

Mayoral Candidate Name: Kathryn Garcia

UJA-Federation of New York's Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

1. Please describe the most significant challenges you believe NYC will be facing at the start of 2022, and how, should you be elected, you would address these challenges. Please provide specific plans.

The key to our recovery is to provide the necessary support and day to day quality of life investments—clean parks, safe transit, reliable childcare, access to fresh healthy foods—that allow all New Yorkers to thrive. My Administration will prioritize supplying the most vulnerable New Yorkers with meaningful economic relief and pathways for economic mobility. First, we will provide free childcare for working families, allowing guardians, especially women, to get back to work. Second, we will unlock barriers for small businesses by increasing access to credit, streamlining all laws and regulations governing restaurants and nightlife establishments, and cutting red tape for all permit and licensing processes. Third, we will create job pipelines into both the public and private sector for justice involved youth, CUNY colleges, and trade schools. We will guarantee graduates of our trade schools City employment, work with the private sector to offer 10,000 paid internships to high school students, and subsidize wages for youth who face barriers to employment. Lastly, for housing we will focus City investment where it's needed most and create 50,000 units of deeply affordable housing (<30% AMI).

While it has been a dark year for New York City, that thing that makes us New York hasn't gone away. The people who started those restaurants, theaters, salons, bodegas, dance clubs, gyms, and museums – all their creative talent is still here. They just need help. That's why the core of our recovery plan is meaningful economic relief and job pathways for the most vulnerable New Yorkers. I have proposed a robust [Reopen to Stay Open Plan](#) that has three key focus areas:

- Create a single small business City Permit. Any new business with less than 100 employees will be able to fill out just one simple, streamlined permit to get up and running. You will be able to apply for that City Permit on your smartphone. Any new or returning business that applies for a City Permit will get a response within 1 month of submitting the application.
- Launch CrowdsourceNYC, a fund that provides zero interest microloans to small businesses with 20 employees or fewer, starting with anchor investments from the City's pension fund and support from the private sector.
- Reimagine how the City uses public space to give local businesses and art organizations a bigger footprint in their communities--by reforming our concessions and public art permitting process to unlock hundreds of thousands of square feet of public space for arts and culture.

2. What previous experience(s) qualify you to be an effective Mayor? Why?

I'm running for Mayor because I love New York, and our City needs a crisis manager who will be ready to get to work on day one to make our city healthier and more liveable, with opportunities for all- no matter the color of your skin, economic status, or what zipcode you live in. I believe our city needs someone that has dedicated their life to public service, not politics, to get us through this. We cannot afford another 4 years of planning without execution.

I have the most experience in city government and crisis management of any candidate running for Mayor. As Sanitation Commissioner, I led the world's largest municipal waste management, recycling, street cleaning and snow response agency. As the former Interim Chair of NYCHA, I worked to reduce and prevent lead exposure in children. As COO of the Department of Environmental Protection, I made sure all NYers had clean drinking water and led the response to emergencies such as Hurricane Sandy. Most recently, I delivered over 200 million meals to New Yorkers in need after the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated food insecurity in our city. After a career in public service, not politics, I deeply understand how city government works and doesn't work, and know that I am the best one to execute on how to fix it moving forward.

3. Please share your personal experience with managing organization(s). How does this management experience translate to your proposed management of New York City's 300,000+ workforce and associated operational complexities and challenges?

I've led the City's largest operating agencies including the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Sanitation, managed billions in budget dollars and thousands of city staff, and led ambitious climate reforms (banning styrofoam) and crisis responses (Hurricane Sandy). During COVID, I built a program that delivered 200 million meals to families in need out of the Department of Sanitation over the course of a weekend, starting with zero infrastructure. I am the only candidate that has city government experience which includes 14+ years of delivering essential services, like clean tap water, clearing snow and picking up trash, for all 8.1 million New Yorkers. Not only that, I often had to deliver multiple different services at the same time- when I was tapped as Interim Chair of NYCHA to combat the lead crisis, and tapped to build the GED Food program during COVID, I was still Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation, and responsible for managing our waste operations. I know how city agencies work and don't work, and what bureaucratic reforms we need to make a more streamlined and efficient city government across the board.

4. How do you intend to work with other sectors of New York City, including business and not-for-profit, to move your Mayoral agenda forward?

Our nonprofit partners and philanthropy are experts in the communities and clients they serve. We are fortunate as a city to have a strong nonprofit services sector that has been a great partner to the city for over a century. Our business community, especially our small business community, will be at the heart of our recovery. If our businesses don't recover, NYC won't recover.

I believe in bringing everyone to the table, making sure I understand the problem, and involving everyone in designing and implementing a solution. I would invite the nonprofit and philanthropic community and the business community to inform policies, programs, and priorities. For example, in my first term, I intend to tackle equity through economic mobility by creating jobs pipelines out of CUNY and trades schools into both the public, private, and nonprofit sector, as well as create 10,000 paid internships for high school students. Our nonprofits and businesses will be key to creating these career programs, and helping to shape the curricula to make sure students are receiving the training they need to be ready for the careers that are in demand.

5. What is your philosophy in approaching how to balance New York City's \$90+ billion budget? Please be very specific on if/when to raise taxes; what do you see as other cost saving methods such as efficiency, reducing headcount, cutting services, etc.

My fundamental approach will be to dedicate resources equitably to ensure that all communities receive the best quality services--that means allocating resources to better serve neighborhoods that have been historically underserved--and finding savings in our existing budget across the board.

We do not need to lay off workers, or cut critical services, to invest in urgently needed programs and infrastructure. When I was at DEP, I identified and implemented more than \$100 million in recurring annual savings over four years -- that's nearly 10% of the utility's operating budget, without a single layoff. We identified opportunities to right-size maintenance practices, more efficiently deploy field staff and use DEP's buying power to negotiate better rates for products used to deliver clean, safe and healthy NYC drinking water. And all of this work happened in partnership with frontline workers and their union representatives — and resulted in no layoffs. We need to take this approach throughout the City. That said, my priorities will be refinancing the debt, working with unions to find productivity savings, and reducing redundancy that has proliferated under the current administration (ie: we don't need a Chief Technology Officer, Chief Cybersecurity Officer, DOITT Commissioner etc).

6. Please share your understanding of the relationship between nonprofits, and human service provision on behalf of the City of New York. Is the current relationship sustainable? What are the largest barriers to success and how will you address these to ensure the long-term viability of the provision of services and non-profit sector?

I was proud at the Department of Sanitation to develop and launch the Sanitation Foundation, the official nonprofit organization that advocates for zero waste and the front line staff of the Department. We launched the Sanitation Foundation in partnership with a designer that repurposed Sanitation uniforms to show the importance of textile recycling. Nonprofit organizations do so much important outreach and engagement work that makes our city run, from Sanitation to social services.

I will fundamentally reorient the way the City works with nonprofits. The slowdown in procurement for services during the deBlasio administration has hurt our non-profit sector. City agencies are sitting on contracts for months, there is no accountability for on time payments and contract registration is delayed at the Comptroller's office.

Meanwhile, our nonprofits have to take out loans just to backfill shortfalls in government funding. That is unacceptable. I have committed to support frontline service providers—and to ensure you can in turn support your workforce with livable wages—by paying services providers on time and including an indirect rate to support infrastructure upgrades and innovation. We have to provide our nonprofits with funding to continue to innovate. I'd like to see our City's nonprofits at the cutting edge of addressing our social issues and then present the government with evidence based programs that we can scale. This is a critical piece of our recovery; New York City relies on a healthy, dynamic nonprofit sector. We have known for years that nonprofits are underpaid, paid late, and held to metrics and definitions of success that can be untethered from the reality of lived experience. I will fix that.

7. We've seen a dramatic increase in hateful rhetoric and acts of violence in recent years, including a rise in anti-Semitism and, most recently, an escalation of attacks against Asian Americans. There has been much debate about how to address hatred and increase individual and community security. "Defund the police" has become a rallying call for some – but what it translates to in policies varies widely. What's your response to those who call for "defunding the police," and how do you envision ensuring safety and security for all New Yorkers?

First, we need anyone in leadership to strongly denounce all forms of hate- whether it be Anti-Asian or antisemitism, or anything else. Leadership matters, and we must have a strong united front against racism and bias. As Mayor, I will always speak up and call a spade a spade, and hire leaders that are both representative of the communities and serve and share my unwavering commitment to being an inclusive and equitable city for all New Yorkers.

Next, hate crimes must be punished to the fullest extent. However, in order to prevent and punish hate crimes, we need to have reliable data. I am very concerned about hate crimes that go unreported, especially in the Asian American community- we need to make sure that victims feel empowered to come forward, and that we are using trusted community leaders to encourage Asian American New Yorkers to report hate crimes, and make it easy to do so, including offering reporting in AAPI languages. Armed with these tools and more accurate data, we can then have an informed conversation with Asian American advocates and community partners on how to move forward in making sure city resources are being distributed in an equitable and accessible manner that is actually responsive to the unique needs of our diverse Asian American communities.

I don't believe defunding the NYPD will get to the root of the problem. To get to real police reform, we need to take actionable steps towards changing making the police a *service* for communities. That starts with measuring what we want to see- reduction in crime, and positive community engagement- and promoting officers that exemplify those values. If we only measure arrests, we will get arrests. We must also make the NYPD accountable to the public, with clear, quick and consistent consequences for infractions, as well as instituting managerial reforms such as: (1) Require NYC residency for new cops and increase community policing - we need every member of the NYPD to be fully bought into rebuilding the City and fully committed to the community they serve. (2) Increase the recruitment age from 21 to 25-- the age at which you can rent a car. Police officers face the most challenging moments of the human condition; we need to make sure new recruits have life and job experiences that bring a mature perspective. (3) Require continual implicit bias training at all levels- but especially mid management such as sergeants.

8. The New York City government has had a tradition of supporting Holocaust survivors, from providing case management to vaccinations. As Mayor, would you commit to continuing to ensure that New York's low-income Holocaust survivors remain cared for?

Yes, I will continue to ensure New York's low-income Holocaust survivors remain cared for and have the supportive services that they need.

9. Feeding those in need is central to many New York City human service programs – from seniors to Universal Pre-K, to school-based meals. However, specialized food supports, such as

kosher and halal, are too often not incorporated in the service provision. As Mayor, would you commit to have your food insecurity policies always include kosher and halal food?

We need to ensure all our communities have access to food support programs that are culturally appropriate. When I led the Get Food program last year at the height of the pandemic, I made it a priority to have culturally appropriate options for our communities. We delivered 200 million meals to New Yorkers in need, and purposefully included kosher, kosher-for-Passover, and halal meals. Particularly during religious holidays, I know how important it is to have culturally appropriate meals available in our food support systems. During Ramadan last year, I worked with more than a dozen organizations including ICNA Relief, Arab American Association of New York, Muslims Giving Back, American Council of Minority Women, Taqwa Mosque, Apna Community Center, COPO and others - to distribute 200,000 boxes of food. This year during Passover, I volunteered at both the Met Council and Masbia to distribute Passover food packages. The city must continue to build relationships and partnerships with our communities. Not only does it build trust, it gets things done. The city government needs to listen to the cultural needs of our communities and help take action.

10. To gain the Democratic Socialist of America (DSA) endorsement for local office, DSA asked candidates to complete a questionnaire, including a question asking candidates to commit to not travel to Israel. Have you and/or will you reject any candidate questionnaires that ask you to commit to refusing to travel to Israel? More broadly, do you commit to opposing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against the state of Israel?

I have and will continue to reject any candidate questionnaires that ask for a commitment to refuse to travel to Israel. I have already publicly stated numerous times that as Mayor, Israel would be on my short list of places to visit.

Not only am I unequivocally opposed to the BDS movement, but as Mayor I look forward to expanding opportunities for economic partnerships and knowledge sharing between New York City and the State of Israel. One specific area my administration would immediately look to partner with our counterparts in Israel is on water management. Despite its extremely limited water resources, Israel has managed to maintain a water surplus. Almost 80% of the country's drinking water is derived from just five water desalination plants, and almost 90% of the treated wastewater in Israel is used for agriculture. This is just one example of why strengthening ties with the people of Israel is just smart for the future of our city.