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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**Mayor Fulop and Jersey City Housing Authority Help Close Digital Divide
and Promote Digital Inclusion for Neediest Residents**

*JCHA Announces New Partnership with Andrena to Expand High-Speed Internet Access in
Low-income Households, Enhancing Education and Employment Opportunities*

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop joins the **Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA)** to announce the *City's latest initiative to expand broadband internet access throughout public housing developments by providing deeply discounted high-speed internet infrastructure and services* in partnership with **Andrena**, a New Jersey based internet services provider. The program has launched at the Berry Gardens senior housing development and service to Booker T Washington, Curries Woods, and Marion Gardens communities will go live in the coming months.

JCHA put out a public bid for broadband infrastructure and high-speed, low-cost internet services earlier last year and contracted with Andrena to wire four JCHA public housing developments. During the same time, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) began providing Wi-Fi subsidies nationally to eligible households, including residents of public housing. Via the contract with JCHA, Andrena will provide JCHA residents with major discounts on high-speed internet service starting at \$20 per month. Combined with the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, there is no cost for Andrena's service to JCHA residents.

"The digital surge during the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work, and educate, and it has put an urgency on the need to close the digital divide. That's why we're investing in the necessary infrastructure within our public housing developments, so that our neediest families are afforded equitable opportunities in education, employment, and beyond," said **Mayor Fulop**.

The expansion of affordable high-speed internet opportunities at JCHA properties began with a highly successful implementation in Jersey City's Berry Gardens senior citizen public housing community where over 350 units were connected to faster and more reliable internet. JCHA and Andrena team members hosted weekly community events where they assisted Berry Gardens residents in signing up for internet service, connecting devices, and obtaining internet subsidies as a part of the FCC's subsidy programs.

“So far the service is amazing, and the seniors in Berry Gardens appreciate the low cost if not free internet through Andrena and the FCC’s program,” said **Eleanor Mixson, Resident Council President at Berry Gardens.**

In an effort to maximize opportunities for low-income residents under the EBB and ACP programs, the City launched an aggressive public outreach campaign to educate our neediest residents on all available resources.

The EBB was a temporary initiative created by Congress as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, to subsidize broadband access during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program functions as an internet coupon, providing a monthly subsidy of up to \$50 toward internet service for eligible households. Late last year, the FCC announced that as of December 31, 2021, the EBB would transition to a long-term program called the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) with \$14 billion in funding. All JCHA and low-income residents throughout Jersey City can apply for monthly internet subsidies of up to \$30 through the ACP. JCHA and Jersey City have been broadly promoted these subsidies since June 2021.

Andrena Internet offers two month-to-month packages for JCHA residents: \$20 per month for up to 50 mbps or \$32 per month for up to 100 mbps of wireless internet. Additionally, all JCHA and low-income residents citywide can [apply online](#) for internet service subsidies through the ACP program. Anyone who lives in federally-subsidized housing is guaranteed ACP eligibility. And like the EBB, the ACP will fully cover the cost of Andrena’s first tier broadband package for JCHA residents.

"We operate in communities all over New Jersey, and it's clear that the Digital Divide is a very real problem," said **Neil Chatterjee, Co-Founder & CEO of Andrena.** "Municipalities and housing authorities across the state have the ability to bridge this divide, and the Jersey City Housing Authority is a leader on this front. We're honored to help them achieve this vision for their residents."

George Bell, who lives in the JCHA Berry Gardens Apartments, signed up for the new internet service for \$20 a month. “It was easy to sign up for and is a good savings to what I was paying before.” He uses it on his phone and tablet.



In addition to discounted internet services, the EBB and ACP programs provide a one-time device discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider. The one-time discount requires a consumer co-payment of more than \$10 and less than \$50.

Per federal guidelines, households qualify for the ACP program if at least one member qualifies for Medicaid or SNAP benefits; receives free or reduced school lunch; is a PELL grant recipient; or the household income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit. For more information on ACP eligibility, please visit the [ACP website here](#).

“The pandemic has laid bare the critical need among students, workers, and isolated seniors to have access to Wi-Fi and devices,” added **Vivian-Brady-Phillips, JCHA Executive Director.** “JCHA began down the path toward understanding and addressing digital inequity in late-2018 after joining HUD and EveryoneOn’s ConnectHomeUSA initiative. We are so thrilled to see our efforts reach this juncture. In partnership with Andrena and as a result of the FCC’s subsidy programs, more than 1200 JCHA households will have access to free, high-speed internet by mid-2022.”

About Andrena

Andrena provides affordable, high-speed internet to thousands of residents across the Greater New York City area. Andrena is backed by leading Silicon Valley and New York venture capital funds and is rapidly expanding across the East Coast. To check whether Andrena is available at your address, visit their website at www.andrena.com. Interested customers, real estate owners, or other public housing authorities can contact Andrena at 256-907-8690 or email support@andrena.com.

Andrena Internet is currently servicing thousands of residents in New Jersey, Brooklyn, Queens, and Yonkers and is rapidly expanding across the Greater New York City area. Anyone interested in bringing Andrena Internet to their building can contact Andrena through the form on their website: www.andrena.com/property.

About Jersey City Housing Authority

The Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA) is New Jersey's second largest public housing authority, serving 15,000 residents in Jersey City, the most diverse municipality in the country. JCHA is responsible for the administration of approximately 7,100 housing units, including approximately 2,300 public housing units and over 4,700 Housing Choice Vouchers.

The JCHA has been lauded as a champion of energy efficiency and green building practices, policies promoting Section 3 hiring, and an impeccable track record of revitalizing distressed public housing. In addition, its Section 8 program has been ranked among the best in the state. And, recognizing that resident needs go beyond housing, JCHA established its Department of Resident Empowerment and Community Engagement (RECE) in 2018, which has developed innovative partnerships with dozens of government agencies, nonprofits, and institutes of higher education to offer a broad range of services and programming to residents with a particular focus on youth, workforce development, senior, and digital inclusion initiatives.