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Mayor Fulop Announces Bloomberg Innovation Team Director; Data Specialist Brian Platt Selected to Lead New City Office Tasked with Solving Complex Urban Challenges with Initial Focus on Revitalizing Jersey City's Main Street Business Districts

Jersey City One of 12 U.S. Cities Selected for the \$2.25 Million Bloomberg Philanthropies' Grant

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced today that Jersey City has selected data specialist Brian Platt as the director for the city's new Innovation Team, a program funded through a three-year, **\$2.25 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies**. The Innovation Team (i-team) will specifically address Jersey City's most complex and challenging issues with an initial focus on the revitalization of main street business districts.

Jersey City was **one of twelve U.S. cities** selected in December 2014 as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Innovation Teams program.

A graduate of Emory University in Atlanta, Mr. Platt previously worked as an analyst with global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, where he conducted extensive analyses on multiple large data sets, identifying trends and uncovering insights. Prior to that, Mr. Platt – who is pursuing a Masters of Public Administration at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs – taught kindergarten students in Newark through the Teach for American Program.

At Teach for America, Mr. Platt implemented innovative and customized teaching methods that resulted in half of his students reaching second grade or third grade reading levels, and two-thirds of class achieving proficiency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Mr. Platt, who was selected as part of a comprehensive search, currently serves as a senior aide in the Mayor's Office where he has been instrumental in building the city's open data portal and implementing data collection and data-driven decision making processes for all city departments.

"Brian has been a vital component of moving many of our most critical and complex projects forward," said **Mayor Fulop**. "He brings to the team a significant amount of knowledge about data, local government, and the Jersey City community, as well as leadership experience and a creative approach to problem solving."

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The Jersey City i-team will fuse data and community outreach to guide how it defines and responds to complex urban challenges, deploys resources to meet those challenges, and measures the impact of the solutions. The i-team will generate bold, forward-thinking strategies to improve the lives of our community members and advance our dynamic and growing City.

“Public service is a growing passion of mine, and I am humbled and thankful for this opportunity,” said **Mr. Platt**. “This new Jersey City i-team will help us exponentially expand our capacity and capability to improve the quality of life for Jersey City residents in a meaningful way.”

Innovation teams function as in-house innovation consultants, moving from one mayoral priority to the next. Using Bloomberg Philanthropies’ tested Innovation Delivery approach, i-teams help agency leaders and staff through a data-driven process to assess problems, generate responsive new interventions, develop partnerships, and deliver measurable results.

“We know that dedicated innovation capacity can drive bold impact for cities and their citizens,” said **James Anderson, head of Government Innovation programs for Bloomberg Philanthropies**. “We’re excited for the work to get underway in Jersey City with the hiring of the new i-team director.”

“Bloomberg Philanthropies’ i-team model is a unique, data-driven process that will help us accurately diagnose the root causes of key challenges we face as a City and identify solutions that work,” said **Deputy Mayor Vivian Brady-Phillips**. “We look forward to getting our first project off the ground and the exciting work that lies ahead.”

Anyone who would like to apply for a position on the Jersey City Innovation Team should visit the Jersey City website at jerseycitynj.gov/iteam. The complete i-team is expected to be assembled by early May.

Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Innovation Teams program aims to improve the capacity of City Halls to effectively design and implement new approaches that improve citizens’ lives. Grant funds allow mayors to hire and fund i-teams for up to three years. These teams function as in-house innovation consultants, moving from one mayoral priority to the next. Using Bloomberg Philanthropies’ tested Innovation Delivery approach, i-teams help agency leaders and staff go through a data-driven process to assess problems, generate responsive new interventions, develop partnerships, and deliver measurable results.

Innovation team grants were also awarded to Albuquerque, NM; Boston, MA; Centennial, CO; Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Mobile, AL; Minneapolis, MN; Peoria, IL; Rochester, NY; Seattle, WA; and Syracuse, NY, as well as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israel.

Bloomberg Philanthropies’ mission is to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Public Health, Environment, Education, Government Innovation and the Arts. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg’s charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving. In 2014, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$462 million. For more information on the philanthropy, please visit bloomberg.org or follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter @BloombergDotOrg](#).

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