

PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY FUND

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Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA, and AT&T Announce the Launch of NYCHA Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T

The intergenerational leadership development program aims to give youth living in public housing critical technology skills and exposure to technology career opportunities

The 10-week program connects youth to resident leaders to tackle a technology project at select NYCHA developments.

The first cohort will develop technology projects that will help resident leadership connect with over 11,000 public housing residents and foster intergenerational connections.

Brooklyn, New York – The Public Housing Community Fund (formerly Fund for Public Housing) and AT&T have teamed up to launch a free innovative program to provide critical digital literacy skills to help bridge the digital divide for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents. Executive Director of the Public Housing Community Fund Alex Zablocki joined NYCHA’s Senior Director of Resident Participation and Civic Engagement DaVida Rowley-Blackman, AT&T’s CFO, Pascal Desroches, public housing resident leaders, youth, and community partners to announce the launch of the NYCHA Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T.

Powered by AT&T, the NYCHA Youth Tech Corps is an intergenerational collaboration that will help bridge the digital divide and bring technology projects to participating NYCHA developments throughout the five boroughs. Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation, the Fund for Public Housing, in partnership with Soulful Synergy, developed the inaugural youth-centered technology program to provide comprehensive technology skills training to youth ages 16 to 24.

The year-long pilot program is free for participants and will host three 10-week long cohorts. Each cohort culminates with a graduation ceremony where participants receive a certificate of completion and a cash stipend. Through this free program, participants will develop valuable technology, leadership, communication, and client service skills, setting them up for success in their future endeavors. It’s projected that there will be more than 3.5 million tech-related jobs in the U.S. by 2025, underscoring the importance of providing youth with the tools and skills necessary to compete in this innovation economy – especially those in underserved and underrepresented communities.

As part of the launch of the program, AT&T and Human-I-T surprised participants with free laptops, funded by an AT&T donation, at the kick-off event. Every participant of the first cohort received a laptop, while the other devices will be given to members of the future cohorts, to be used to help with digital projects within their communities in collaboration with public housing resident leaders. These efforts are part of the [AT&T Connected Learning initiative](#), and the companywide \$2 billion [commitment](#) from 2021- 2023 to help address the digital divide through internet accessibility, affordability and safe adoption. They are also part of the company’s dedication to advancing education, creating opportunities, strengthening communities, and improving lives.

“Through the power of intergenerational collaboration and technology, we can break down the barriers that divide us and create a more equitable future for all public housing residents,” said **Public Housing Community Fund Executive Director Alex Zablocki**. “Thanks to this investment by AT&T in young leaders from across the five boroughs, they will learn valuable technology skills and be exposed to careers and education opportunities in tech. Working with adult leaders and mentors, they will form bonds within their community and tackle a technology problem to connect their community better. We are thrilled to welcome this first class of NYCHA Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T scholars and can’t wait to see what they learn and create together!”

"We are excited that the Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T program is being brought to NYCHA developments to foster intergenerational connections that will help bridge the digital divide and benefit both resident leaders and youth members of the community alike," said **NYCHA Interim CEO Lisa Bova-Hiatt**. "We are grateful for the support of the Public Housing Community Fund and its partners and thank them for their ongoing commitment to investing in the lives and futures of public housing residents across the five boroughs through initiatives like this."

“As a Brooklyn native, I am honored to be here to support the wellbeing and development of this community,” said **AT&T CFO Pascal Desroches**. “As a company, AT&T has made a multi-year, \$2 billion commitment to expand internet accessibility, teach digital literacy and address the digital divide that exists in too many communities. That is why we are so excited to collaborate with the Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA and Soulful Synergy on this innovative program. This program will provide youth with the necessary skills to compete in the innovation economy and pursue careers in technology while also solving real life technology challenges that currently exist throughout NYCHA. It is a win-win for every generation.”

"We are thrilled to be part of the launch of the NYCHA Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T program, which aligns perfectly with our mission to empower communities through technology, resources, and education. By providing comprehensive technology skills training and promoting intergenerational collaboration, we believe this program will have a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of residents in NYCHA communities. We look forward to working with our partners to bridge the digital divide and provide opportunities for success in the digital age," said **Soulful Synergy Co-Founders Alejandro Alvarez & Dwayne R. Norris**. Soulful Synergy is another partner of the program, and curriculum facilitator.

The first of three cohorts will meet every Saturday through June at Wyckoff Gardens' Resident Association computer lab. Youth participants from each development will work with resident adult leaders to develop a technology plan. With guidance from Soulful Synergy, young leaders will help the resident association accomplish its goals based on skills learned in the classroom. Participants selected in this first cohort reside in Wyckoff Gardens, Unity Plaza, Whitman, Hughes Apartments, and Polo Grounds, representing over 11,300 public housing residents, nearly 17% over 62 and 29% under the age of 18.

“Our youngest New Yorkers are more and more engaged in the future of tech and innovation, making investments in underserved and underrepresented communities critical to ensuring they have exposure to the foundational skills to be competitive in today’s academic and professional spaces,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “I’m grateful for public-private partnerships like the one between NYCHA, Public Housing Community Fund and AT&T that connect communities, funding, and access to technology to help bridge this gap together.”

“I’m delighted that the Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T is launching a program at Wyckoff Gardens, which will prepare the next generation of leaders for the digital age,” said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**. “This program will teach young people STEM and tech skills and develop a collaboration with resident association leaders to help address unmet tech needs. I want to thank NYCHA, Public Housing Community Fund, Soulful Energy and the AT&T for making this program possible. I’m excited to see the impact this program will have in the community.”

"NYCHA approached me about the Youth Tech Corps Program Powered by AT&T, and I thought it would be a great opportunity for our young people to learn about technology and stay off the streets," **Valarie Bell, Resident Association President, Wyckoff Gardens**. I believe it can be a way for different developments to communicate with each other, so I fully support bringing the program here to Wyckoff Houses."

"I'm excited the Public Housing Community Fund and AT&T will be bringing digital literacy skills and technology training to young people in our NYCHA developments - including Wyckoff Gardens," said **New York City Councilmember Lincoln Restler**.

The NYCHA Youth Tech Corps Powered by AT&T program has a waitlist for youth and resident participants and will open up the application for the second cohort in June. More information on the program can be viewed at www.fundforpublichousing.org.

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About the Fund for Public Housing

Public Housing Community Fund, formerly known as the Fund for Public Housing, is a nonprofit that forges partnerships to power transformative programs that enhance the lives of over 500,000 residents across NYCHA communities. The Fund engages people and partners to build a stronger, more equitable New York City by investing in public housing communities. The Fund invests in programs focused on leadership development, financial empowerment, community health, and workforce training for residents of the NYCHA community. For more information, visit www.communityfund.nyc.

About NYCHA

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the largest public housing authority in North America, was created in 1935 to provide decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. NYCHA is home to roughly 1 in 16 New Yorkers across over 177,000 apartments within 335 housing developments. NYCHA serves over 339,000 residents through the conventional public housing program (Section 9), over 29,000 residents at developments that have been converted to PACT/RAD, and over 92,000 families through federal rent subsidies (the Section 8 Leased Housing Program). In addition, NYCHA connects residents to opportunities in financial empowerment, business development, career advancement, and educational programs. With a housing stock that spans all five boroughs, NYCHA is a city within a city.

About Philanthropy & Social Innovation at AT&T

We're committed to advancing education, creating opportunities, strengthening communities, and improving lives. As part of our companywide \$2 billion commitment from 2021- 2023 to address the digital divide, we launched AT&T Connected Learning to invest in connectivity and technology, digital literacy, and education solutions to help today's learners succeed inside and outside of the classroom. Since 2008 we've committed to programs that help millions of students across all 50 states and around the world, particularly those in underserved communities.