

City OS: The 2026 Strategic Pivot to Public Interest Tech

Strategy, Structure, and the Evolution of New York City's Digital Ecosystem

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Executive Summary: The Evolution of NYC Tech



Structural Consolidation

⚡ - **Unifying fractured agencies** (DOITT, Cyber, 311, Data)

⚡ - **Merged into** the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI)

⚡ - Creating a **single digital front door** for the metropolis

OTI



The 2026 Leadership Pivot

- Strategic transition under Mayor **Mamdani**

- Moving from infrastructure-first Getting Stuff Done



Infrastructure-first
Getting Stuff Done



User-centric
Public Interest Tech

- Shifting to user-centric Public Interest Tech led by CTO **Lisa Gelobter**



The Three Battlegrounds

- **Universal Digital Equity**



- **Responsible AI Governance**



- **Modernized Service Delivery**



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The Leadership Pivot: A Strategic Shift

The Infrastructure Era (2022-2025)



Leadership: Matthew Fraser (Adams Administration)



Philosophy: Getting Stuff Done / Efficiency and rapid deployment.



Key Focus: Agency consolidation, foundational portals (MyCity), blockchain/crypto exploration.

The Public Interest Era (2026+)



Leadership: Lisa Gelobter (Mamdani Administration)



Background: Obama-era US Dept. of Education Digital Service, Hulu launch team, tEQuitable founder.



Philosophy: Public Interest Tech / Digital rights and equity.



Key Focus: Algorithmic accountability, embedded service design, decentralization of access.

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OTI by the Numbers: Operational Scale



Managing the digital footprint of a metropolis requires an operating system built for massive scale.

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Critical Infrastructure Modernization



Public Safety Modernization (NG9-1-1)

- Transitioning to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1).
- Features: Interim Text-to-911, advanced GIS routing for pinpoint location accuracy.
- Performance: Zero public safety outages in early FY26 (down from 420 minutes in FY25).

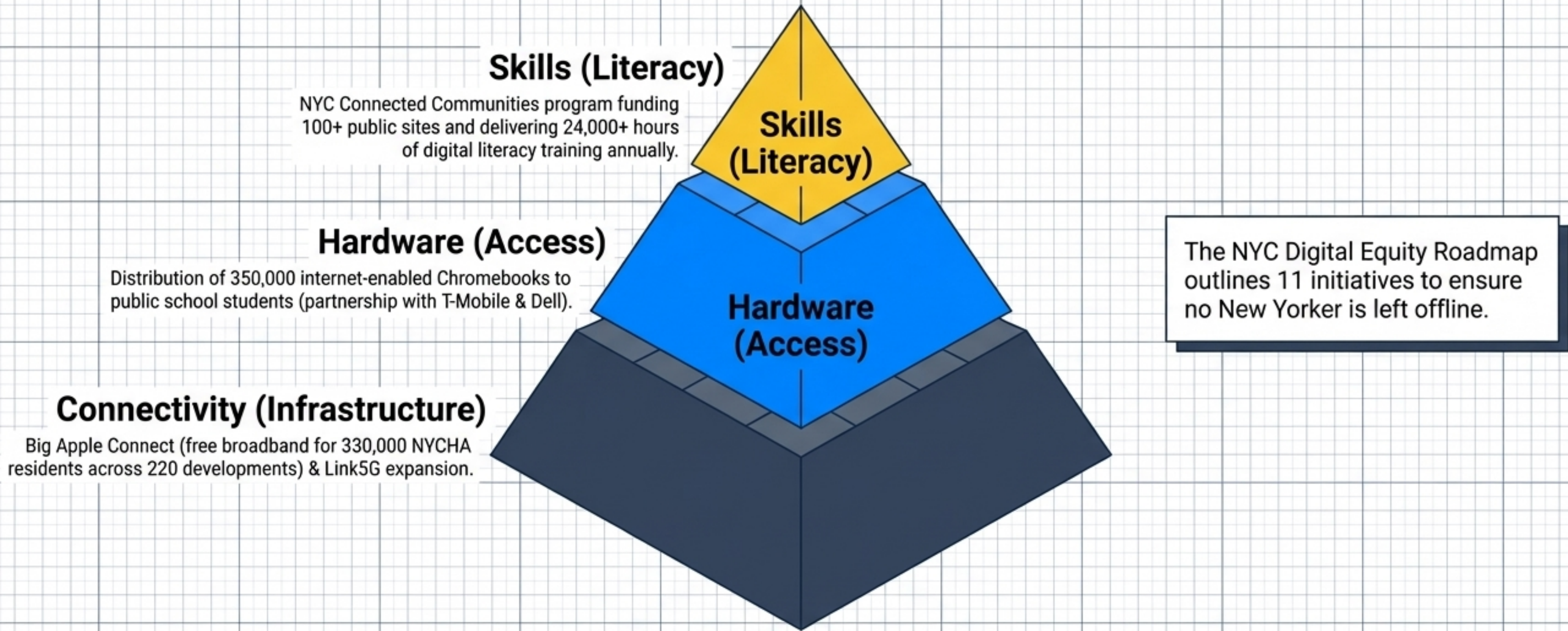


Proactive Cyber Defense

- Navigating global crises (e.g., zero impact on 911 during the 2024 CrowdStrike outage).
- Launch of the nation's largest municipal Vulnerability Disclosure Program (VDP).
 - Allows ethical hackers to responsibly report city system flaws.

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Strategic Battleground 1: Digital Equity



Bridging the Divide: Performance Dashboard



Adoption

Adoption rate of Big Apple Connect among eligible NYCHA households (up from 81.4% in FY25).



Market Shift

Drop in traditional video cable complaints, signaling a massive shift in how residents consume digital services and connectivity.

\$2.4 Million invested directly into community organizations to advance digital equity in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

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Strategic Battleground 2: AI Governance



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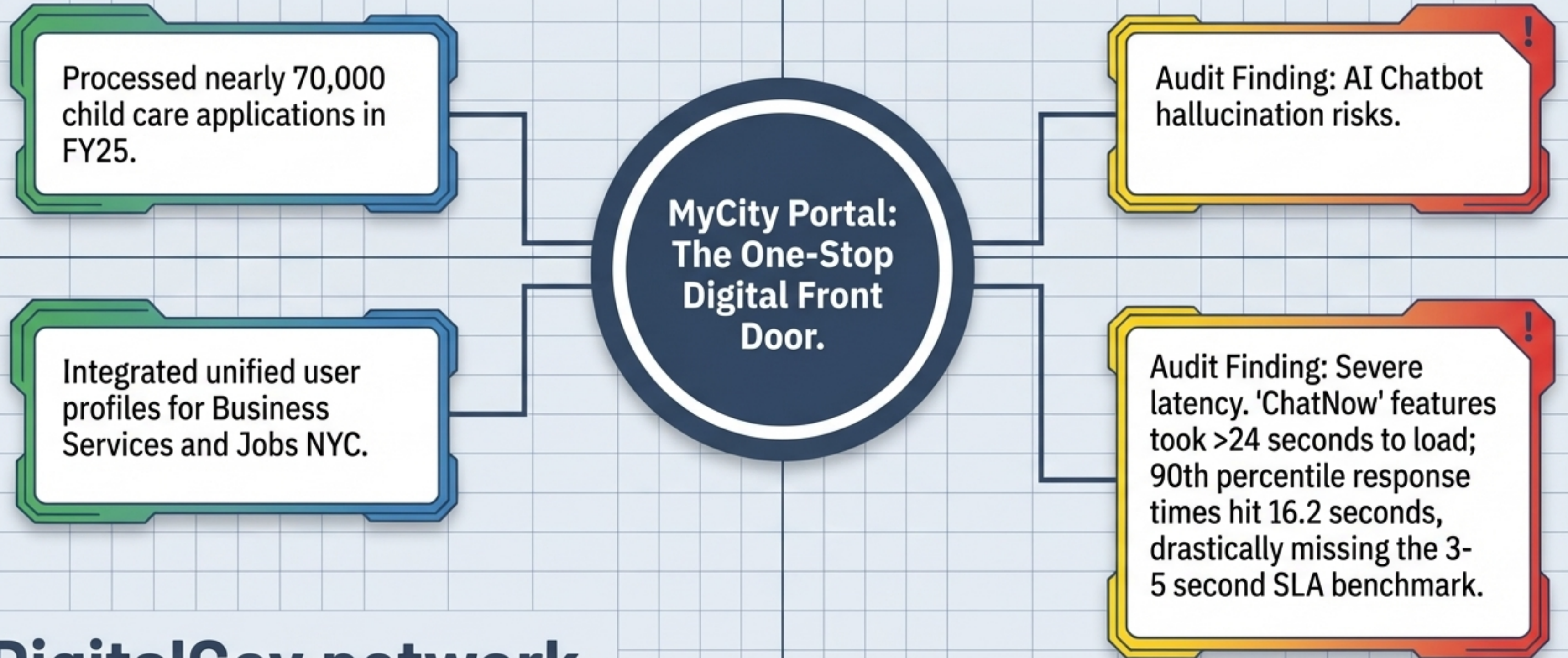
The goal is to balance in-house AI development with strict risk assessment to prevent algorithmic bias.

The Governance Reality Gap: Audit Findings

Policy Intent (The Goal)	Agency Reality (The Audit)
Establish clear, city-wide definitions of AI.	Sampled agencies lack distinct AI definitions.
Develop AI-specific risk management and bias testing protocols.	Agencies rely on broad surveillance laws (e.g., NYPD POST Act) instead of AI-specific governance.
Review NIST vendor evaluations for algorithmic accuracy.	Failure to review NIST Facial Recognition Vendor Test (FVRT) reports prior to algorithmic deployment.

Effective governance in 2026 requires closing the gap between high-level mandates and operational execution at the agency level.

Strategic Battleground 3: Digital Service Delivery



Open Data for All: A Civic Ecosystem

6.2 Million

Rows of open data available.

5.6 Million

Dataset downloads (an 89% increase from FY24).

+34% API / +61% Web

Massive year-over-year engagement growth in API usage and Website views.

Context Box

NYC Open Data Week—co-organized by OTI and BetaNYC—features 70+ events, proving that open data is not just a repository, but a vibrant civic ecosystem.

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The Civic Community Mandate (First 100 Days)



Modernize Plumbing

Standardize data schemas, APIs, and service levels across all agencies.



Open Source Adoption

Stand up an Open Source Program Office to prioritize secure, reusable code over proprietary vendor lock-in.



Elevate Service Design

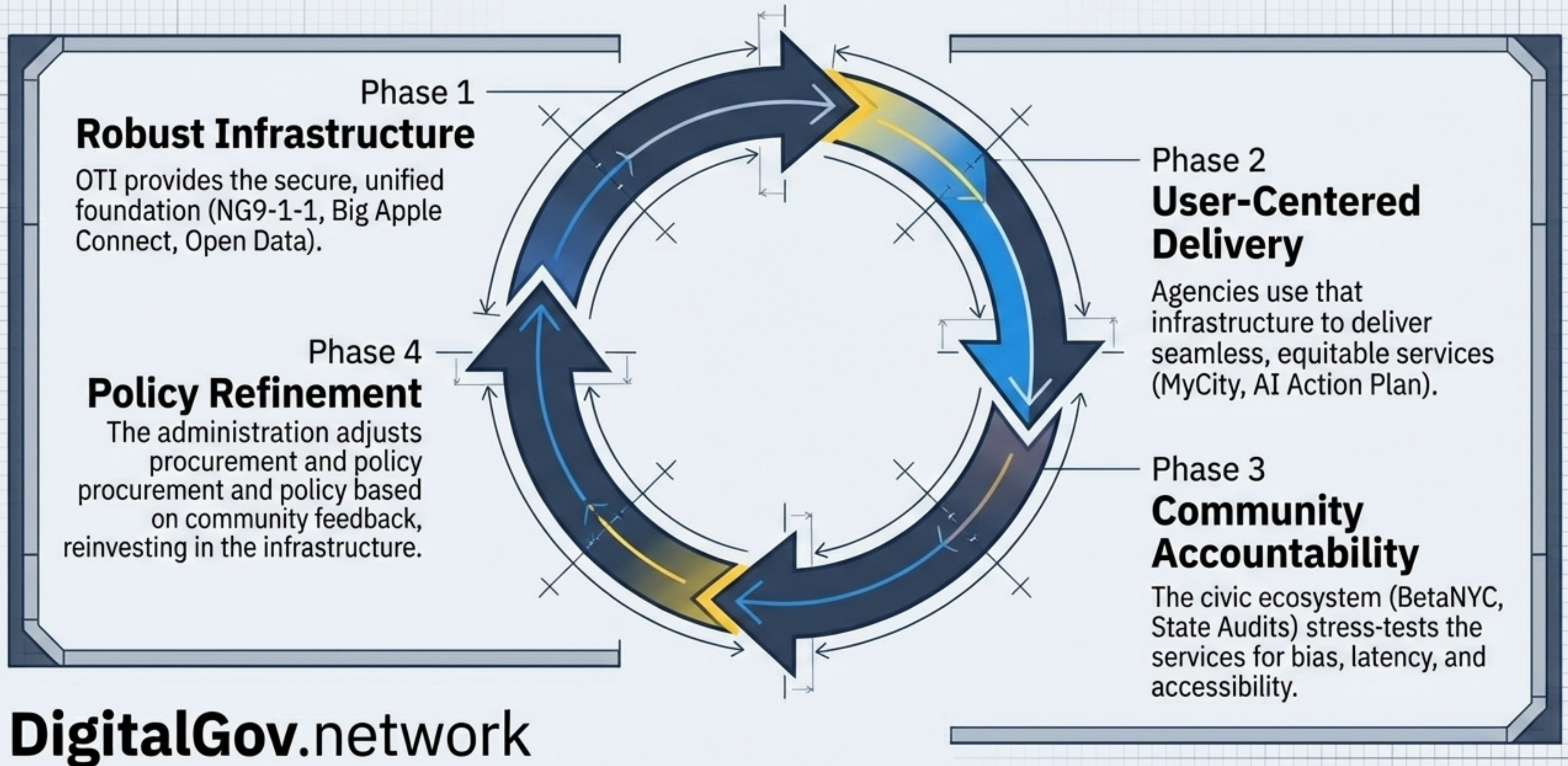
Scale the NYC Digital Service team, embedding service design roles directly within line agencies.



Pipeline Development

Launch a 2-year CUNY Public Interest Tech Apprenticeship focused on AI, GIS, and community data.

The Public Interest Tech Flywheel



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“Technological success in New York City is no longer defined merely by deploying new tools. In 2026, success is defined by ensuring those tools are equitable, accountable, and explicitly built for the public interest.”

The transition from efficiency to equity.

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