protected from sharp increases in rent and have the right to renew their leases, among other protections. For more information, visit: http://bit.ly/324sNt1

³ "Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities", NYC Housing Preservation & Development, last accessed 2019. https://on.nyc.gov/2T8ln3C

⁴ "Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019," New York State Assembly, 2019, http://bit.ly/2P4ul0Q



Opportunity

Motivation

According to a 2018 UN World Cities report, an estimated 55.3% of the world's population lived in urban settings, and by 2030 one in every three people will live in a city with over half a million inhabitants.⁵ As cities grow, real estate developers prioritize profit over affordable housing and policies on land use, construction and financing make the development of affordable housing more complex and financially infeasible.6 Both nationally and internationally, new construction has emphasized the production of market rate over affordable units. In existing buildings, landlords force out long-term tenants in order to bring in new tenants who are able to pay higher rents. As a result, low-income and vulnerable tenants both in NYC and around the world are facing harassment and displacement.

The City of New York has undertaken a wide range of efforts to combat these challenges. It has developed substantial new affordable housing through its Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program, provided property owners with financial and technical resources to preserve the existing affordability of their housing units, and created several new programs to combat tenant harassment and displacement (see pages 26-31, below). Through this Challenge, the City is seeking to complement these efforts by leveraging the expanding "proptech" sector to identify new strategies for overcoming obstacles to safe, secure, and affordable housing.

In August 2018, the Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO)'s NYCx Co-Labs⁷ team and partners facilitated six issue-area workshops for the Inwood and Washington Heights residents to identify challenges and resources in the following areas: housing, education, health, arts & culture, small businesses, and immigrant affairs. Then the NYCx Co-Labs team developed a literature review of relevant secondary sources and analyzed 191 direct resident responses regarding community challenges.⁸

Community members emphasized the urgency of housing challenges in the neighborhood, in particular tenant harassment and a lack of resources for community organizers. Many of their concerns are rooted in a generalized fear of the predatory practices, both legal and illegal, that landlords and developers use to increase their profits over community wellbeing.

Landlords have often abused and harassed lower income tenants in an effort to force them out of the building leaving residents with few options they can afford. In 2017, 53% of renter households in Inwood and Washington Heights were severely rent burdened (tenants spent at least 50% of their monthly income on rent). Over the past 20 years, very few new affordable units have been built, while rent increased 14% between 2011 and 2017.

Over the course of Mayor de Blasio's administration, the City has taken action to address the challenges facing both the housing stock and tenants in Inwood and Washington Heights. The City's housing development pipeline includes significant affordable housing for the community, and the Landlord Ambassador Program helped to connect building owners to technical and financial resources to ensure their buildings' maintenance needs are met and rents are able to be kept affordable. The City is also piloting several programs in the neighborhood, such as Partners in Preservation and the Certification of No Harassment Program (see pages 29-31, below) to help protect tenants from the predatory activities of bad-actor landlords. The NYCx Co-Labs Housing Rights Challenge will further these efforts by ensuring that tenants have better access to information about their rights and how to act on them.

Through the NYCx Co-Labs Housing Rights
Challenge, applicants will be directly addressing
a challenge facing cities around the world: the
harassment and displacement of vulnerable tenants.

This challenge aims to find solutions that are scalable and can be further applied across the City of New York and, ultimately, in other cities worldwide. Positive outcomes could include tenants understanding and claiming their housing rights and/or tenant organizers/ CBOs increased capacity to support tenants.

⁹ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/ NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous). Households in public housing or with vouchers are not included in totals or percentages of burdened and severely burdened households. Additionally, households whose level of burden could not be calculated because of rent or income above top-coded values are not included in these estimates. However, households that had no rent were classified as not burdened and households with negative or no income and that paid some rent were classified as severely burdened this was true even in cases where rent or income were top-coded.

¹⁰ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2011 and 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous). Gross rents in 2011 are adjusted to real 2017 dollars using the BLS NY, NY MSA Base CPI adjustment factor.

⁵ "The World's Cities in 2018: Data Booklet," United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2018. http://bit.ly/2P3R2IE.

⁶ Jonathan Woetzel, et al., "Tackling the World's Affordable Housing Challenge," McKinsey Global Institute, October 2014. https://mck.co/2usTxqz

⁷ NYCx Co-Labs is a partnership between the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and the NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO).

⁸ "ONENYC 2050," City of New York, April 2019. https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ OneNYC-2050-Full-Report-11.7.pdf.

Benefits

NYCx Co-Labs will award the following benefits to finalists and winners of The NYCx Co-Labs: Housing Rights Challenge.



All Applicants

Showcase your initiatives to NYC government agencies.

- Gain exposure to NYC tech ecosystem through NYC's government agencies and Industry Partners.
- Access publicity through the City of New York and Industry Partners marketing channels.
- Gain visibility across the NYCx Co-Labs network of international cities working on inclusive innovation.
- Access networking events and potential pro bono partnerships through Industry Partners.



Finalists

- Receive targeted feedback from venture capitalists / investors and experts in your industry through the Industry Partner network
- Receive targeted feedback from the Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO), the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT) on your proposal
- · Finalists featured on NYCx website



Winners

- Win up to USD 20,000 in seed funding to pilot a tech-enabled solution in Inwood/Washington Heights.
- Receive support from MOCTO and NYCEDC on the monitoring, evaluation, design and pilot implementation.
- Receive guidance from City agencies and local networks of community-based organizations during the implementation of the pilot.

The City's Vision on Housing

In May 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio unveiled Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan to create and preserve 200,000 high-quality, affordable homes over ten years. The plan outlines a comprehensive set of policies and programs to address the city's affordable housing crisis and retain the diversity and vitality of its neighborhoods. This holistic approach is part of a broader strategy to ensure the long-term affordability, health, and competitiveness of New York City.

Building on the foundation laid through Housing New York, in November 2017, the Administration committed to completing the initial goal of 200,000 affordable homes two years ahead of schedule, by 2022, and generating an additional 100,000 homes over the following four years. To accomplish this accelerated and expanded plan, the Administration launched Housing New York 2.0, a roadmap for how the City will help reach a new goal of 300,000 homes by 2026. HNY 2.0 introduces a suite of new initiatives to help thousands more families and seniors afford their rent, buy a first home, and stay in the neighborhoods they love.

In 2018, as a part of HNY 2.0, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and NYC Housing Development Corporation (HDC) launched Partners in Preservation (PiP), a program focused on developing anti-displacement initiatives by funding and coordinating tenant organizing efforts in three geographically targeted areas: Inwood and Washington Heights, East Harlem, and the Jerome Avenue area in the Bronx. The four core strategies include utilizing a data-driven process to identify rent-regulated buildings where harassment and displacement are likely to occur; creating tailored action plans for each target building; coordinating stakeholders across tenant organizing groups, legal service providers, direct service providers, tenant leaders, and government agencies; and establishing tenant protection and education efforts throughout the target areas to inform tenants of their rights.

To further these goals, in 2019 the City created the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT), a core part of the City's strategy to confront the affordable housing crisis. MOPT works collaboratively across City agencies helping make existing anti-harassment programs better. It also leads new initiatives to improve enforcement coordination with the use of data, conducts extensive outreach and engagement with community organizations and tenants themselves and makes sure that new policy to further tenant protections is evaluated.

These new programs and agencies work with other City agencies, elected officials, and community-based partners to achieve effective citywide implementation of strategies, maximize their effectiveness and ensure sustainability.

The NYCx Co-Labs: Housing Rights Challenge is part of the inclusive innovation efforts of the City of New York to connect the NYC tech ecosystem, government agencies, local communities, and global innovators to address the housing needs of our most vulnerable communities.



Application Process

Competition Process

The Challenge is open to everyone regardless of background, experience, or geographic location - all relevant and compelling ideas will be taken into consideration. There is no minimum business or growth stage required.

Competition Phases:

- 1. Application Process: The application will be accepted on a rolling basis from February 25, 2020 to July 15, 2020. Applications are to be submitted by July 15, 2020, by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time. Applications will include a short statement of purpose, a brief description of the team's concept for the challenge and supporting documentation. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel from MOCTO, HPD, MOPT, EDC and Industry Partner. All applicants might receive follow-up clarification questions during this time on a set date to ensure equal time for clarification responses.
- 2. Finalists: Finalists will be selected by Summer 2020. These selected applications will be reviewed by a panel of venture capitalists and the Inwood/Washington Heights Community Tech Board, composed of local community members. These two panels will provide written feedback on the applications, which will be shared with applicants through the challenge judges.
- 3. Final Round: Finalists will be announced during Summer 2020. They will be invited for a pitch presentation and Q&A session with a panel of judges. This presentation may be conducted via video conference.
- 4. Winners Announced: Winning teams will be announced in the Summer of 2020.
- 5. Pilot Period: Pilots will begin in Fall 2020 and will run for a period of 6-9 months.

*Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the competition timeline is subject to change.

Please sign up for updates here.

2020 Competition Timeline*

25 February 2020

Applications Open Online

TBD

Information Session(s)

15 July 2020

Deadline for Submissions

Summer 2020

Finalists Selected

Summer 2020

VCs and Community Tech Board** provide feedback

Summer 2020

Pitch Presentations and Q&A

Summer 2020

Winners Announced

Summer 2020

Contracts and funding finalized

Fall 2020

Pilot Launch

Implementation Process

Pilot: The winning team(s) will pilot their solution in Inwood and Washington Heights in Fall 2020 in collaboration with MOCTO, NYCEDC, HPD, and MOPT.

Throughout the duration of the pilot, MOCTO, NYCEDC, HPD, and MOPT will evaluate its efficacy in meeting the challenge's goals and determine next steps, which may include releasing an open solicitation to deploy the solution on a larger scale.

Funding: We anticipate funding two pilots. Each challenge winner will receive \$20,000 in funding to support implementation. Funds should be used to implement and ensure the success of the pilot, including but not limited to purchasing and installing equipment, as well as for expenses related to insurance, maintenance, user testing, and evaluation.

*Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the competition timeline is subject to change.

Please sign up for updates here.

**The Community Tech Board (CTB) is an advisory board of community-based organizations and residents who provide guidance on program activities and advance opportunities for their neighborhood to benefit from new technologies. The 32 board members were selected in 2018 through an online application process as well as nominations from city agencies.



Selection Criteria

Community Principles

Successful solutions will be responsive to the following principles:

Empowering: Successful solutions should create and support opportunity and equity in Inwood and Washington Heights.

Responsive: Successful solutions should be useful, respond continuously to the needs of the community, and generate significant impact.

Accessible: Successful solutions should serve, be inclusive of, and be usable by all members of the community.

Linguistically inclusive: Successful solutions should be accessible in Spanish and English. We encourage solutions that can be adapted to different linguistic needs.

Culturally competent: Tools and services should incorporate interactive, engaging, and culturally appropriate methods to address the community.

Transparent: Successful solutions should make their products, processes, outcomes, partners, and participants clear and transparent

Responsible: Successful solutions should be safe and well-maintained throughout the duration of the pilot.

Compliant: Successful solutions should follow NYC IoT Guidelines (on privacy, transparency, infrastructure, data management, security, operations, and sustainability), and all applicable NYC rules and regulations.

Evaluation Criteria



Innovative

Proposal is original, and demonstrates an innovative approach. The proposal includes novel concepts, processes, tools or governance models as a test-bed for innovation.



Sustainable



Proposals consider the solution's ongoing maintenance, usage, and continuous improvement needs.



Implementable

Initiatives can be implemented within current regulations and starting in Fall of 2020.



Impactful

Solutions propose clear, significant, and measurable outcomes. Solutions should demonstrate clear contributions to future city action plans and decision making processes.



Scalable

Initiatives can scale to benefit hundreds, thousands (perhaps even millions) of people in the future.



Replicable

Solutions should be transferable to other contexts, different than the one it was originally conceived for; that is, that could be replicated in other sectors, regions, countries.



Cost effective

Initiatives can be affordably deployed throughout the City for the defined target audience.



Relevant

The solution defines a need(s) or unresolved problem(s) being addressed in its context



User-centric

Solutions should be developed with the end-user experience in mind.



Compliant

Successful solutions should follow NYC <u>IoT Guidelines</u> (on privacy, transparency, infrastructure, data management, security, operations, and sustainability), and all applicable NYC rules and regulations.

Partners

Roles and Responsibilities

PARTNER	ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
City Agencies Partners (MOCTO, HPD, MOPT, NYCEDC)	Partnership Managers	 Provide seed funding for winning proposals. Evaluate proposals. Select program winners. Oversee successful execution of pilot program. Provide visibility to challenge winners through the local and international networks. Support the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot implementation. Support the documentation of the pilot program to identify lessons learned and policy recommendations.
Industry Partner	Industry Advisor	 Provide feedback to finalists through the Advisory Board/VC review board. Provide advice and industry expertise to the challenge winners.
Community Tech Board	Community Advisor	Provide feedback to finalists through the CTB review.
Challenge Winners	Challenge Beneficiary	 Implement the pilot. Undertake monitoring and evaluation of the pilot to determine success. Document the execution of the pilot. Manage the day-to-day implementation of the pilot



NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO) strives to make broadband, smart city technologies, digital services, and the tech industry work for all New Yorkers. This includes strategies towards closing the digital divide and driving technology investments to underserved neighborhoods.



NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) is a mission-driven, non-profit organization that creates shared prosperity across New York City by strengthening neighborhoods and growing good jobs. NYCEDC works with and for communities to provide them with the resources they need to thrive, and invests in projects that increase sustainability, support job growth, develop talent, and spark innovation to strengthen the City's competitive advantage.



NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is the nation's largest municipal housing preservation and development agency. Its mission is to promote quality housing and diverse, thriving neighborhoods for New Yorkers through loan and development programs for new affordable housing, preservation of the affordability of the existing housing stock, enforcement of housing quality standards, and educational programs for tenants and building owners. HPD is tasked with fulfilling Mayor Bill de Blasio's Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan to create and preserve 300,000 affordable units for New Yorkers at the very lowest incomes to those in the middle class.



NYC Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT) works across City agencies to make existing antiharassment and anti-displacement programs better, and create new strategies to root out abuse. It also serves as a central point of contact for advocacy groups and tenants to raise issues and get results from agencies; leads policy development to strengthen tenant protections and better target problematic buildings and owners; brings government and advocate task forces together to address challenges; convenes and coordinates activities of key city agencies; and tracks outreach efforts across agencies and metrics at a building and neighborhood level.

Community Partners

The NYCx Co-Labs: Housing Rights Challenge emerged from a series of participatory workshops with community experts from Inwood and Washington Heights.

In August 2018, the NYCx Co-Labs Program engaged 35 Inwood/Washington Heights residents, representatives of community-based organizations, entrepreneurs and educators in a series of workshops on housing, education, health, arts & culture, small businesses, and immigrant affairs to identify priority issues in the community. This research was complemented by six one-on-one interviews with local healthcare professionals and stakeholders, 191 relevant data points from the OneNYC challenge survey, expert interviews, a literature review, and participatory workshops with NYC City agencies.

In each Co-Labs community, NYCx convenes a Community Technology Board (CTB) to serve in an advisory role throughout the process of developing the Co-Labs site, defining challenges that are a priority to community members, supporting the challenge competition and advising on pilot implementation. The Inwood and Washington Heights CTB is comprised of local residents, Manhattan Community Board 12 representatives, local community-based organizations, educators, entrepreneurs, and service providers.



Community Overview

Community Context

Inwood and Washington Heights, defined by the boundaries of Manhattan Community Board 12 (MN12), encompasses the northernmost portion of Manhattan, north of West 155th Street. The community of approximately 220,000 people is about 69% Hispanic or Latinx,11 and the largest group in the community is of Dominican descent.12 With a foreign-born population of 46% 13, Inwood and Washington Heights has a diverse cultural identity and heritage. In recent years, though, it has attracted many new residents, who are drawn by its relatively low rents, thriving streetscape, and easy access to Midtown Manhattan.

As its population has grown, the neighborhood is facing new challenges. A lack of housing development, coupled with slow growth in wages, is making Inwood and Washington Heights less affordable. The vast majority of units were built more than 20 years ago. 14 At the same time, rents in the neighborhood are rising quickly. Landlords, looking to take advantage of the changing market conditions. have resorted to harassing and displacing longterm, often low-income and immigrant tenants.

The median household income in MN12 is \$47,496, compared to the median in Manhattan, which is \$79,781.15 Approximately 63% of residents are extremely low- to low-income, making less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), 16, 17 and 17% are under age 18.18 The district also has a high unemployment rate, estimated to be 10.4%.19

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number DP05 (ACS Demographic and Housing

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number B03001 (Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin).

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table Number S0501 (Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-born Populations).

¹⁴ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number B19013 (Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months). Income in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars.

¹⁶ ACS 2013-2017 5vr PUMS Data. These estimates are based on survey data and are therefore subject to sampling and non-sampling

 $^{^{\}rm 17}$ In 2017, Area Median Income (AMI) was \$85,900 for a family of three.

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number S0101 (Age and Sex).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number B23025 (Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over).

Housing in Inwood and Washington Heights

The majority of residents in MN12 are renters, with 87% of apartments occupied by renters.²⁰ The community has about 64,000 occupied apartments, approximately 77% of which are rent-stabilized (See the "Issue Context" for more details about rent stabilization in New York City).²¹ As the neighborhood grows in popularity, it is increasingly difficult for tenants to find vacant apartments.

The housing stock in Inwood and Washington Heights is fairly homogeneous. About 90% of all units are in buildings that were built before 1947, and 95% are in multifamily buildings with 20 or more apartments. The neighborhood has seen very little new construction in recent decades, despite the recent influx of new residents. The majority of the buildings in the neighborhood have:

- Low- and moderate-income residents;
- Vulnerable tenant populations, including (undocumented) immigrants, senior citizens, non-English speakers, and families with children;
- Rent-regulated apartments; and
- Histories/signs of physical and financial distress, harassment, displacement.

Residents reported three or more maintenance deficiencies in 15% of apartments in Inwood and Washington Heights.²² These maintenance deficiencies included: a lack of heat or hot water: cracks or holes in interior walls, ceilings, or floors; the presence of rodents in the building; the presence of broken plaster or peeling paint; and toilet breakdowns and leaks. These issues usually arise when a landlord fails or refuses to make repairs. However, when landlords do make repairs, tenants in these buildings report that the repairs are often insufficient and fail to address the underlying conditions that cause the problem. Maintenance issues are often indicators of a landlords' inability or unwillingness to care for their buildings, but they may also be a sign of tenant harassment.



- ²⁰ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).
- ²¹ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).
- ²² NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).

Issue Context

Overview of Tenant Harassment in New York City

Tenant harassment is any act or failure to act by a landlord or their agent(s) that causes or intends to cause a tenant to give up their home or any of their related rights as tenants. In New York State, tenant harassment can be a felony or misdemeanor. In New York City, it is a violation of the Housing Maintenance Code, and tenants can sue their landlords for harassment in Housing Court.

It was widely believed that certain provisions of New York State's previous rent-stabilization laws created incentives for landlords to employ tactics that would force or motivate tenants to leave their apartments. often through harassment. Rent stabilization is a form of regulation that applies to multifamily buildings in the five boroughs that were built before 1974, as well as to buildings that receive certain tax abatements/ exemptions or financing from HPD. Today, there are approximately one million rent-stabilized apartments citywide, whose rents are governed by the New York City Rent Guidelines Board. Landlords of rent-stabilized apartments cannot raise rents by more than the annual threshold set by the Rent Guidelines Board, usually between 1% and 5%.

Under the previous rent-stabilization laws, which were in effect until June 2019, once the rent of a rent-stabilized apartment was raised above a certain threshold (most recently, \$2,774 per month), a landlord could remove the apartment from rent regulation upon turnover and charge market rates thereafter. The laws provided two main ways for landlords to increase rents:

- 1. The "vacancy bonus": Landlords could raise the rents of rent-stabilized apartments 20% upon vacancy by the previous tenant.
- 2. Major Capital Improvements (MCIs) and Individual Apartment Improvements (IAIs): Landlords could raise rents after completing building-wide (MCI) and/or individual apartment (IAI) improvements in order to recoup the costs of these improvements.

Because tenants in rent-stabilized units are guaranteed lease renewals, some landlords resorted to harassing tenants and forcing them out of their homes in order to raise rents and ultimately transition apartments from being rent stabilized to being market rate. Many speculative landlords utilized business models that explicitly called for the deregulation of rent-stabilized apartments and implicitly relied on harassment to remove rent-stabilized tenants.

Tenant harassment can take many forms. Some of the most common tactics reported in Inwood and Washington Heights include:

- Cutting essential services, such as heat and hot water, electricity, and gas
- Failing to make repairs or making insufficient repairs
- Engaging in illegal or unsafe construction activity (e.g. tearing apart a tenant's bathroom for repairs and never replacing it; allowing construction debris and dust to accumulate; performing construction without a permit; etc.)
- Bringing repeated, frivolous lawsuits against tenants
- Making repeated offers to buy out tenants
- Threatening to call ICE on foreign-born tenants, regardless of their immigration status
- Failing to recognize rent reduction orders obtained by tenants from New York State Homes and Community Renewal (NYSHCR)
- Discriminating against tenants that are members of a protected class or based on their source of income
- Disrupting tenants' efforts to organize

The City provides strong legal protections for tenants, especially for those in rent-stabilized buildings; however, many tenants are unaware of their rights and/or do not have the confidence to claim them. This lack of knowledge and confidence leaves tenants vulnerable to landlords who want to harass them and force them out of their homes. Combating tenant harassment requires residents who are well-informed about their rights and who feel empowered to fight back.

In New York City, and in Inwood and Washington Heights in particular, tenant organizers help tenants fight harassment and displacement through a combination of education, advocacy, and legal action.

The New Rent Laws

In June 2019, the New York State Legislature passed the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which led to sweeping reforms of the laws that govern New York City's housing stock. These new laws expand tenants' rights and closed many of the loopholes that were inviting speculative investment in rent-stabilized multifamily buildings. By abolishing the destabilization threshold, doing away with the "vacancy bonus," and reforming MCIs and IAIs, the new legislation undermined investors' business model of churning tenants in order to raise apartment rents to market rates. The bill also extended new protections to tenants in both stabilized and non-stabilized apartments.

While the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act is a huge win for both tenants and housing advocates, many tenants may still be at risk of harassment and displacement. Some landlords have threatened that the new laws require them to defer necessary maintenance and repairs in their rent-stabilized buildings, claiming they no longer have the means to financially support building maintenance. Speculative landlords whose business model is premised on the ability to raise rents to market rate also run the risk of financial crisis in their overleveraged buildings, which could lead to foreclosure and displacement.

The need for continued tenant protection, education, and organizing is great. NYSHCR, the agency charged with implementing the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act, has not finalized the rules governing the new legislation and has not yet updated any of its outreach materials. The burden of educating tenants about their new rights and ensuring that landlords are complying with the new laws falls largely on already-overburdened tenant organizers. New tools and strategies will be necessary

to ensure that they can get the message out. For more information on the strategies that tenant organizers use to combat tenant harassment and the challenges that they face, please see the "Strategies and Challenges for Tenant Organizing" section of the Appendices.

Market Analysis

Fundamental to the NYCx Co-Labs program is the idea that the use of technology can generate strong social impact - particularly in intractable issues, from local to global in scale. In addition to impact, we have found that low-income and rent-stabilized housing represents a massive, dynamic, and global market opportunity across the world for those technologies and innovations able to address ongoing sector challenges and traditionally under-served populations. This is true, even in light of uniquely local or national policies and programs governing such housing.

There is some difficulty in sizing the market for technology and innovations uniquely focused on affordable housing: using data from Pitchbook, a private market investment business intelligence platform, B2C startups featuring the keyword "tenants" raised some \$293 million across 33 deals in 2018 - 100% year-over-year growth from 2017.23 While a \$1.6 million median deal size using these criteria suggests that this segment of the industry is still in early innings, the broader market for "real estate" technology" - also known as "proptech" or "smart buildings tech" - is a multi-billion dollar industry. The industry saw more than \$4 billion in investment funding alone in 2018, an increase from \$20 million ten years prior, and a number of so-called "unicorns" with more than \$1 billion single-company valuations.

Improving the operations of buildings - up to and including technologies that facilitate the two-way exchange of information to and from residents of such buildings - is not only a strong private real estate market opportunity, but also a public policy priority with considerable funding available at the local (New York City) and national level. New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, which promotes the quality and affordability of the city's housing and the strength and diversity of its many neighborhoods, spends more than \$98 million annually and employs more than 800 ²⁴ employees to oversee its "Preservation" programs, many of which could benefit from buildings and housing technology.²⁵

Across the US, the federal government sends nearly \$44 billion to states to administer a broad range of programs focused on "rental assistance"²⁶. Such budgets capture only a fraction of the city's and nation's investments in affordable housing, which is sourced from a variety of actors - public, private, and nonprofit.

While this challenge is focused on the estimated 49,000 households residing in rent-stabilized units in Inwood and Washington Heights,²⁷ an estimated 2.5 million New Yorkers²⁸ occupy homes that benefit from affordability programs and rent-stabilization, and more than 10 million people in the United States are helped by federal rental assistance.²⁹

https://on.nyc.gov/2UkPuXS

²⁶ Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, "Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheets", December 2019.

https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/federal-rental-assistance-fact-sheets#US

²⁷ NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2017. US Census Bureau/NYC Dept of Housing Preservation and Development. The NYC HVS is based on 55 Sub-Borough Areas (SBAs that approximate NYC community districts but are not coterminous).

²⁸ New York City Council, "Evictions", (n.d.). https://council.nyc.gov/data/evictions/

²³ More information can be found on Pitchbook. https://pitchbook.com/

²⁴ Council of the City of New York, Fiscal 2019 Preliminary Budget, Department of Housing Preservation and Development, March 2019. https://on.nyc.gov/37HbEa1

²⁵ Council of the City of New York, Department of Housing Preservation and Development committee report, May 2019.

²⁹ Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, December 2019.

Potential Technology Applications

The following are some technologies that could be leveraged to address this challenge. This list should serve solely for the purpose of providing tangible potential examples, and should in no way be considered exhaustive:

Tools to empower residents:

- Informational tools about tenants' rights, actions to take, and resources
- Tools to gather and collect information regarding violations of rent laws in real-time, scalable, and resource-efficient ways
- Digital tools adapted to low digital literacy and language barriers
- Online residential community platforms for residents to communicate, share information, discuss building issues, etc.
- Building/landlord review and discussion platforms
- Building communications technologies, work order management applications, or resident management platforms for personal (smartphone) devices or for common areas inside or outside of buildings

Tools to empower CBOs/tenant organizers:

- Tools to empower city agencies, CBOs, tenant organizers, or others to better protect tenants by increasing information accuracy, precision, timeliness, or analytical efficiency
- Tools that use emerging technology to train or support community engagement, education, or outreach
- Innovative legal aid tools, services, or applications
- Data analytics or AI that detect, alert, and/ or preemptively provide information in light of vacancy and/or displacement patterns, using publicly and/or privately available data



FAQs and Additional References

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I need to have experience working with the public sector?

A: No

Q: What should I include in my submission?

A: Submissions must include a short statement of purpose, a brief description of the team's concept for the challenge and supporting documentation. Further information can be found in the Challenge Manual: Application Process. The evaluation committee will review submissions based on the evaluation criteria to determine the finalists and winners. The committee may or may not reach out to request more detailed technical specifications for the solution you proposed. Details about the type of information, format, and length will be shared along with that request.

Q: Can I propose a novel solution that hasn't been tested before?

A: You may propose a solution that has not yet been tested; however, assumptions should be rigorous and provable. If the project team is interested in your solution, you will be asked to provide additional technical documentation and/or research demonstrating the outcomes that you are claiming. If you have had previous test pilots or deployments, please indicate this information on your submission application.

Q: Will I have an opportunity to meet with the evaluation committee team to pitch my solution?

A: Finalists will have the opportunity to pitch via a web video conference, or via in-person interview, if based in the New York City metropolitan area.

Q: Will I have access to existing City-owned

infrastructure and technology?

A: The possibility to use existing Cityowned infrastructure and technology will be assessed, and considered after a security and operations review by the project team.

Q: If I apply to this challenge, can I also apply to other challenges?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the next step be to issue an RFP to procure the best solution?

A: Upon selection, winning applicant(s) will be offered the opportunity to install/launch their solution in the pilot location. The sponsoring City agencies and the selected applicant(s) will develop a method for evaluating the solution and, if demonstrated to be effective in meeting stated goals, the sponsoring agencies may release an open solicitation to deploy a technology on a larger scale following the completion of the pilot.

Q: Will the contents of the submission remain as my intellectual property?

A: The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the idea and related materials are owned by applicants. However, we urge applicants to bear in mind that this is an open innovation call that is looking for co-creation and joint development. The applicants will decide what kind of sensitive business information they would like, or need, to share in the competition. Individual confidentiality agreements to protect sensitive business information will be accepted to protect the business idea. It is the applicants' responsibility to point out the sensitive information and deliver the confidentiality agreement. All submissions may be published on the Co-Labs website, as written documentation

associated with the competition, on the websites of the agencies, or under other circumstances in which the organizing agencies may want to inform others about the competition and its results. When applicants submit proposals, they accept that their proposal can be published (See the Freedom for Information Law section, and the Ownership and Responsibility section for more information).

Q: Can the contents of my submission be applied without my further involvement?

A: This challenge provides an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of the winning solution, or service in one location in real-life conditions. Additionally, the pilot may be followed by an open solicitation to deploy the technology on a large scale if the evaluation proves its benefits and the sponsoring agencies decide to pursue it. If the open solicitation is released, it will detail the level of involvement required.

Q: Is there any available funding for the winning teams?

A: Teams, who effectively identify funding needs in their application, may be eligible for funding of up to \$20,000 to facilitate installation and deployment of the pilot technology. The solutions that require the least invasive installation and are most cost-effective will receive preference. We also encourage teams to think creatively about financial sustainability and will consider partnerships, especially between small and large firms.

Additional References

The references below are linked to online sources, please click on the links to access the documents

- Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan (2014)
- Housing New York 2.0 (2017)
- NYC Economic Development Corporation: Inwood NYC Planning Initiative
- NYC Council: <u>Background on the Inwood NYC</u> <u>Planning Initiative</u> (2018)
- Rent Guidelines Board
- Housing Court Answers
- Press Release: <u>City Launches Partners in</u> <u>Preservation Pilot Program</u> (July 24, 2018)
- Press Release: <u>City Selects Community</u>
 <u>Organizations to Lead the Partners in Preservation</u>
 <u>Pilot Program</u> (March 12, 2019)
- New York State Housing Stability and Tenant
 Protection Act of 2019
 - Assembly Bill 8281/Senate Bill 6458
- NYU Furman Center: <u>State of New York City's</u> Housing and Neighborhoods in 2018

FAQs and Additional References

Appendices

Demographics

Manhattan Community District 12 (MN12), which comprises Inwood and Washington Heights, is a large and diverse community with a population of approximately 220,000 people.³⁰ The community is majority-Hispanic or Latino, mainly of Dominican descent,³¹ and 46.3% of residents are foreign-born.³² Approximately 17% of the population is under 18 years old, while 14% is at least 65 years old.³³

RACE / ETHNICITY	% OF POPULATION
Asian, non-Hispanic	3%
Black, non-Hispanic	8%
Hispanic or Latino	69%
Other, non-Hispanic34	2%
White, non-Hispanic	19%

Fig. 1: Race / Ethnicity

Household make-up varies greatly, further reflecting the diversity of the community:

HOUSEHOLD MAKE-UP	% OF POPULATION
Married-couple family	27%
Single householder family	30%
Householder living alone (65+)	12%
Other non-family households	31%

Fig. 2: Race / Ethnicity 35

The median household income in CD12 is \$47,496³⁶, and the majority of residents are extremely low-to low-income.

RACE / ETHNICITY	% OF POPULATION
Extremely low income (0-30%)	29%
Very low income (31-50%)	17%
Low income (51-80%)	17%
Moderate income (81-120%)	17%
Middle income (121-165%)	10%
Above middle income (166%+)	11%

Fig. 3: Income levels by percent of Area Median Income^{37,38}

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey5-Year Estimates. Table number DP05 (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates).

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number B03001 (Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin).

³² US Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

³³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number S0101 (Age and Sex).

³⁴ Other, non-Hispanic includes American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, some other race alone, or two or more races.

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number DP02 (Selected Social Characteristics in the United States)

³⁶ Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table number B19013 (Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months). Income in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars.

³⁷ ACS 2013-2017 5yr PUMS Data. These estimates are based on survey data and are therefore subject to sampling and non-sampling error

³⁸ In 2017, Area Median Income (AMI) was \$85,900 for a family of three.

Inwood NYC Planning Initiative & City Investments³⁸

Inwood NYC is a comprehensive plan to ensure that Inwood remains an affordable, attractive neighborhood for working and immigrant families. The Inwood plan lays out a framework for City action and investment in Inwood in response to the community's needs, including over \$200 million of new public investment to the neighborhood. These investments will create, preserve, and protect thousands of affordable homes; restore parks and create access to the Harlem River waterfront; provide new STEM education opportunities; and support small businesses and workforce training.

Inwood NYC is the result of over three years of extensive engagement with the Inwood community, including over 25 bilingual public events, workshops, stakeholder meetings, and a survey, through which over 2,500 community members and local stakeholders engaged with the planning process. One of the top community priorities identified through this community planning process was the need to preserve the neighborhood's existing affordable housing and protect tenants from harassment.

Community Resources

Inwood and Washington Heights have a variety of community resources to support and serve tenants, including both CBOs and elected officials.

Inwood and Washington Heights have an active network of CBOs that serve neighborhood residents who are facing harassment and displacement. Many of these organizations are represented on the Community Tech Board. To learn more about these organizations and the services they offer, please visit their websites.

Elected officials serve as an important resource for residents in Inwood and Washington Heights. They are often the first stop for tenants seeking resources or who have complaints about their buildings' conditions and/or their landlords' behavior. Elected officials connect tenants to resources provided by CBOs and government agencies, file complaints on behalf of tenants, and introduce and advocate for legislation to increase and improve tenant protections.

City Council

Ydanis Rodriguez, Council District 10 District Office: 618 West 177th Street, Ground Floor New York, NY 10033 917-521-2616 https://council.nyc.gov/district-10/

New York State Assembly
Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly District 72
District Office:
210 Sherman Avenue, Suites A & C
New York, NY 10034
212-544-2278
https://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Carmen-N-De-La-Rosa

³⁸ This section gives a brief overview of the Inwood NYC Planning Initiative. For more information about the initiative and accompanying investments, please see the "Inwood Points of Agreement" and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) "Inwood NYC Planning Initiative" website. Links to these materials can be found in the "Resources and Other Materials" section. Those components of the Inwood Plan that are tied to the Inwood Rezoning approved by the City Council in 2018 cannot be implemented at this time because the rezoning was annulled by a State Supreme Court judge. The decision annulling the rezoning is being appealed by the City.

New York State Senate

Robert Jackson, NY Senate District 31 District Office: 5030 Broadway, Suite 701

New York, NY 10034

212-544-0173

https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/robert-jackson

US House of Representatives
Adriano Espaillat, NY District 13
Washington Heights District Office:
720 West 181st Street, Suite 2
New York, NY 10033
212-497-5959
https://espaillat.house.gov/

Manhattan Community Board 12
Richard Lewis, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager
530 West 166th Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY
10032
https://www1.nyc.gov/html/mancb12/

html/home/home.shtml

Strategies for Tenant Organizing

Strategies

Tenant organizers, such as the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC), help tenants to understand and claim their housing rights and to build power so that they may fight harassment and displacement. Organizers work with tenants through three broad action areas: education, advocacy, and legal action.

Education

Educating tenants about their rights and related government agencies and services is fundamental to organizing against harassment. Tenants with an understanding of their rights are better positioned to act on those rights and to hold their landlords accountable. Tactics organizers use to educate tenants include:

- Leading Know-Your-Rights trainings and workshops
- Hosting or participating in tenant resource fairs
- Conducting outreach to tenants in target buildings
- Providing one-on-one counseling for tenants to discuss their individual issues and concerns
- Building the capacity of tenant leaders and other tenant-support organizations

Advocacy

Organizers also advocate on behalf of tenants to help them achieve improvements in their building conditions and landlords' behavior. Advocacy can take a wide variety of forms:

- Organizing tenant associations and developing tenant leaders
- Coordinating tenant associations across buildings with shared portfolios, ownership, and/or geography in order to maximize tenant power
- Assisting tenants in pursuing repairs, upgrades, and landlord action
- Partnering with City agencies to arrange inspections and record violations
- Connecting tenants to direct and legal service providers
- Holding press conferences and staging protests to draw public attention to the conditions in buildings and/or the behavior of landlords

Legal Action

Finally, tenant organizers partner with legal service providers to help tenants to navigate the complex and confusing housing legal system in New York City. They assist tenants in understanding overlapping City and State laws governing tenants' rights and landlord responsibilities and in determining the appropriate legal strategies for both individuals and buildings. Not all tenant organizing groups have housing attorneys on staff (those that do not work with local legal service providers), but all assist tenants with legal action, such as:

- Providing assistance in completing NYSHCR forms for rent overcharges, rent reductions, etc.
- Collecting evidence and completing paperwork to support Housing Part cases
- Writing and submitting letters of complaints to landlords
- Organizing rent strikes

Challenges for Tenant Organizing

Tenant organizing is deeply impactful and it can profoundly improve tenants' day-to-day living conditions. However, it is also very challenging work, with multiple obstacles to overcome. Three main issues threaten the success of tenant organizing efforts: a lack of resources and capacity, tenants' fear, and cultural challenges.

Lack of Resources and Capacity

One major issue that tenant organizers have raised is the lack of resources, which leads to a diminished capacity to do their work. Huge sums of funding have been directed to legal services in recent years (see below), but similar funding has not been made available for organizing. Legal service providers now have an increased demand for tenant organizing, which feeds their pipeline, but organizers have not received additional funding to meet this demand. The larger workload without matching funding means most tenant organizing groups are understaffed and organizers cannot get as deeply involved in their target buildings.

Furthermore, tenants in the target buildings often lack the resources or energy to fully participate in organizing activities, particularly if they are worn down by the long-term poor conditions in their buildings.

Tenants' Fear

Tenant organizers have also reported that tenants' fear of retaliation by their landlords is another impediment to successful organizing. Many tenants see their landlords as faceless but powerful entities and fear the potential fallout of making complaints or otherwise standing up to their landlords, such as eviction or loss of their rental subsidies (e.g. Section 8 vouchers). Furthermore, in Inwood and Washington Heights, this fear of retaliation is heightened among immigrant communities, regardless of whether tenants are documented or undocumented. Tenants' fear is directly related to their lack of information about their housing rights, City and State policies, and how to request repairs and rent reductions.

Cultural Challenges

Inwood and Washington Heights is a predominantly Dominican community with a large share of foreignborn residents. Tenants often have culturally informed points-of-view, which can lead to additional complexities for tenant organizers. For example, NMIC reported that some tenants they organize are ashamed to ask for help and believe they may create even more problems if they complain or take action against their landlords. Even if they do understand their rights, they often feel unprotected and do not believe exercising these rights is a viable option. These challenges are compounded by limited and poor translation services and an opaque legal system that is difficult to navigate, especially if tenants are not from the United States.

The City's Efforts to Combat Tenant Harassment

To supplement and support the work being done by tenant organizers, the City has also undertaken several initiatives that seek to address tenant harassment and displacement on multiple fronts:

HPD Partners in Preservation (PiP)

PiP is an 18-month pilot program that seeks to improve coordination between community-based organizations (CBOs) and City agencies in order to prevent tenant harassment and displacement. The program is being piloted in three neighborhoods, including Inwood and Washington Heights. Networks of CBOs in each pilot neighborhood received funding to organize tenants and implement strategies to address building conditions and bad landlord behavior in target buildings. The CBOs are also working with HPD staff to implement broader tenant protection and education strategies in their neighborhoods. Both the work in particular at-risk buildings and the broader tenant protection efforts will require the CBOs to closely coordinate with direct and legal service providers, as well as government agencies.

HPD Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit (TAHU)

HPD formed TAHU in 2018 in order to pursue potential cases of maintenance harassment in multifamily residential buildings and to connect tenants to legal services resources. TAHU has ten dedicated staff, including two attorneys who can initiate litigation against unscrupulous landlords. The Unit uses data analysis to identify potential buildings and portfolios where harassment is occurring; respond to emergency complaints; partner closely with the Department of Buildings (DOB) and other agencies to address issues; and connect tenants with legal services.

HPD Certification of No Harassment (CONH) Program

The CONH program is a three-year pilot program which requires owners of certain buildings to obtain a Certification of No Harassment (CONH) from HPD prior to acquiring permits from DOB for work

involving demolition or changes in use or occupancy. The CONH applies to buildings with high levels of physical distress or ownership changes, as well as buildings in HPD enforcement programs or in which there has been a finding of harassment within the last five years by a court or NYSHCR. The CONH process is intended to ensure that owners do not undertake major construction projects by harassing lawful occupants into leaving or otherwise depriving them of their rights. The program is currently being piloted in several neighborhoods, including Inwood and Washington Heights.

Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force (THPT)

The THPT was created to investigate and bring enforcement action – including criminal charges — against landlords who harass tenants by creating unsafe living conditions through illegal construction. It is a collaboration between the Office of the NYS Attorney General (OAG), NYSHCR, and City agencies, including HPD, DOB, and the Law Department, among others. The THPT coordinates City and State agencies for joint inspections, enforcement actions, and litigation strategies to intervene in buildings where harassment may be occurring in order to prevent tenants from being forced out.

Department of Buildings Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA)

The OTA serves as a resource to tenants who may be experiencing harassment from construction in their buildings. The OTA is responsible for ensuring that landlords and owners comply with the requirements of the Tenant Protection Plan for the duration of construction projects in their multifamily buildings. The Tenant Protection Plan provides a list of compliance categories that must be met in buildings undergoing construction that contain at least one occupied unit.

Human Resources Administration (HRA) Right to Counsel (RTC)

The RTC law aims to ensure that anyone facing eviction in court will have access to legal help. Over the next several years, the City is phasing in RTC to provide tenants who are facing eviction in Housing Court with access to free legal services. During the initial implementation phase, all low-income tenants facing eviction in Housing Court who live in specified ZIP codes have access to full legal representation. The program has been implemented in ZIP code 10034, which covers a portion of Inwood, but has not been implemented for the entire neighborhood. RTC will be fully phased in by 2022.

Law Department Anti-Harassment Unit

The Law Department has established an Anti-Harassment Unit within the Affirmative Litigation Division to bring major actions against large landlords who are harassing tenants through construction activities in violation of the City's Building Code. The Anti-Harassment Unit works with DOB and HPD's Housing Litigation Division to bring cases against landlords and owners who are conducting illegal work, harassing tenants, and who have other violations across multiple City agencies. These cases focus on securing compliance from landlords, eliminating hazardous conditions, and protecting tenants.

Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT)

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the formation of the MOPT in his 2019 State of the City address. The Office serves as a central point of contact for tenant advocates and leads comprehensive tenant outreach and education on anti-harassment initiatives. It convenes and coordinates activities of key City agencies and community-based organizations working on curbing tenant harassment, leads and strengthens the THPT, and tracks and coordinates efforts across the City's many anti-harassment programs.

Public Engagement Unit's Tenant Support Unit (TSU)

The New York City TSU was created in 2015 to provide assistance to New Yorkers who may be experiencing landlord harassment, are at risk of displacement, or need to make home-related repairs. Tenant Support specialists conduct proactive outreach in select neighborhoods to assist tenants with accessing important City resources, such as free legal assistance or housing inspections. The program has been implemented in ZIP code 10034, which covers a portion of Inwood, but has not been implemented for the entire neighborhood.

Legal Information

Publicity and Promotion of the Challenge

For promotional purposes, all challenge winners will be required to provide marketing materials to support the announcement of their solution.

The partnership may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the proposals, documents -- notably summaries for publication -- as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material, that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

The organizers will publish the name of both the finalists and the winner(s), their origin, and their nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest).

Ownership and Responsibility

The participant is accountable for the proposal and ensuring that no intellectual property rights, industrial property rights, copyright and/or image rights are violated.

The participant assumes complete responsibility with regard to third parties: organizers are free of all liability. Should the proposal be short-listed, the participant authorizes organizers to disseminate, reproduce and publish the proposal in any format.

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the idea and related materials are owned by the contestant. However, we urge the contestants to bear in mind that this is an open innovation call that is looking for co-creation and joint development. The contestants will decide what kind of sensitive business information they would like, or need, to share in the competition. Individually confidentiality agreements to protect sensitive business information will be accepted to protect the business idea. It is the contestants' responsibility to point out the sensitive information and deliver the confidentiality agreement. All submissions will be published on NYCx Co-Labs website, as written documentation associated with the competition, on the websites of the organizing partners and network or under other circumstances in which the organizing partners and network may want to inform others about the competition and its results. When contestants submit for the competition, they accept that their proposal can be published.

Terms and Conditions

NYCx Co-Labs - Competition Terms and Conditions ("Official Rules")

Organizers / Sponsors

This Open Innovation Call ("OIC" or "Challenge") is organized by the NYCx Co-Lab program which is a partnership between the NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO) and the NYC Economic Development Corporation.

NYCx Co-Labs are neighborhood-based partnerships that combine technology piloting and education in high-need, high-opportunity neighborhoods across NYC to challenge inequality in the deployment of smart city technologies.

The program brings together a set of partners — from government, local non-profit organizations, technology companies, communities, and foundations — through various events, workshops, and community spaces to accelerate research and development of new technologies that can improve city life. NYCx Co-Labs is based on developing strong community relationships through human-centered design and participatory methods.

The NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer, the NYC Economic Development Corporation, The Housing and Preservation Department and the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants ("The City") will launch The NYCx Co-Labs: Housing

Challenge which is calling for innovative projects, services or products to address housing rights.

Teams are responsible for all of their own costs, including but not limited to, developing and testing submissions and all ancillary costs such as travel. If no team qualifies for baseline performance expectancy, then the evaluation panel may reassess performance standards.

Participating teams will be afforded the opportunity to, with other teams, share resources and assets, merge, or reorganize at any point during the Open Innovation Call to produce the best outcome. Teams that do merge must agree on terms that integrate all parties involved under one entity so that there are no disputes during contract negotiations in the event that the conjoined team wins the OIC.

The City may, at any point during the Challenge, change any details about the Challenge as unforeseen circumstances arise.

Eligibility

To be eligible to compete in the OIC, a team must be an Eligible Entity. An Eligible Entity is a person or company, 18 years or older, who is not disqualified by restrictions defined in the following sentence. Employees of the City, and the judges or any of their respective affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising agencies, or any other company or individual involved with the design, production, execution or distribution of the Challenge and their immediate family (spouse, parents and step-parents, sibling and step-siblings, and children and step-children) and household members (people who share the same residence at least three (3) months out of the year) of each such employee are not eligible to participate and receive award of a stipend or agreement with the City or any award. Participation constitutes participant's full and unconditional agreement to these Official Rules and Sponsors' decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the Challenge. Award of a stipend is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements set forth herein.

Each team must designate a Team Leader. The Team Leader will be the sole point of contact between the team and the Challenge administrators.

The City reserves the right to limit, or restrict upon notice, participation in the OIC to any person or entity at any time for any reason. Teams may withdraw as set forth in the guidelines provided in the Challenge Rules.

Confidentiality

Challenge participants may be exposed to information about the City's business that is considered sensitive to its operations. Teams are required to sign a Non-Disclosure.

Agreement and to protect and keep confidential any information it may come into contact with during the challenge process as laid out in the Challenge Rules.

Privacy and Data Collection

The Open Innovation Call ("OIC") organizers ("NYCEDC, MOCTO, HPD and MOPT) collect participants' personal and contact information for the purposes of the The NYCx Co-Labs: Housing Rights Challenge. This information may be shared with New York City agency participants and external evaluators to assess and score submissions. Participants' information will also be stored and used for marketing and promotional purposes. Participants have the right to request that OIC organizers amend any data that is incorrect or in need of updates. Participants also have the right to request that OIC organizers delete any personal information pertaining to the participating teams and team members. Applicants can exercise these rights by contacting Oscar Romero, NYCx Co-Labs Program Director, of the NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer at oromero@cto.nyc.gov, with a specific request to change or delete personal information.

Challenge Rules

The Challenge will begin at 10:00:00 AM Eastern Standard Time ("EST") on February 25, 2020 and end at 11:59:59 PM Eastern Time on July 15, 2020 ("OIC Period"). The OIC is organized by the City of New York. Participation is subject to all federal, and New York state and local laws and regulations. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. You are responsible for checking applicable laws in your jurisdiction before participating in the Challenge to make sure that your participation is legal and to ensure that you comply with all relevant laws. You are responsible for obtaining all passports, visas, and other government-required documents and permissions needed to participate in the OIC.

All submissions must be electronic, and to enter, you must visit the application page and complete all forms by 11:59:59 PM, Eastern Time, on July 15, 2020. By making a submission you acknowledge and agree to hold the City and the Partners harmless from any and all claims, loss or damage to your personal property, liabilities and costs, including attorney's fees, as a result of your participation in this OIC, including travel to and from the Activity (including air travel) or any events incidental to this OIC.

The timeline is proposed as follows (all dates are subject to change):

- 1. Application Process: The application will be accepted on a rolling basis from February 25, 2020 to July 15, 2020. Applications are to be submitted by July 15, 2020, by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time. Applications will include a short statement of purpose, a brief description of the team's concept for the challenge and supporting documentation. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel from MOCTO, NYCEDC, HPD, and MOPT. All applicants may receive follow-up clarification questions during this time on a set date to ensure equal time for clarification responses.
- 2. Finalists: Finalists will be selected in the Summer of 2020. These selected applications will be reviewed by a panel of venture capitalists and the Inwood/Washington Heights Community Tech Board, composed of local community members. These two panels will provide written feedback on the applications, which will be shared with applicants through the challenge judges.
- 3. Final Round: Finalists will be announced during Summer 2020. They will be invited for a pitch presentation and Q&A session with a panel of judges. This presentation may be conducted via video conference.
- Winners Announced: Winning teams will be announced in Summer, 2020.
- 5. Pilot Period: Pilots will begin in Fall 2020 and will run for a period of 6-9 months.

2020 COMPETITION TIMELINE		
Applications Open	Feb 25, 2020	
Information Session	TBD, 2020	
Deadline for Submissions	July 15, 2020	
Finalists selected	Summer 2020	
VCs and Community Tech	Summer 2020	
Board provide feedback	Summer 2020	
Pitch Presentations and Q&A	Summer 2020	
Winners Announced	Summer 2020	
Contracts/Funding	Summer 2020	
Pilot	Fall, 2020	

*Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the competition timeline is subject to change.

Please sign up for updates here.

ALL POTENTIAL AWARDEES ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION BY EVALUATORS WHOSE DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE CHALLENGE.

In Summer 2020, organizers will announce the finalists on the NYCx Co-Labs website. The finalist submissions may also be featured on official social media channels operated by the City of New York.

Finalist participation does not include assistance with or travel costs or other expenses associated with the OIC, if required. No cash in lieu of award. No substitution of award is permitted except by organizers. Award is not assignable or transferable. Limit one award per person/team. If Awardee(s) cannot participate for any reason, Awardee(s) will forfeit the award and Sponsors may, at their option and in their sole discretion, select an alternate awardee or the award may not be awarded. All of the award elements are subject to change and shall be determined by the organizers in their sole discretion.

Finalists are responsible for obtaining all necessary travel documents prior to travel. Certain restrictions, as determined by organizers, may apply. All specifics of the Challenge will be at Sponsors' discretion. If Awardee(s) cannot comply with these restrictions or any other portion of these Official Rules, the award will be forfeited in its entirety and an alternate Awardee(s) will be chosen. If finalists cannot meet deadlines specified by organizers, any award will be forfeited in its entirety and the award may be awarded to an alternate finalist selected by a panel of judges from among finalist entries. All costs and expenses associated with award acceptance and use not listed herein as part of the award including, without limitation, ground transportation (other than that specified above as included in prize), luggage fees, souvenirs, miscellaneous hotel expenses, and gratuities are the sole responsibility of finalists.

All federal, state and local income taxes on award(s) and gratuities are solely the responsibility of the Awardee. Payments to potential Awardee(s) are subject to the express requirement that they submit to the Sponsors all documentation requested by the Sponsors in compliance with all applicable state, federal and local tax reporting

and withholding guidelines. All Awards will be net of taxes Sponsors are required by law to withhold. The Awardee is responsible for ensuring that he/she complies with all applicable tax laws and filing requirements. If the Awardee fails to provide such documentation or comply with such laws, the prize may be forfeited and the organizers may, in their sole discretion, select an alternative potential Awardee.

Organizers do not claim any ownership rights in the intellectual property of the subject of each participant's Submission. By participating, you agree to be bound by these Official Rules and grant organizers a non-exclusive, fully paid-up, perpetual and royalty-free, worldwide license to use, modify, delete from, add to, publicly perform, publicly display, reproduce and translate your Submission, including without limitation the right to use all or part of your Submission in any format in perpetuity.

By participating, you consent to the use, by Sponsors, their affiliates, subsidiaries, parents, and licensees, of your name, likeness, and image, in connection with the OIC and organizers' related marketing activities, in any media or format now known or hereafter invented, in any and all locations, without any payment to or further approval from you. You agree that this consent is perpetual and cannot be revoked. You agree that nothing in these Rules grants you a right or license to use materials owned by organizers or any materials or data supplied by Sponsors during the course of the OIC.

Warranties

By participating in the OIC, you represent and warrant that your Submission: Is your own original work; does not violate or infringe upon the copyrights, trademarks, patents or other rights of any person or entity; does not and will not violate any applicable law, statute, ordinance, rule or regulation; and does not trigger any reporting or royalty obligation to any third party. You further represent and warrant that the rights that you are granting under these Official Rules do not conflict in any way with any other agreement to which you are a party, or with any commitments, restrictions, or obligations that you are under to any other person or entity.

Participation Conditions and Release

By entering, each participant agrees to: (a) comply with and be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of the Sponsors and/or the Challenge judges which are binding and final in all matters relating to this Challenge; (b) release and hold harmless the Sponsors, and their respect parent, subsidiary, and affiliated companies, the award suppliers and any other organizations responsible for sponsoring, fulfilling, administering, advertising or promoting the OIC, and all of their respective past and present officers, directors, employees. agents and representatives (collectively, the "Released Parties") from and against any and all claims, expenses, and liability, including but not limited to negligence and damages of any kind to persons and property, including but not limited to invasion of privacy (under appropriation, intrusion, public disclosure of private facts, false light in the public eye or other legal theory), defamation, slander, libel, violation of right of publicity, infringement of trademark, copyright or other intellectual property rights, property damage, or death or personal injury arising out of or relating to a participant's Submission, creation of an entry or submission of an entry, participation in the OIC, acceptance or use or misuse of an award (including any travel or activity related thereto) and/or the broadcast, trans-mission, performance, exploitation or use of a Submission; and (c) indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Sponsors from and against any and all claims, expenses. and liabilities (including reasonable attorneys fees) arising out of or relating to a participant's participation in the OIC and/ or participant's acceptance, use or misuse of an award.

Publicity

Except where prohibited, participation in the OIC constitutes participant's consent to organizers' and their agents' use of his or her name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/ or hometown and state for promotional purposes in any media, worldwide, without further payment or consideration. Participants are prohibited from using the City name or any of its trademarks, without the express written approval by the City.

General Conditions

Organizers reserve the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the OIC, or any part of it, if any fraud, technical failures or any other factor beyond organizers' reasonable control

impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the OIC, as determined by organizers in their sole discretion. Organizers reserve the right in their sole discretion to disqualify any individual or participant it finds to be tampering with the entry process or the operation of the OIC or to be acting in violation of these Official Rules or any other promotion or in an unsportsmanlike or disruptive manner. Any attempt by any person to deliberately undermine the legitimate operation of the OIC may be a violation of criminal and civil law, and, should such an attempt be made, the Sponsors reserve the right to seek damages from any such person to the fullest extent permitted by law. Sponsors' failure to enforce any term of these Official Rules shall not constitute a waiver of that provision. Sponsors are not responsible for, nor are they required to count incomplete, late, misdirected, damaged, unlawful or illicit Submissions, including those secured through automated means or by registering more than one email account and name, using another participant's email account and name, as well as those lost for technical reasons or otherwise.

All Challenge related submissions and materials become the property of the NYCx Co-Labs Partnership.

Limitations of Liability

The Released Parties are not responsible for: (1) any incorrect or inaccurate information, whether caused by participants, printing errors or by any of the equipment or programming associated with or utilized in the Challenge, (2) technical failures of any kind, including, but not limited to malfunctions, interruptions, or disconnections in phone lines or network hardware or software; (3) unauthorized human intervention in any part of the entry process or the Challenge; (4) technical or human error which may occur in the administration of the Challenge or receipt or use of any award. If for any reason a participant's Submission or is confirmed to have been erroneously deleted, lost, or otherwise destroyed or corrupted, participant's sole remedy is to provide another Submission within the applicable deadline. No more than the stated number of awards will be awarded.

Disputes

Participant agrees that: (1) any and all disputes, claims and causes of action arising out of or connected with this Challenge, or any award, other than those concerning the administration of the Challenge or the determination of awardees, shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action; (2) any and all disputes, claims and causes of action arising out of or connected with this Challenge, or any awards, shall be resolved exclusively by the United States District Court or the appropriate New York State Court; (3) any and all claims, judgments and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering this Challenge, but in no event attorneys' fees; and (4) under no circumstances will participant be permitted to obtain awards for, and entrant hereby waives all rights to claim punitive, incidental and consequential damages and any other dam- ages, other than for actual out-of-pocket expenses, and any and all rights to have damages multiplied or otherwise increased. Some jurisdictions do not allow the limitations or exclusion of liability for incidental or consequential damages, so the above may not apply to you. All issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation and enforceability of these Official Rules, or the rights and obligations of the entrant and Sponsors in connection with the Challenge, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York, without giving effect to any choice of law of conflict of law rules (whether of the State of New York or any other jurisdiction), which would cause the application of the laws of any jurisdiction other than the State of New York.

Privacy

Sponsors collect personal information from you when you enter the Challenge. The information collected by the City is subject to the City's privacy policy.

OIC Results

Challenge results will be announced in Summer 2020.

Freedom of Information Law

The City is subject to the New York State Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL"), which governs the process for the public disclosure of certain records maintained by the City. (See Public Officers Law, Sections 87 and 89.) Proposal submission material will generally be made available to interested parties upon written request, except when specifically exempted from disclosure under the requirements of FOIL. Individuals or firms that submit proposals to the City may request that the City except all or part of such a proposal from public disclosure, on the grounds that the proposal falls within the exceptions to FOIL disclosure, which include that it contains trade secrets, proprietary information, or that the information, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the individual or firm submitting the information. Such exception may extend to information contained in the request itself, if public disclosure would defeat the purpose for which the exception is sought. The request for such an exception must be in writing and state, in detail, the specific reasons for the requested exception. It must also specify the proposal or portions thereof for which the exception is requested. If the City determines that the requested exemption from public disclosure qualifies for an exemption from disclosure under FOIL, the City will grant the requested exception to the extent permitted under FOIL.

