



**Mayoral Candidate Name: Eric Adams**

## **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 first thing we must do to ensure that New Yorker's can get back to work and our City can build back stronger and more equitable is to make certain that every business, individual, and community is fully equipped with the necessary PPE and that the COVID19 vaccination program is fully built out and available to every corner of our city. The rollout of our vaccination plan is finally hitting its stride, however we must ensure that our economic recovery is integrated into our public health recovery. Without safely reopening, our recovery will only be delayed further. To do this, we must address our economic relief and recovery comprehensively.

After that I would ensure we strengthen our safety net and helping struggling New Yorkers and families. I would help struggling families by boosting the City's Earned Income Tax Credit match to 30% of the Federal return and increasing the childcare tax credit, adding thousands of dollars for families in need.

To keep New Yorkers facing eviction from becoming homeless, I will also increase the value of the City FHEPS housing vouchers so they reflect the current cost of housing in the city. There was a time when \$1,300 for a one bedroom and \$1,500 for a two bedroom was sufficient, but that time is long gone

My administration will provide every parent who needs it with childcare and we can start by removing the biggest cost to childcare providers of young children: space. We will do this by prioritizing free space in City-owned buildings for childcare and offering density bonuses to residential building developers who guarantee permanently free or low rent to childcare providers.

Then we must adequately support our small businesses to keep them open and employees working with tax relief. To keep New Yorkers working—particularly in the service industries—we will allow businesses that pay the Commercial Rent Tax a break for two years if they demonstrate hardship and commit to certain employment levels.

We must also reduce tax burdens on small businesses to make them more competitive against out-of-town tech companies, such as Amazon, who have asserted market dominance in our city at the expense of small business owners—an existential problem for our small businesses that only deepened during the pandemic. This is why we will implement a weekly sales tax holiday, every Tuesday, on services and products that are more likely to be paid for in-person to incentivize New Yorkers to spend locally. We will offset the cost of this weekly holiday by more fairly taxing online transactions such as streaming services, which are not currently taxed.

We will also eliminate fees for starting, or restarting, a small business, in New York City. The last thing we want to do in an economic crisis is charge people to start a new business—and restart a closed one. All filing and registration fees will be eliminated.

Lastly for a full and equitable recovery we need to balance safety and justice and fund proactive public safety measures.

The number one driver of crime spikes in the city right now -- and the perception that we are moving backward on crime -- is gun violence. We must reverse this troubling trend, fast. To do that, we will:

- Reinvent the anti-crime unit as an anti-gun unit, hiring officers with the skills and temperament for this kind of intense, on the ground police work, targeting known shooters with precision policing tactics.
- Fully fund the City's Crisis Management System and allow for more centralized coordination between violence interrupters and different organizations throughout the city, including our hospitals.
- Convene citywide clergy leaders and law enforcement officials to partner on public safety initiatives in hotspots.
- Form a Tri-State commission to formulate policy proposals that would stop the flow of illegal handguns into our communities.
- Prevent guns from coming in through our bus and train stations with spot checks like the ones we use in subway stations.

In order to work towards justice, we can start by publicizing the list of cops the NYPD is monitoring for bad behavior and then make it easier for good cops to identify bad cops. The NYPD keeps its own "monitoring list" of cops with records of complaints and violent incidents. We will make it public to be transparent and build trust. Additionally, most police officers could tell you about a few bad cops they work with or have run into—and most cops resent their behavior because it brings down their profession and makes it harder for them to do their job. At the same time, it is dangerous for cops to report those bad apples. So we will make it easier for cops to anonymously report bad behavior by their colleagues that results in swift action through an outside system overseen by the Department of Investigation, protecting whistleblowers and exposing problem police.

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

I've lived in New York all my life. My single mom struggled to make ends meet for my five siblings and me. We didn't always know if we would come home to an eviction notice or food on the table. And that is why I've spent my entire adult life in public service. Because I lived the life of the people I want to help. I remember what it was like to live with crime. To be hungry. To be on the edge of homelessness. To be forgotten by the city you love.

That's why I put on a bulletproof vest as a police officer and walked the streets. That's why I fought racism in the department. That's why I stood up for human rights in Albany. And that's why I have spent my borough presidency making government work better for the people who need it the most.

And during my 35 years in public service, I have seen what works and what doesn't in New York. And the problems we face existed far before COVID hit. Because inefficiency leads to inequality. Mismanagement creates crises. We can't continue to run this city the way we have been.

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 have had many experiences with managing and leading. I served as a supervising officer and led 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care. Through that role I built coalitions of groups in order to fight the injustices in the police system.

As a young police officer I was one of the officers who worked with Jack Maple to develop CompSTAT, a real-time data tracker for crime which helped to revolutionize policing as we knew it and deploy resources in a more efficient and targeted manner. Unfortunately, the rest of New York City did not follow along with this groundbreaking effort and believe it or not, nearly all City agencies currently operate wholly separately from one another, not

sharing data or metrics. I propose to change that. By combining all agency metrics onto a single platform similar to CompStat and using analytics to track performance in real time.

Those experiences greatly informed my approach to managing teams as well. I strive to bring people of different backgrounds together to work towards mission-oriented and data driven problem-solving. My role as manager is to ensure that my teams are set up to work together cohesively and get the best results.

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?

As Brooklyn Borough President, I have an open door policy to meet and work with nonprofits and businesses of all types. Many of my most successful initiatives and programs began as collaborations and partnerships with the nonprofit and business sectors. For example, my first initiative as borough president was to launch my Renewable and Sustainable Energy Task Force (RESET) which brings together nonprofits and industry to outline how to advance renewable energy in Brooklyn and my office coordinates two Business Improvement District roundtables a year to bring resources to BIDs and to seek feedback on what is needed to make small businesses more successful and how to ensure government isn't becoming too burdensome on their bottom lines. This approach will inform how I operate citywide as Mayor, bringing the experts to the table and advance smart policy and programming that will benefit the most residents.

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.

I have called for new revenue sources in order to address our budget deficit as outlined below, however we must also find greater efficiencies in our agencies. I have called for instituting a Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG). I would reduce agency spending at least 3-5% -- without layoffs -- by applying an efficiency mandate that eliminates ineffective programs and unnecessary spending. I would also utilize an inequality impact test so that programs vital to lower-income and struggling New Yorkers are protected.

In addition, New York City also owns and controls billions of dollars' worth of property across the five boroughs. There is huge potential value and revenue there to pay for critical City services. I would immediately conduct a complete inventory of all City properties and determine their best use, and then sell properties and cancel leases we do not need.

I would also find better deals for New York City. Far too many City contracts just keep getting renewed or extended despite poor performance. At the beginning of the new administration, all contracts over \$10 million will be put under immediate review, and those that are ineffective, or can be done better by the City, will be eliminated. It is often the case that City workers are better suited to do the work of contractors.

Additionally, I would implement a Recovery Share--a modest increase to the income taxes of New Yorkers who make more than \$5 million a year, sunseting after two years. Those funds would go directly into initiatives that help us bounce back from the pandemic, including testing and vaccination programs, anti-hunger efforts, and financial help for those New Yorkers and industries hardest hit by COVID-19. After instituting these changes I would then see where the budget stands.

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?

According to Nonprofit New York, the nonprofit sector in New York City accounts for close to \$78 billion in economic output and roughly 660,000 jobs proving that the nonprofit sector is not only integral to delivering important services to New Yorkers, but also to New York City's economy and quality of life. We must ensure that the funding that is the lifeline for these agencies is delivered in a coordinated and timely manner. For too long, nonprofits have been held to the whim of government inefficiency. My administration will make certain that the Mayor's Office of Contracts Services holds up its end of the bargain by incorporating the data developed into a single platform similar to CompStat and using analytics to track performance in real time.

Further, we must create a central authority in City government that oversees and coordinates delivery of these services on a day-to-day basis. Because this currently does not exist, we are not finding efficiencies and savings that can help us better deliver services to more New Yorkers. That is why we will create a real-time reporting system for the delivery of services across a unified network, overseen by the First Deputy Mayor.

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?

An Adams Administration will have a zero tolerance policy toward hate crimes, and that includes anti-Semitic attacks. I will direct the NYPD to work in partnership with our district attorneys to ensure that they have the resources they need to swiftly identify, apprehend, and prosecute those who prey on innocent New Yorkers through these cowardly acts. I will take a more robust approach with my Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes that includes rapid graffiti removal, support for expanded anti-hate curriculums in our public schools, and innovative cross-cultural dialogue initiatives like our "Breaking Bread, Building Bonds" program at Brooklyn Borough Hall that brings together everyday people each from all various ethnicities, identities, and faiths around a dinner and conversation.

I do believe we can reduce the police budget and redirect funding to community services that stop the cycles of crime before we see crimes occurring, however no cuts should be made to programs that impact public safety.

For example, we can reduce the police budget with smarter management and spending while protecting public safety by increasing civilianization of our police force. Early estimates, based on consultations with policing experts, suggest that approximately \$200 million in savings can be achieved by strategic civilianization of NYPD units where the existing ratio of police officers is simply not necessary. In general, this would entail an 80/20 split of civilians to police officers going forward in these units. These savings would be coupled with a uniform headcount loss via attrition in these civilianizing units.

We must also deal with excessive overtime. There are two general types of overtime: arrest and programmatic. Transferring more police officers to enforcement-related duties, a concept in line with civilianization efforts, would lead to a reduction in overtime because more personnel would be focused on the same data points. Personnel assigned to Saturday/Sunday regular days off can be reassigned to Friday/Saturday or Sunday/Monday, by default providing more personnel to fill the programmatic overtime.

Finally, I would conduct annual forensic audits of the NYPD. NYPD spending is notoriously opaque, which directly feeds budgetary inefficiency and waste. The Mayor and NYPD Commissioner must commit to forensic audits and transparent reporting by the New York City Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to get to the heart of the waste. Focus should be placed on contracts for equipment expenditures, including firearms and vehicles, as well as technology like data aggregation, facial recognition, and gunshot detection softwares. Without impeding on the primary goal of public safety, the goal must be to determine necessity and possible duplication either within the

**department or another City agency. Significant cuts can be made in this area that do not impede on uniform headcount, which serves in an active public safety role on our streets.**

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. We must never forget the horror of the Holocaust and care for those that survived such tragedy, and we must expand on what existing policy provides. We can do this in two ways: bringing health care directly to low-income communities and by treating social issues as part of health care.**

**Two major reasons that the pandemic hit lower-income communities the hardest are lack of access to healthcare and a near total failure by government to effectively reach those communities on the ground. Part of this, we must make sure that we effectively communicate to populations in the language they are most comfortable in- we can not afford to let healthcare get "lost in translation." During the pandemic and after, health professionals should be paired with local organizations and workers to go into those same communities and set up in NYCHA complexes and open storefronts, partnering with public and private providers, creating a one-stop shop for basic exams, preventive care, and resources to live a healthier life. These locations would be accessible to any New Yorker, including those who are uninsured or undocumented.**

**Poverty, homelessness, unemployment and food insecurity all directly lead to poor health—yet hospitals are largely not equipped to address those issues. By utilizing the extra capacity in H+H hospitals to co-locate social services, we will address both the social and physical causes of illness, leading to much better outcomes and cost savings**

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?

**There is an overall lack of information of available food resources throughout the five boroughs. Poor communication and information sharing negatively impacts efforts to connect food insecure individuals with SNAP benefits, food pantries, soup kitchens and other food resources; and this is evident now more than ever in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will form an integrated and community-engaged structure to coordinate food policy in NYC which will absolutely include kosher and halal food. A critical component of this structure will be to create and maintain easily accessible databases that New Yorkers and public officials can use to monitor and ensure equitable access to nutritious food across all of our communities.**

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 do not support the BDS movement and yes I would reject any candidate questionnaire asking me to not travel to Israel. I have visited Israel multiple times, most recently in 2016 when I led a five-day mission focused on developing transatlantic partnerships in public safety and economic development, traveling with an 11-person delegation of current and former NYPD officials as well as local community leaders. Personal highlights of my most recent trip included my visit to the Sea of Galilee, a special place in my spiritual tradition, as well as my tour of Jerusalem.**

