

January 22, 2018

Via E-Mail & First Class Mail

Mayor de Blasio
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Re: NYC Automated Decision Systems Task Force

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

The undersigned organizations and individuals write to offer recommendations regarding your anticipated appointments to the Automated Decision System Task Force, which is mandated by Local Law 49 of 2018. The task force is required to present the Mayor and ultimately the public with recommendations on identifying automated decision systems in New York City government, developing procedures identifying and remedying harm, developing a process for public review, and assessing the feasibility of archiving automated decision systems and relevant data. We are interested in ensuring the integrity and efficacy of the task force because government use of automated decision systems has broad and varied effects on New Yorkers, and the questions the task force must address are very complicated. We also anticipate that the task force's prospective findings and recommendations can serve as a national or international model for other cities and states grappling with the opportunities and challenges presented by the use of automated decision systems.

To that end, we offer the following recommendations on: (1) Issue and subject matter expertise that should be represented on the task force; (2) City agencies and specific staff that should be appointed or directed to cooperate with the task force; (3) Organizations, institutions, and individuals that should be appointed; and (4) Considerations regarding transparency and conflicts of interest.

1. Issue and Subject Matter Expertise

- Computer Science and Data Science researchers including those with expertise in security, privacy, data management, data mining, and machine learning.
- Computer Science and Data Science practitioners, including those involved in open data initiatives and open source software development.
- Representatives from community-based organizations that represent communities most immediately affected by automated decision systems.
- Experts on New York City government agencies and operations, particularly criminal justice, education, housing, child welfare, public health.
- Experts in the disciplines of ethics, social science, philosophy, social work, and peer review.
- Legal practitioners or experts in data privacy, technology, surveillance, national security, civil rights, and criminal justice. If possible, we also recommend legal scholars with expertise on the European efforts at regulation government use of automated decision systems.

2. City Agencies and Staff

- Mayor's Office of Data Analytics- Craig Campbell or Adrienne Schmoeker
- Commission on Human Rights- Brittny Saunders
- Department of Investigations, Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department
- Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications- Donald Sunderland
- Chief Technology Officer- Miguel Gamiño
- Human Resources Administration- Ariel Kennan
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene- Randi Rothschild
- Manhattan Borough President Office- Aldrin Bonilla
- Fire Department
- Department of Education

3. Organizations, Institutions, and Individuals

- Albert Cahn (CAIR-NY)
- Andrew Nicklin (Johns Hopkins University)
- Ben Wellington (Quant NY)
- Brennan Center for Justice
- Cathy O'Neil (Independent/Former Director of Lede Program in Data Practices at Columbia School of Journalism)
- Center for Democracy & Technology
- Community Voices Heard
- CryptoHarlem
- Janet Haven, Andrew Selbst (Data & Society)
- Data for Black Lives
- Erin Murphy (New York University School of Law)
- Hassan Aden (The Aden Group)
- Helen Nissenbaum and Thomas Ristenpart (Cornell Tech)
- Julia Stoyanovich (Drexel University)
- Jason Schultz, Kate Crawford, and Meredith Whittaker (AI Now Institute)
- Khalil Cumberbatch (Legal Action Center/ Columbia School of Social Work)
- Make the Road
- Mary Jane Dessables (Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies)
- New York Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union
- New York Public Library
- Noel Hidalgo (BetaNYC)
- Patrick Ball (Human Rights Data Analysis Group)
- Picture the Homeless
- Princeton Center on Information Technology Policy
- Queens Community House
- Rebecca Widom and Julia Solomon (Bronx Defenders)
- Ron Davis (Independent/ Former Director of the US Department of Justice COPS Office)
- Save Our Streets Crown Heights
- Tina Luongo (Legal Aid Society)
- Virginia Eubanks (SUNY Albany)

4. Considerations Regarding Transparency and Conflicts of Interest

- To the extent possible, all appointees should publicly disclose any engagement, association, and present or prior grant funding from any vendors of automated decision systems used in New York City government. Appointees should also abide by the New York City Conflict of Interest Law.
- Avoid appointment of New York City agencies that may have or appear to have conflicts of interest because of pending litigation or public criticism regarding the use of automated decision systems. For this reason, we recommend avoiding appointment of the New York City Police Department, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

We understand that striking the right balance in the composition of this task force will be a challenge. Therefore, we welcome you to use the undersigned as resources during the appointment process and we extend the same offer to the subsequent automated decision systems task force chair and members.

Sincerely,

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