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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, TECHNOLOGY COMMISSIONER POST, MAYORS OFFICE
TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMISSIONER JIMENEZ, AND PRIVATE
SECTOR PARTNERS LAUNCH “NYC STEPS” PROGRAM**

*Pilot Initiative Provides Training to Help New Yorkers Prepare for and Access Entry-Level Jobs
in City’s Growing Technology Industry*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) Commissioner Carole Post and Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez today launched the New York City Supported Training and Employment Preparation Services (NYC STEPS) program. In collaboration with the technology company NetApp, NYC Steps provides free workplace and computer skills training to help individuals prepare for entry-level jobs in the technology field. Mayor Bloomberg announced to the John Gambling show today that the first NYC STEPS participants will be New York City Family Justice Center clients – victims of domestic violence who want to break the cycles of violence and dependency by preparing themselves for self-sufficiency, rewarding jobs, and financial independence. Upon successful completion of this pilot, NYC STEPS may be expanded to additional City agencies and their client populations to foster professional development opportunities among New Yorkers across the five boroughs.

“Helping New Yorkers acquire the tools and training they need to advance their careers is one of the most importance services our City can provide,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “NYC STEPS is a great example of how the private sector can work with City government to help New Yorkers develop workplace and computer skills in our growing tech industry, helping those seeking to prepare themselves for jobs and gain financial independence.”

“NYC STEPS represents an innovative public-private initiative between DoITT and NetApp to help prepare certain under-served New Yorkers for careers in the technology industry,” said DoITT Commissioner Post. “With the generous support of our corporate partners, we’re able to bring valuable technology training to many who can use it to improve their lives. Thank you to Commissioner Jimenez and the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence for helping to coordinate the program, and also to partner agencies – NYC Service, the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, and the Department of Small Business Services – for

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providing the institutional support to make it sustainable. By coming together in new and unique ways, we are using technology to make a better New York City.”

“We are very excited to add this new program to the myriad of services the New York City Family Justice Centers provide to all victims of domestic violence, as we continue in our commitment to help clients regain control over their lives,” said OCDV Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez. “I want to thank Commissioner Post and her team at DoITT, as well as the NetApp team for making this possible”.

Beginning today, 13 participants from 11 countries, ranging in age from 28 to 53, will attend weekly classes at the Queens Family Justice Center (FJC). The FJC provides a safe, familiar environment with onsite child care, along with classroom space with laptop computers and Internet access for each student. FJC employees and a guest facilitator will instruct students on technology careers and hiring practices, as well as help participants as they work through self-paced online courses lasting 50-90 minutes. Participants will also be given computer and Internet access at the FJC outside of class hours to continue or review the online courses.

Today’s companies need employees who are adept at using basic technology and office productivity tools – and without these basic skills, many unemployed individuals are excluded from consideration or relegated to less secure service or physical jobs. Through an innovative public-private partnership between the City and a range of private-sector partners, NYC STEPS will pilot tailored web-based instruction using two series of lessons selected from SkillSoft’s extensive training catalog, with onsite support and supplemental instruction from volunteers and FJC employees.

The City’s technology agency, DoITT, is leading the program design and coordination with NetApp, one of the City’s strategic technology partners. NetApp will provide in-kind donations of laptop computers, secure storage of laptops, software, and volunteer guest instructors. NetApp will continue to assist the successful graduates/participants in identifying jobs within the technology industry through its vast network of vendors and partners.

“NetApp is proud to work with the New York City Mayor’s Office and DoITT to help victims of domestic violence become better prepared to enter the workforce and regain their financial independence,” said Bob Raymond, district manager for State/Local Government and Education, NetApp. “I participated in one of the program’s introductory classes and it was great to see the women’s enthusiasm and eagerness as they are truly committed to improving the situation for themselves and their families. It was the most enriching two hours I’ve spent in years.”

SkillSoft, a leader in e-learning courseware for business skills, provides access to 12 carefully selected online courses in Professional Effectiveness (time management, business writing, and interpersonal skills) and Desktop Computing Skills (introductions to Microsoft Office, Outlook, Word, PowerPoint and Excel) at no cost to participants.

As part of this pilot, Microsoft is providing free software licenses for all NYC STEPS-issued hardware.

“At Microsoft, we believe technology can do amazing things, and that's why we support great community initiatives like the NYC STEPS Program,” said Laura Wallace, general manager for Microsoft’s NY Metro District. “We are pleased to provide the software that will assist in this important training program and are proud to be a part of a program that has great potential to change peoples’ lives.”

CDW-G, a leading provider of IT solutions to government, education and healthcare, has partnered with Bretford, Logitech, Sennheiser and Tripp Lite to provide in-kind donations of laptop carts, mice, headsets and power supplies respectively, as well as volunteer guest instructors.

“Technology continues to drive efficiency in the workplace, and the ability to use it is not just desired – it is expected by employers,” said Christina Rother, president of CDW Government LLC. “The NYC STEPS program provides the skills women need to enter or re-enter the workforce and succeed. It will bring eager new workers to companies in the New York City area and, in the process, can transform the lives of its participants.”

Also part of this initiative, NYC Service will coordinate volunteers to assist with weekly classes and ensure a steady stream of high-profile guest instructors from the public and private sectors. In addition, the Department of Small Business Services’ Workforce1 program will strengthen candidates' employment prospects by providing certificate holders with access to job-readiness services and interview and resume development workshops.

In consultation with DoITT and the New York City Family Justice Centers, NetApp and SkillSoft have developed two “certificate tracks” of six courses each, upon completion of which students will gain a unique accreditation. Following their completion of the courses, NetApp will convene a panel of professionals to discuss careers in technology. Ultimately, successful participants will be referred to entry-level job opportunities at local employers.

For participants who progress successfully through the program, there may be an opportunity for additional specialization or training. Workforce 1 and its partners will help direct certificate holders to appropriate entry-level job opportunities.

The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications provides for the sustained, efficient and effective delivery of IT services, infrastructure and telecommunications to modernize, unlock, innovate and enhance service delivery to New York City’s residents, businesses, employees and visitors.

The New York City Family Justice Center Initiative of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence reduces barriers faced by victims of domestic violence who are seeking help. Launched by Mayor Bloomberg in 2005, this initiative enables victims to meet with a prosecutor, speak with a trained counselor, and apply for housing and financial assistance in just one visit – all in their language while their children play safely in the next room. By providing services in one location with partnering City agencies and community providers, the Brooklyn, Queens and Bronx Centers are increasing the effectiveness of service delivery to break the cycle of violence.

The New York City Family Justice Center Initiative is a private/public partnership of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector.

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