



Mayoral Candidate Name: Scott M. Stringer

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 immense financial and social disruption caused by COVID-19 serves as a stark reminder of how we need to rethink every element of government and do all that we can to make our communities stronger. As mayor, I will put forth a broad-based plan to lift up the economic and physical well-being of all our communities, many of which will be drawn from plans and priorities that I have already laid out as Comptroller since COVID-19 struck -- all of which center communities hit hardest by the pandemic and the need to address disparities in our city. They include detailed, comprehensive plans to save [small businesses](#), [protect frontline workers](#), [keep children attached to childcare and our schools](#), [protect the homeless](#), [overhaul workforce training programs](#) and [provide free tuition to CUNY community colleges](#), and [lift up minority and women-owned businesses](#).

I am proud to be [running on a broad agenda](#) to bring our city — and our economy — forward for all New Yorkers, stronger and fairer than ever before. While I would not elevate these over other areas of focus, housing, healthcare, and early childhood education are essential to my holistic vision for recovery and progress:

Housing as a Human Right: As a former housing organizer, I understand that the crisis of homelessness in our city is a product of decades of policy failure by all levels of government to build the housing we need. Housing justice, and ensuring that everyone who calls New York City home has a safe and stable roof over their head, will be a top priority in a Stringer Administration. As Mayor, I will build affordable housing that is actually affordable for working people and New Yorkers on the brink, including the one-third of shelter residents who go to work every day. Too much of our so-called affordable housing today is built for families making \$80,000 a year or more. We need to be targeting more of our resources towards extremely low and very low income families, those making \$58,000 a year or less for a family of three (two parents working minimum wage jobs). But that's just a start. As Comptroller, I have laid out specific plans to end the 421-a tax giveaway and re-invest those dollars in building more affordable units; to create a Land Bank/Community Land Trusts to turn city-owned vacant lots into 100% affordable units; and to triple from 5% to 15% the set-aside of new units for homeless families. Finally, my Universal Affordable Housing plan would require that every single new residential development in the city, in every neighborhood, set aside 25% of all units for affordable housing.

End Health Disparities. The toll the pandemic is taking on our city, our economy, and especially on communities of color and marginalized people in our city, cannot be understated. This is especially true when it comes to healthcare delivery, which for too long has failed to reach those most vulnerable in our city. We need to expand models of culturally competent, trauma-informed care for marginalized populations across NYC, including new immigrants. New York City is America's front door, and we welcome people from all over the world to come and make their home, without fear and in an environment that recognizes the hardships they may have faced prior to arrival. This must include healthcare, where systems must be inviting and receptive to their needs, allowing them to engage proactively in healthcare, rather than waiting until they are

acutely ill or deferring care altogether. We will expand investment at H+H into trauma-informed healthcare and other delivery models tailored to the needs of people with unique cultural needs and histories of violence or trauma. We will also center the patient experience in our healthcare system and ensure that patient rights are advocated for.

Comprehensive Child Care: NYC Under 3 is my plan to deliver universal affordable child care to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status from birth to 3 years old. The research is clear -- more than 80% of a child's brain develops before the age of 3, yet as a society we invest almost nothing in these critical years. Providing greater access to high-quality, center- or home-based care is the single most important investment we can make toward closing the achievement gap, because we will be helping every child get to the starting line of pre-K and elementary school on a more even footing. At the same time, we need to be investing more in our schools, particularly in grades K-3, to make sure we are leveraging the investments in the earlier years and helping more of our children become proficient readers by the 3rd grade. And we need to make sure that every student, in every neighborhood, has access to free, reliable, high-speed internet at home. At a time when all 1.1 million school children are forced to learn remotely due to COVID, failing to give students the tools they need to connect is tantamount to denying them their right to a full education.

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

I have a vision to build a more just, affordable and progressive New York. In the last year, we've all watched our city and its families endure enormous pain, most of it in communities of color and immigrant communities. COVID-19 has exposed the long standing inequities that have divided our society and has finally forced us to reckon with simultaneous public health, economic, and social justice crises.

New York City's next mayor will oversee a massive recovery effort, and we must reopen our economy in a fundamentally different way than we closed it. This will require policy expertise, government managerial experience, coalition-building skills and political savvy, and a bold vision — with detailed, actionable plans — for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city. It is this very combination of skills, experiences, and vision that I bring — uniquely, I believe — to this race.

As Mayor, I'll bring our city forward starting on Day One. I've released bold and comprehensive plans that are ready to go — on everything from public housing, to public health and public safety — and I'm building a diverse, progressive coalition to get it done. I'm ready to take on this fight, for today's New Yorkers and the next generation, and fundamentally transform our city so that everyone has a fair shot.

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?

As New York City's Chief Financial Officer, I have managed a City office with more than 800 employees and a \$240 billion pension system — the fourth largest in the country — responsible for the retirement security of more than 700,000 current and former City employees. In my more than 30 years in public services, I've earned the reputation as a proven and progressive leader with the vision, experience, and political skills to deliver a full comeback for our city.

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?

I intend to work in close partnership with all who are engaged in bringing our city into the greatest comeback it's ever seen — particularly our not-for-profit community which is so often on the frontlines of providing critical services to New Yorkers, yet fails to receive true support from City Hall. As Mayor, I will enact procurement reforms that I have advocated for as Comptroller to bring more transparency and accountability to the non-profit contracting process and to ensure non-for-profits receive payments from the City in the timeline manner.

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.

As Mayor, I will issue a budget plan that charts a course for our city's future as the fiscal year proceeds. As Comptroller, for years my job has been to dig into every budget, understand every detail, and to come up with solutions that help to protect essential services and workers, and keep our city moving forward. We cannot balance our budget on the backs of workers, particularly City workers, and should not be threatening workers with layoffs. We have other options, and should use them: from cutting back administrative waste, to rolling back unnecessary outside consulting contracts and asking the wealthier to pay their fair share. I look forward to bringing that unique experience and expertise to helping us through the city's current fiscal challenge.

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?

From housing for homeless families to meals for our seniors, non-profit organizations are on the front lines of our city, supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. Yet these groups are surviving hand-to-mouth when it comes to funding and often it's our own city government that's stalling the contracting process and delaying payments that thousands of nonprofits rely on.

I have long advocated for full-force procurement reform — and as City Comptroller, have instituted reforms within my office to help nonprofits and social service providers get the financial compensation they need. As Comptroller, I've outlined a [blueprint](#) to streamline contracts for non-profits and social service providers — as Mayor, I will deliver.

In [August](#), I called on the City to fully fund the Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) initiative, which helps non-profit organizations pay the costs of human resources, facilities, finance staff, rent, utilities, and other indirect expenses that are not covered by City contracts. In [January](#), again I urged the City to stop shortchanging nonprofits on the frontlines of COVID relief. Nonprofits employ over 660,000 people and contribute more than \$77 billion annually to the city's economy — over 9 percent of City economic output — they must be centered in our agendas to move our economy forward.

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?

Policing in America has a long and fraught history, and New York City is no exception. From Clifford Glover, Amadou Diallo, and Eric Garner to choke holds, and stop and frisk – examples of deeply discriminatory practices and violence run deep, especially in communities of color.

Breaking down structural racism in New York City will require long-term, lasting change. I believe we can decisively stop the rise in violence while making reforms that shift a range of responsibilities away from the NYPD that would be better achieved by other professionals with a public health focus.

Hate crimes, violent racism, and white supremacy have been stoked and fueled over the last four years — and must be unequivocally condemned at every turn. Our communities are reeling from the surge in hate crimes and incidences, particularly the recent wave of anti-Asian violence gripping our nation right now.

Sadly, hate will not disappear now with new leadership in Washington — we must stand together as New Yorkers and say hate is not welcome here. The day after the attack in Atlanta, I joined Chinatown leaders to denounce hate and spoke with small business owners about how fear of violence is leading them to close up shops early. I have also worked with Assemblymember Nily Rozic to expand Holocaust education and hate crime awareness and prevention in middle and high schools.

Moving forward, I believe we must strengthen the City and State's survivors funds, work with community-led safety efforts to prevent incidents of harm, support businesses and workers who are experiencing an additional financial burden of the rise in hate, and work with experts in the restorative justice field to pioneer new approaches to repairing harm for survivors of hate.

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, absolutely. Our city is defined by how we care for our most vulnerable — and as Mayor, I will ensure that Holocaust survivors are supported and cared for.

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?

Yes, absolutely. As Comptroller, my office proposed and outlined the City's first-ever pilot program to bring kosher and halal school lunch to New York City schools in partnership with Muslim and Jewish stakeholders which was funded by the City Council and implemented by DOE. As Mayor, I'll ensure halal and kosher is available for all our kids who need it. Moreover, I've recently laid out [a roadmap to combat hunger](#) in New York City which includes proposals to broaden access to halal and kosher food in our emergency food systems as well as in our policy approaches to ending food deserts and bringing fresh and healthy food to communities across the city. My plan also involves the creation of borough-based councils of emergency food providers, advocates, community and faith-based organizations, and mutual aid networks to partner with the City on improving food access.

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 am opposed to the BDS movement, principally because I believe it is a barrier to direct negotiations that are the best way to achieve a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict. But the right to the peaceful expression of political views is the cornerstone of our democracy, and I would not attempt to limit any individual's right to peaceful expression, regardless of whether I agree. I have also been clear that as Mayor, I would travel to Israel while in office. I traveled to Israel with JCRC and a delegation of Latino leaders in 2016. The trip was focused on strengthening ties between the Latino community in New York and Jewish communities. One special memory was visiting the Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem and seeing Jewish and Arab children learning together. It was inspiring.

I personally spoke out against the question, saying that denying opportunities to learn, ask questions, & share perspectives will not deliver justice and safety to both Israelis and Palestinians. We should be building more bridges, not fewer. As a public official, I believe this question is counter-productive, and as a Jew, it personally stings.