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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

City Hall: Most Homeless New Yorkers Will Have to Wait for Working WiFi Until Next Summer

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society condemned Mayor Bill de Blasio for refusing to immediately install broadband-based internet at the overwhelming majority of shelters housing families with children who have been [struggling](#) to access remote learning due to shoddy internet. In response to a demand [letter](#) dated October 8, 2020, from Legal Aid, the City acknowledged in a reply today that it “cannot offer a detailed timeline” and its goal is to have “all sites complete [by] this summer.” There are 240 sites at issue, which are comprised of existing shelters, planned new shelters, scattered site apartment units and other dwellings. The City plans to prioritize installation for 27 shelters “this winter,” but this timeline falls woefully short for the many families and literally thousands of homeless students who need working internet access now.

The City’s reply also confirms Legal Aid’s understanding that the internet access issue was not an isolated one but a systemic problem affecting shelters across New York City in every borough.

“The City’s plan is simply insufficient, and families in shelters will continue to grapple with shoddy internet for weeks and months, impairing access to remote learning,” said **Susan Horwitz, Supervising Attorney of the Education Law Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “This is another problem solely of the City’s own making that could have been avoided months if not years ago if decision makers at City Hall actually listened to our clients’ concerns. Legal Aid remains prepared to take legal action imminently should the City refuse to modify this unacceptable proposal.”

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.

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