

New York City Strategic Funding Initiative

Citywide Implementation and Communications Strategy and Operations

Context

In March 2024, New York City Mayor Eric Adams [announced a \\$741 million investment](#) in human services contracts impacting an estimated 80,000 nonprofit workers. The commitment was to roll out the new funding over three years through 3% annual cost of living adjustments, with the first investment scheduled for July 1, 2024. 1digit was retained to work with the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget to develop an expedited implementation and communication strategy.

Consulting Engagement

1digit established a funding implementation plan and communications strategy driven by human centered design principles, beginning with a 1digit team that represented nearly 60 years of experience in human services contracting. "This 1digit team had been on the receiving end of COLA implementation plans both as government agency executives and nonprofit leaders," reflected Jennifer Geiling, President of 1digit. "We tapped into these experiences to design plans that address the challenges we had faced and considered the different cultural dynamics and pressures of nonprofit organizations and city agencies." Before going live, 1digit also tested calculation methodologies and risk management strategies with end users to ensure ease of use, maximize expediency and cultivate support for deployment. 1digit vetted proposed communications, including instructions and public awareness correspondence, as well as the timeline and media channels.

The final implementation plan included a centralized process for circulating, populating, reviewing and approving a COLA calculation template for every active (and future) human services contract, across thirteen different city agencies, over three fiscal years (FY25 through FY27). The plan also included quality controls and risk management features. The communication strategy was grounded in plain and consistent language through multiple modalities to maximize reach and awareness. The plan included FAQs, emails, webinars and template instructions, each designed for the specific audience – city staff or nonprofit staff.

The project was completed in less than four weeks and within budget.