OVER 35 TECHIES REGISTERED TO CODE SOLUTIONS FOR FOSTER YOUTH AT ACS' FOSTER CARE HACKATHON IN NEW YORK CITY

First-ever City-hosted event to develop technical solutions to challenges faced by foster youth will take place this weekend at the eBay offices in Manhattan

New York, NY- This Saturday, December 3rd and Sunday, December 4th, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), in partnership with the **Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation** (MOTI) and **Think of Us**, a web and mobile platform supporting foster youth to successfully transition into a prosperous adulthood, will host the first-ever NYC Foster Care Technology & Policy Hackathon. This two-day event brings together child welfare experts, foster care providers, foster youth, parents, non-profits, government and technology experts to help us "hack" NYC foster care system's most pressing challenges.

This May, ACS joined the White House in Washington D.C. at its inaugural foster care and technology hackathon, where foster care families, child welfare leaders, and other professionals convened with tech experts to discuss ways to improve our foster care system through the use of technology. Inspired by the White House's foster care and technology hackathon, the NYC foster care and technology hackathon will code solutions for **six challenging issues** facing foster youth, parents, and social workers.

"Technology has the incredible power to transform lives," said **Gladys Carrión, Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children's Services**. "We are excited to harness tech and partner with New York City's robust tech community to develop solutions that make a significant impact on the foster care system."

"We must accelerate our advancements in technology to modernize our country's child welfare systems," said **Rafael López, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**. "With cutting-edge technology and the entrepreneurial spirit of innovators we can make progress and find solutions to some of our greatest challenges in child welfare.

"We're thrilled to partner with ACS on this important effort to boost services and connectivity for New York's foster care kids," said **Jeff Merritt, Director of Innovation at the Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation**. "This is an exciting opportunity for New York's brightest minds to come together, contribute their unique technology skills, and help better the lives of thousands of foster youth, foster parents and social workers."

"Witnessing tech and child welfare come together at The White House was amazing, however, it was just the first step," said **Sixto Cancel, CEO of Think of Us**. "We're thrilled to continue the

momentum as we work together with NYC's leaders and talented tech community, to develop innovative ideas that will support more efficient and effective tech in the child welfare system."

Resulting from the White House's hackathon, the Obama Administration announced a number of **new steps** aimed to increase the use of technology in improving outcomes in the foster care system. In New York City, there are currently under 9,000 children and youth in care, with 3,000 waiting to be adopted. Youth aging out of care face tremendous challenges, including assessing furthering their education, finding employment and obtaining housing. Lessons learned from the White House's hackathon will help NYC in developing our own technical solutions to address challenges in foster care.

In 2009, the city held a New York City Big Apps competition where techies created technological tools to help advance multi-agency initiatives. Since then, the NYC Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation is actively engaging New Yorkers via the **Calls for Innovation site**—a one-stop shop for individuals anywhere in the world looking to get involved in challenges put forth by different City agencies. This upcoming weekend's #HackNYCFosterCare hackathon is one of them.

The hackathon will begin on Saturday, December 3rd and will go overnight until Sunday, December 4th at eBay New York in Midtown Manhattan. Hackers will help us develop tech solutions that address the challenges below.

Youth Challenges:

- Peer to Peer Communication

- Enhancing Youth Voice in Transition Plans

- Speeding Up System Responses

Foster Parent Challenges:

- Connecting Foster Parents Together

- Recruiting Foster Parents

Social Worker Challenge:

- Reaching and Communicating with Youth

To learn more about the NYC Foster Care Technology & Policy Hackathon, please visit: **www.nyc.gov/acs/hackathon**. Click **here** to read ACS' Strategic Foster Care Blueprint.

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care. For more information, please visit **www.nyc.gov/acs**.