FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 27, 2019
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Automated Decision Systems Task Force Announces Spring Public Forums
The Task Force will hold two public forums this Spring during which members will hear guidance and comments from community-based organizations, researchers, private sector companies, and the general public.

NEW YORK— Today the New York City Automated Decision Systems Task Force announced it will be holding two public forums this Spring. At these forums, the 21-member Task Force will invite panelists to provide commentary that will guide the Task Force as it develops its recommendations, which will be finalized and made public in late 2019. The public is also invited to speak directly to the Task Force at these sessions. Both forums will be held at New York Law School in lower Manhattan and will be livestreamed.

The first forum, to be held on Tuesday, April 30, will focus on the first three core components from Local Law 49 of 2018 that center around fairness and accountability: development of criteria for deciding which systems are considered within the purview of this Task Force and its recommendations, a process for the City to determine if an ADS has disproportionate impact on an individual or population on the basis of characteristics like race or gender, and a process for addressing instances of harm due to such disproportionate impact. The second forum, to be held on Thursday, May 30, will focus on the remaining topics from the law, which center on the principle of government transparency: processes by which impacted people can request information about ADS, strategies for publically disclosing information about those systems, and a feasibility analysis of archiving agency systems.

The Task Force is composed of 18 members and three co-chairs from City agencies, nonprofits, universities, and other organizations, and has been meeting regularly since May 2018. The Task Force is chaired by Jeff Thamkittikasem, Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations, and co-chaired by Brittny Saunders, Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives at the City Commission on Human Rights, and Kelly Jin, Chief Analytics Officer and Director of the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics.

"The commentary from panelists and residents will be invaluable alongside the diverse array of professional backgrounds and expertise of the Task Force members," said Jeff Thamkittikasem, Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations and Task Force Chair. "We are thrilled that these forums will provide the opportunity for the public to contribute to the Task Force's important and challenging work."

"We are excited to launch this public engagement process. We can't overstate the importance of hearing from individuals, organizations, and communities as we formulate our recommendations on the use of algorithms in New York City government," said Brittny Saunders, Deputy Commissioner at the NYC Commission on Human Rights and Task Force Co-Chair. "We look forward to the input these forums will provide to inform Task Force members' work, and contribute to the broader public dialogue on use of these technologies."

"New York City is the first to examine the role of automated decision systems in local government, and we have the rare advantage that the leading voices in the field are here in our own backyard," said Kelly Jin, Chief Analytics Officer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics, and Task Force Co-Chair. "The feedback and stories we hear from experts and community leaders will help make the Task Force's recommendations as representative and well-informed as possible.

In addition to the two Spring forums, the Task Force also plans to hold a series of summertime community meetings at which Task Force members will be able to gain additional insights and feedback from New Yorkers.

Council Member Peter Koo, Chair of the Technology Committee, stated, "Automation may make our lives easier, but it requires diligent oversight to ensure all algorithmic decisions are made fairly and in the best interests of those who live, work and visit New York City. These forums are a great opportunity for the public and civic tech world to help shape our future and make sure the systems that govern our city are more accountable and transparent for all."

"As 'New York's law school,' we're proud to host important conversations about technology and society to ensure our governmental operations are best in class and are as equitable and inclusive as possible," said Anthony Crowell, Dean and President of New York Law School.

About the Forums

The public forums will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 30, and Thursday, May 30, at:

New York Law School
185 West Broadway (corner of West Broadway and Leonard)
Room W-400
New York, NY 10013

The event is free and open to the public. If you are unable to attend or would like to provide written comments for the Task Force, please email ADSTaskForce@cityhall.nyc.gov.

To request accommodations to attend the event, please contact Mary Sue Daniels, Senior Manager of Special Events at New York Law School, MarySue.Daniels@nyls.edu.

About the Automated Decision Systems Task Force

The Automated Decision Systems Task Force was created by Local Law 49 of 2018, and aims to review how the City uses algorithms to make decisions. The Task Force is required to recommend procedures for reviewing and assessing City algorithmic tools help achieve the goals of equity and fairness for all New Yorkers. For more information or to provide comment, please visit: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/adstaskforce/index.page.