

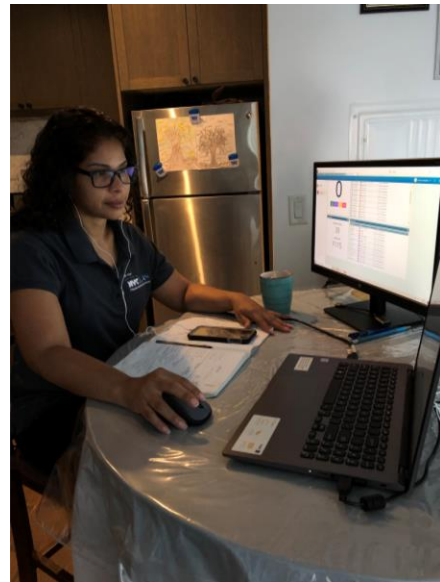
## Fleet Helps NYC Get Cool

By: Keith T. Kerman and Nathaniel Koszer

Due to COVID-19, Fleet staff have been asked to take on many new roles supporting emergency response. We have reviewed the specifications for Personal Protective Equipment, assisted the Office of Chief Medical Examiner in their difficult responsibilities, and continue to help coordinate food support for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers daily.

This summer, ten of our fleet staff also helped give out air conditioners (ACs) to seniors in need. Seniors are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and it is essential they do their best to socially distance themselves to stay safe. Adding to the challenge, it has been a particularly hot and humid summer, with heat already a major safety risk.

To help address the heat, Mayor de Blasio announced the Get Cool program on May 15. The program provides a free AC to seniors who are NYC residents, don't have a working AC, and participate in certain public assistance programs. The 55 million dollar program will support up to 74,000 households with ACs by the end of summer.



As per Mark Chambers, Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, "Whether it is opening our streets to pedestrians, distributing free air conditioners to our vulnerable seniors, or fighting for utility bill relief for those that need it most, addressing the imminent threat that heat vulnerable neighborhoods face this summer is a critical part of climate leadership that must shape a just transition out of this pandemic."

The Mayor's Office asked for support with handling 311 calls to schedule ACs and deliver the units. Ten staff at DCAS Fleet responded and have been spending the summer, either full-time or part-time, fielding thousands of calls, explaining the program to NYC seniors,

and scheduling deliveries. Mechanic inspector Scott Rose has also helped to transport and install the ACs.

Our staff have been particularly gratified to help many seniors who did not realize they were eligible, and to hear from them about how important this cooling help is. Special thanks to NYC Fleet staff members Ramona Ledesma-Garrido, Marcin Gubernat, Veronica Rodriguez, Jason Li, Nate Koszer, Matthew Aronberg, Amira Samad, Scott Rose, Gary Prasad, and Tomomi Landsman who all provided phone or delivery support for this important emergency program. Thanks to everyone at the Mayor's Office, Department for the Aging, Human Resources Administration, NY National Guard, and the others who implemented this effort.



You can learn more about the NYC Get Cool initiative [here](#).

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