



# LA GRAN MANZANA

The Road Ahead For New York City's  
Latino Community

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABOUT OUR NETWORK

Over the past 35 years, Hispanic Federation (HF) has grown into one of the most respected nonprofits in the nation — a trusted partner to the more than 800 Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) in its network, 196 which are based in New York City. Founded in 1990, HF’s mission is to empower and advance the Latino community. Through its extensive national network, HF serves millions of low-income and immigrant families in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. HF’s offices in New York, Washington, D.C., and satellite offices in multiple states enable it to advocate for social, economic, and racial equity with respect to education, immigration, health, civic engagement, jobs and economic empowerment, disaster relief, nonprofit base building, and the environment.

HF accomplishes its mission by providing grants and institution-building services to its member and partner agencies, advocating for the interests and aspirations of the Latino community by setting city and statewide policy agendas, and developing and providing community assistance programs that serve as scalable models locally and nationally, and which have a collective impact on the social and economic wellbeing of the Hispanic community.

In 2024, HF delivered a network of care, hope, and strength to millions of families across America. From supporting over 58,000 farm and food workers and providing legal assistance to 38,000 immigrants, to mobilizing 2.1 million voters across 13 states and investing millions into community health, climate resilience, and education — we are shaping a future where all of us belong and all of us prosper.

**The following organizations are part of HF’s New York City network of member and partner organizations:**

100 Hispanic Women National*	Bronx Council on the Arts	Community Connections for Youth
20/20 Vision for Schools	Bronx Parent Housing Network	Comunilife*
Abada-Capoeira Bronx Arts	Bronx River Alliance	Creative Justice Initiative
Acacia Network*	Bronx River Art Center	CUNY Citizenship Now!
Afro Latin Jazz Alliance*	Building Beats	Cypress Hills Child Care Corporation
AID FOR AIDS International*	Calpulli Mexican Dance Company*	Davidson Community Center*
Alianza Dominicana Cultural Center*	Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute*	Dominican Women’s Development Center*
All Star Code	Casita Maria*	Dominicanos USA*
Amber Charter Schools*	Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services	Dominico-American Society of Queens*
America on Tech	Catholic Migration Services	East Harlem Council for Human Services*
Amigos del Museo del Barrio*	Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York	Ecuadorian American Cultural Center
Arab American Association Of New York	Centro de Recursos Educativos para Adultos	El Barrio’s Operation Fightback*
Arab-American Family Support Center	Children’s Defense Fund	El Puente De Williamsburg*
Arthur Avilés Typical Theatre	Church of St. Jerome	El Taller Latino Americano*
Artists Athletes Activists	Churches United For Fair Housing*	Emergency Shelter Network Of Faith-Based And Community Organization
AscendUs*	Clemente Soto Velez Cultural & Educational Center	En Foco
Asociación Tepeyac de New York*	Coalition for Hispanic Family Services*	Exalt Youth
ASPIRA of New York*	College Bridge Café	Exodus Transitional Community*
Avenues for Justice*	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families*	Fifth Avenue Committee*
Beacon Christian Community Health Center	Community Association of Progressive Dominicans*	Friends of Wheels
Betances Health Center*	Community Catalyst	Futuro Media Group
Boundless Theatre Company		
Brandworkers International		
Bronx Children’s Museum		

*\*Hispanic Federation member organizations*

*HF network organizations, continued*

Girl Be Heard Institute	Mosholu Preservation Corporation	Spanish Speaking Elderly Council - RAICES*
Girls on the Run NYC	Movement for Justice in El Barrio	St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction*
Good Old Lower East Side	National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice*	Nonprofit Staten Island Association
Greater Hunts Point Economic Development Corp.	National Mobilization Against Sweatshops	Step Up for Better Living
Hispanic AIDS Forum*	Neighborhood Housing Services of Queens CDC	Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling
Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network*	Neighborhood Self Help by Older Persons Project	Sure We Can*
Hospital Clinic Home Center	Neighbors Helping Neighbors	Sylvia's Place
Hunts Point Alliance for Children I Challenge Myself*	New Immigrant Community Empowerment*	Tacombi Foundation
ID Studio Theater Performance and Research Center	NEW Pride Agenda	Teatro Círculo*
Immigration Law & Justice New York	New Women New Yorkers	Thalia Spanish Theatre*
Institute for Puerto Rican / Hispanic Elderly*	New York Council On Adoptable Children*	The Brave House
Instituto Arte Teatral Internacional*	New York Disaster Interfaith Services	The Brotherhood Sister Sol
International Art Relations	New York Legal Assistance Group	The Center For Anti-Violence Education
I'Raise Girls & Boys International	New York State Youth Leadership Council	The Children's Aid Society
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement	New York Women's Chamber of Commerce	The Community Service Society of New York
Jazz Drama Program DBA Jazz Power Initiative	Nido de Esperanza	The Corona Self Help Center
José Limón Dance Foundation	North Brooklyn Coalition Against Family Violence*	The Knowledge House
Just Us	Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance*	The People's Theatre*
Justice for Families	Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Freedom*	THE POINT Community Development Corporation
La Casa de Salud	Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation*	The Resource Center for Community Development*
La Colmena*	Nuyoricano Poets Café	Translatinx Network
La Jornada	Operation Exodus Inner City*	Trinity Healing Center
Latin Women in Action*	Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow	Union Community Health Center
Latinas on the Verge of Excellence*	Pregones Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre*	Union Settlement Association
Latino Commission on AIDS*	Promesa Residential Healthcare Facility	United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park
Latino Pastoral Action Center	Puerto Rican Family Institute*	UnLocal
LatinoJustice PRLDEF*	Qualitas of Life Foundation*	Uptown Stories
Laundry Workers Center	R.Evolución Latina	Urban Health Plan*
Lesbian And Gay Community Services Center	Red Hook Art Project	Urban Justice Center - Sex Workers Project
LGBT Center Intercultural Collective	Regional Aid for Interim Needs*	Urban Justice Center - Street Vendor Project
Loisaida*	Repertorio Español*	Urban Youth Alliance International
Los Pleneros de la 21	Restaurant Opportunities Centers United	Violence Intervention Program*
Lower Eastside Girls Club of NY	Riverstone Senior Life Services	VIP Community Services*
Make the Road New York*	Ryan Health	Vision Urbana*
Manna of Life Ministries	Sadie Nash Leadership Project	Voces Latinas*
Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders	Safe Passage Project Corporation	Volunteers of Legal Service
Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center	Siembra Today	Washington Heights and Inwood Development Corporation
Masa-MexEd*	Society of the Educational Arts*	We Stay/Nos Quedamos*
Medicare Rights Center	SoHarlem	Woodside On The Move
Mercy Center*	South Asian Council for Social Services	Word of Life International
Metro New York Health Care for All	South Bronx United	Young Urban Christians & Artists
Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth & Families	Southside United HDFC - Los Sures*	Youth Action Programs and Homes
Mixteca Organization		Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice
		Zone 126*

*\*Hispanic Federation member organizations*

# A LETTER FROM HF PRESIDENT

October 2025

Dear Friends,

When we released the third edition of *La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for New York City's Latino Community* in 2021, the city was just emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. New York's economic situation was teetering, the extent of the damage caused by prolonged isolation was unclear, and, in community after community, the mourning for those we lost continued. It was a time of deep uncertainty and anxiety for us all.

Four years later, as we publish the fourth edition of *La Gran Manzana*, the pandemic's ripple effects are still being felt but a recovery is well underway. We are grateful to have arrived on the other side of a crisis that defined so many of our lives.

Still, there are new challenges facing us. The first and perhaps most important challenge is that coming from our nation's capital. Changes in federal leadership, policy, and practice over the course of the last several months have made many Latino New Yorkers afraid for themselves, their families, and their communities. For the undocumented immigrant, the small business owner, the college student, or the elderly, these are times, once again of deep uncertainty and anxiety.

The second challenge is the imminent change in leadership closer to home. This year's mayoral election in New York City comes at a time when Latino New Yorkers are deeply concerned about their future in the city. Our recent poll of Latino New Yorkers found that nearly two-thirds of us think the city is headed in the wrong direction. Another two-thirds say they are concerned about their financial well-being, including their income, savings, and job prospects. Overwhelming majorities want the city to build more affordable housing, make it easier to run a small business, and increase the minimum wage.

This year, as we have done in every New York City mayoral election cycle for more than a decade, we asked our member and partner agencies to help us draft a blueprint of what the next mayor and City Council of New York City can do when assuming office in January 2026. The suggestions in this blueprint are the product of discussion and debate from the leaders of the Latino nonprofit sector and they reflect policy proscriptions that are achievable and can improve the lives of Latino New Yorkers and their families.

We look forward to working with the new mayor, his administration, and City Council on implementing many of these policies and programs. The Latino nonprofit community in New York City is not only robust but also on the front lines of some of the city's most important issues. City Hall would be wise to leverage our experience.

The next four years promise to be challenging for all New Yorkers but especially for Latino New Yorkers. We expect that our next wave of leadership will clearly understand that Latinos are an integral part of New York City and that our future will determine the city's future.

Sincerely,



Frankie Miranda  
President and CEO

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**N**ew York City's Latino communities are at a crossroads. Changes in Washington have created economic uncertainty, rising fears of nativism, and concern about the strength of the social safety net. Changes in City Hall complicate matters even further. What will the new mayor's agenda be for the nearly 2.5 million Latinos who call New York City home? How will the city's next chief executive address the diverse concerns of a community that now accounts for nearly one out of every three New Yorkers?

In order to help guide the next mayor and his administration, Hispanic Federation assembled the leaders of New York City's Latino nonprofit sector — content experts who know our communities best — to draft a policy roadmap. The men and women who contributed to this blueprint represent organizations that work on many of the important issues that Latino New Yorkers face: health care, housing, education, immigration, criminal justice, environmental resiliency, and arts and culture. Their recommendations are based on decades of experience and are feasible; they simply require political will and leadership.

The need to enact these policy proposals cannot be clearer. The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on Latino New Yorkers and the next administration must create a comprehensive strategy that addresses the Latino community's particular needs. One-size-fits-all approaches won't suffice to help Latino families thrive in New York City. Without a clear strategy, the risk of Latino families falling through the city's proverbial cracks increase — as does the likelihood that these same families will seek out other communities in which to live, work, and raise their families.

For more than thirty years Hispanic Federation has worked to strengthen the Latino nonprofit sector and, by extension, strengthen the Latino community. That work is at the core of our mission and we are proud of our successes. But we have much more to do and the urgency of the current moment — perhaps one of the most unsettled moments in the recent history of Latino New York — is not lost on us. The threats to our community are very real; our responses to these threats should be just as real. We look forward to working with the new mayor and his administration to make sure that Latino New Yorkers and their families are able to thrive and contribute to the success of the city they call home.

## SUPPORTING LATINO NONPROFITS

New York City's Latino nonprofit sector provides critical social services to communities across the city. That work not only stabilizes Latino families but also generates significant economic activity. Our recommendations include expanding financial support for the sector by increasing the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF) to \$50 million over five years with broadened eligibility — which supports Black, Asian, Latino, and other people of color-led CBOs — establishing an emergency response fund for crises, and requiring that 20% of public-private partnership funding be allocated to diverse, culturally competent agencies. We recommend critical contracting reforms including increasing Other Than Personal Service (OTPS) funding to account for inflation, streamlining the Procurement and Sourcing Solutions Portal (PASSPort) system to accelerate disbursements, establishing a firm 15-day contract registration timeline, and expanding advance payments to cover 50% of contract values upfront rather than through reimbursement models that strain under-resourced organizations. The new administration can improve transparency and accountability in Request for Proposals (RFPs) processes by mandating diverse review panels that reflect service populations, annual demographic reporting, and

formal mechanisms for CBOs to provide input on community needs. We also call for workforce sustainability measures including establishing living wage requirements in all city contracts, removing caps on fringe benefits, creating multi-year grant opportunities for smaller organizations, and providing restorative opportunities like sabbaticals to prevent leadership burnout. Finally, our blueprint proposes modifying Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) requirements to include CBOs as eligible providers, ensuring subcontractors receive equitable indirect cost-rate coverage, and mandating comprehensive training for City Council members and contract staff to improve efficiency and ethical compliance throughout the procurement ecosystem.

## **IMPROVING EDUCATION**

Schools may be recovering from COVID-19, but Latino and immigrant students still face systemic barriers across New York City’s educational system. Our recommendations elaborate upon opportunities like expanding early childhood programs (Pre-K and 3-K) with extended hours and equitable access, while investing heavily in bilingual teacher recruitment and support for English Language Learners (ELLs) through enhanced funding, targeted scholarships, and culturally responsive programming. Strengthening community-based schools will help address chronic absenteeism by providing wraparound services. Latino nonprofits can also help in replacing punitive discipline with restorative practices. City Hall can remove barriers to selective programs through equity reviews and diverse assessment methods, expanding after-school and summer employment opportunities for immigrant youth, and creating seamless pathways from high school through City University of New York (CUNY) completion by expanding programs like *¡Adelante!* Finally, we call for robust data systems to track outcomes across the education-to-workforce pipeline, digital equity initiatives prioritizing connectivity in Latino communities, and cross-agency coordination to ensure transparency, accountability, and sustained investment in historically underserved neighborhoods.



## **SUPPORTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

There are critical disparities affecting Latino and immigrant communities across New York City's healthcare system. Addressing these disparities is difficult but the next mayor can make significant inroads by providing sustained funding to safety-net community health centers (CHCs) and Community Health Workers (CHWs), expanding partnerships between Latino CBOs and medical schools to deliver culturally competent care, and separating all city-funded health services from immigration enforcement to ensure safe access. Given the increase in mental health crises since the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health priorities should include significant investment in school-based counselors and social workers, peer-led education programs to reduce stigma, non-police crisis response models, and expanded telehealth services with integrated digital literacy training. Youth-focused initiatives that emphasize expanding suicide prevention programs for vulnerable populations like Latina teens and comprehensive reproductive health education addressing issues from gender-based violence to birth control access are critically important for Latino young people. The obesity epidemic that is ravaging our communities can be addressed through culturally relevant nutrition campaigns, partnerships with bodegas to increase healthy food access, protection of the Health Bucks program, and expansion of community gardens and biking subsidies. Additional public health interventions including multilingual HIV/STI prevention campaigns, expanded syringe access programs, safe consumption spaces with community engagement, widespread Naloxone distribution, and restorative justice approaches to substance use that prioritize treatment over incarceration, will help hard-to-reach populations. Finally, our blueprint calls for creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and domestic violence survivors while diversifying the healthcare workforce through improved cultural competency training and expanded pathways for bilingual professionals of color to enter medical careers.

## **PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS**

New York City's Latino immigrant communities are in the crosshairs of a federal administration that demonizes them. Our policy recommendations range from expanded and sustained support for immigrant communities in New York City through public education campaigns to enhanced services, legal protections, and economic empowerment initiatives. The proposals advocate for maintaining and expanding funding for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, The New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) universal civil representation, ActionNYC, Immigrant Children Advocates' Relief effort (ICARE), and Unaccompanied Minors and families Initiative (UMFI) programs with wraparound services addressing legal, mental health, and employment needs, while providing multi-year programmatic funding to reduce advocacy fatigue. The city must strengthen enforcement against fraudulent immigration service providers, minimizing low-level arrests to prevent immigration consequences, protecting sensitive locations like schools and hospitals from immigration enforcement actions, piloting low-interest bail loan programs for immigration detention bonds, and ensuring comprehensive translation services, including indigenous languages, across all city programs. The recommendations emphasize ways in which the criminal justice system can keep immigrant families together through expanded virtual hearings, family supports, and District Attorney (DA) discretion while ending discrimination by allowing IDNYC and Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) for housing and city program access. Our economic empowerment measures include continuing and expanding day laborer workforce initiatives across all boroughs with flexible nontraditional hours, supporting worker organizing and wage theft legal assistance, expanding street vendor licenses by reducing caps, providing loans and technical assistance for immigrant business owners, investing in worker-owned cooperatives, and creating formal partnerships between CBOs, shelters, and neighborhood businesses for workforce

training and hiring pathways. Finally, our plan stresses culturally- and linguistically-competent outreach campaigns to reduce fear and misinformation, equitable service delivery with attention to marginalized groups including aging immigrants, LGBTQ+ immigrants, and survivors of violence, and institutionalizing regular CBO-City roundtables for ongoing policy input to ensure immigrant communities have meaningful input in decision-making processes.

## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY**

City Hall must prioritize economic empowerment and financial security measures for Latino and immigrant communities in New York City through improved job quality, entrepreneurship support, and housing stability. Our proposals advocate for strengthening enforcement of the \$16.50 minimum wage with proactive audits and culturally-competent outreach, significantly increasing NYC's minimum wage, implementing comprehensive Know Your Rights campaigns covering labor protections, expanding Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and workplace safety training in multiple languages, creating city-level retirement savings programs for informal and nonprofit workers, and guaranteeing paid internships for Latino youth while expanding apprenticeships and credentialing programs with targeted training in green jobs, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital skills that integrate ESL and linguistically-competent instruction. Small business support includes city-backed shop local campaigns with equitable tourism marketing distribution across all boroughs, expanded access to credit through community development financial institution (CDFI) partnerships and microlending, robust technical assistance building on Small Business Forward 2.0 to simplify permitting and consolidate funding portals, street vending policy reform that decriminalizes vending and creates immigration-safe protections, support for women and immigrant-led cooperatives with seed grants and city contracting pathways, and mandatory multilingual outreach channels through CBOs. Our plan addresses the twin issues of housing affordability and food insecurity by, among other things, transitioning pandemic-era food support into permanent programs, offsetting federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cuts with city-funded nutrition assistance for culturally appropriate foods, ensuring accountability of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) redevelopment through Rental Assistance Demonstration/Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (RAD/PACT) conversions with binding resident benefit agreements and relocation guarantees, modernizing Housing Connect to accept alternative documentation and provide CBO navigators, strengthening eviction prevention with expanded legal assistance, reforming shelter recertification policies to eliminate arbitrary displacement, establishing formal partnerships between shelters, CBOs, and businesses for workforce training, and expanding supportive housing with culturally competent wraparound services. Throughout all recommendations, the plan emphasizes data-informed strategies requiring agencies to publish disaggregated outcomes, institutionalizing CBO involvement in program design and investment decisions, expanding digital access and financial literacy programs, auditing contractor licensing rules to ensure wage-theft compliance, and creating accessible complaint mechanisms like city hotlines for Fair Chance Act violations to ensure targeted, accountable outcomes for Latino communities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Latino communities are deeply affected by environmental inequalities. The lack of greenspace, the outsized role of pollutants, and the lack of climate change-resilient housing all shape the experiences of Latino New Yorkers. Our recommendations call for equitable and community-centered approaches to waste management, energy, and climate resilience in New York City. The proposals demand rigorous oversight of the Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) rollout, including enforceable equity protections for overburdened neighborhoods like North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Southeast Queens, with transparent public dashboards tracking waste diversion to Marine Transfer Stations

and implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility policies. Energy initiatives prioritize local renewable generation through community-owned microgrids, expanded green job training pipelines for youth of color, assistance for affordable housing owners to comply with Local Law 97 without displacement, continued fossil fuel divestment from city pension funds, and community-led green retrofit programs with culturally competent outreach. Climate resilience measures include mandatory climate risk assessments for infrastructure in vulnerable areas where many Latino New Yorkers live and work, creation of a Transportation Resilience Fund (TRF) for workers during extreme weather, deployment of air quality monitors and tree planting programs in environmental justice neighborhoods, acceleration of the Green Wave Bicycle Plan (GWBP) in transit deserts, expansion of warming and cooling centers integrated with solar-powered resilience hubs, and adaptation of open spaces using the Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI). Our proposals emphasize meaningful community decision-making power, sustained investment in frontline environmental justice organizations and CBOs, multilingual and culturally-competent outreach with translation and childcare support, recognition of grassroots expertise in shaping policies, and establishment of penalty-based funds from energy companies to offset climate-related costs for vulnerable residents while embedding climate justice goals into the city's 2030 and 2050 planning.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

New York City's approach to criminal justice is in need of transformation. Our recommendations, starting from the perspective that Latino New Yorkers disproportionately encounter the criminal justice system, begin with reforms that prioritize youth support, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and survivor-centered services. The proposals advocate for expanding the definition of youth in the criminal legal system to age 24 — based on scientific research regarding brain development — and reinstating Youth Domestic Violence Courts with trauma-informed interventions across all boroughs. They emphasize alternatives to incarceration through restorative justice programs, increased mental health services, and cross-agency coordination between the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to support vulnerable youth. For formerly incarcerated Latinos, the recommendations include expanded supportive housing, employment programs, and enforcement of Fair Chance and Clean Slate Acts. We must fundamentally reshape policing by ending broken windows policies, eliminating the Gang Database, reallocating police budgets to community programs and strengthening civilian oversight through the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB). Additional priorities include combating human trafficking through community-trusted reporting systems and culturally-competent education campaigns, supporting survivors of domestic and gender-based violence through specialized training and survivor-centered court mechanisms, expanding harm reduction services including Overdose Prevention Centers and Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) programs, and ultimately closing Rikers Island without building new jails while investing in non-carceral alternatives and ensuring humane conditions for those currently incarcerated.

## **ARTS AND CULTURE**

Our communities contribute to and benefit from the production of arts and culture. The arts are an economic engine for our communities and enrich our lives. Because of this, New York City's cultural funding landscape must be transformed to achieve equity for Latino arts organizations and communities. Our recommendations encompass a comprehensive audit of Department of Cultural Affairs funding to correct systemic imbalances, including rebalancing the current allocation where 34 established Cultural Institution Group members receive 80 percent of resources while hundreds of smaller organizations share just 20 percent. Some of our key proposals include establishing permanent line-item funding for Latino cultural institutions, a 1 percent arts tax and creative use

of vacant public spaces, reforming reimbursement policies that disadvantage and often cripple smaller organizations, extending employee benefits to all nonprofit cultural groups, and creating a Latino Legacy Fund to preserve heritage institutions. The arts are essential public infrastructure that advance mental health, intergenerational healing, and community cohesion while generating \$110 billion in economic impact. We believe that cross-agency collaboration to embed Latino cultural organizations into education curricula, youth development programs, and public health initiatives, while expanding workforce pathways in the arts sector with equitable wages and paid internships, can reinforce the arts sector and elevate Latino leadership in shaping cultural policy decisions.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

It has been decades since the attacks on Latino civil rights have been as serious and consistent as they are today. Protecting Latino New Yorkers' civil rights is more urgent than ever. The new administration can begin by strengthening accountability mechanisms by creating a centralized database to track complaints across city agencies, establishing neighborhood-based advisory councils, and mandating ongoing cultural sensitivity training with public reporting requirements. To combat discrimination, the agenda proposes expanding the Partners Against the Hate (P.A.T.H.) FORWARD initiative and creating a multilingual legal resource hub. Being proactive in promoting civic engagement is also important. Our civic participation policy proposals include establishing a Municipal Interpreter Corps to serve diverse language communities, providing year-round training for poll workers, expanding early voting access in under-resourced areas, and funding CBOs to increase engagement in democratic processes like redistricting and participatory budgeting. The agenda emphasizes comprehensive language access across all city agencies and schools, including a permanent oversight council to monitor compliance, and a public platform for ELL program feedback. Finally, given the intersection between civil rights and climate justice, we offer proposals linking environmental resilience to civil rights by creating a centralized accountability system, prioritizing climate-vulnerable neighborhoods through bottom-up resource allocation, and providing stable funding for CBOs to ensure Latino and immigrant communities can fully participate in environmental decision-making processes.

## **LATINO REPRESENTATION**

Despite a growing Latino population, New York City still lags in Latino representation in government. No Latino occupies a city-wide elected position. Just two of the current Mayor's Deputy Mayors are Latino. Across the city government, the disparity between the Latino population of the city and Latino employees of the city is significant; just 22 percent of municipal workers in New York City. Our policy recommendations aim to significantly increase Latino representation across New York City government through four key strategies. First, we call for the next New York City Council Speaker to be Latina/o and establishing a permanent Hispanic Appointment Advisory Committee to boost Latino staffing in the City Council. Second, we recommend diversifying city boards and commissions by increasing Latino résumé submissions, creating a demographic transparency database, launching educational campaigns about these bodies' roles, partnering with CBOs, and allowing temporary membership expansions to enhance diversity. Third, we propose strengthening Latino representation in the judicial system by appointing more Latinos to the Mayor's Judiciary Advisory Committee, creating training programs for Latino judicial candidates, reforming hiring practices for court staff and clerks, and requiring annual demographic reporting from the judicial branch. Finally, the recommendations advise the incoming mayor to hire Latinos in senior transition and political positions, appoint Latinos to traditionally non-Latino cabinet roles like Police Commissioner and Budget Director, establish a citywide task force to increase Hispanic city workforce participation, and collaborate with Latino-serving CBOs to promote city employment opportunities within the Latino community.

# SECTION 1: STRENGTHENING LATINO NONPROFITS



**F**or decades, New York City’s Latino nonprofit network has been on the front lines of some of the most important issues facing our communities. In every borough they provide critical services to vulnerable New Yorkers — Latinos and non-Latinos alike — including after-school programs, health care, housing, mental health services, financial literacy training, and aid to immigrants. Our communities depend on these groups to make our families and neighborhoods stronger and more resilient.

Despite their importance, however, the sector faces a number of obstacles. Funding from corporate, private philanthropic, and government sources has remained flat or declined in recent years while demand for services from Latino New Yorkers has increased. Changes in Washington, D.C. have also made some donors reluctant to support organizations that explicitly serve our communities. Since the beginning of the year, federal funding for nonprofits has been disrupted by cuts and program cancellations. Even when organizations are able to secure funding, the timeliness of payments from funders — most especially city government agencies — puts pressure on organizations to meet their basic operating costs. Cash-flow interruptions, onerous reporting requirements, and the lack of long-term funding commitments make it difficult for organizations to recruit and retain staff.

The failure to invest in the Latino non-profit sector is shortsighted and counter-productive for the city. The sector is an economic engine supporting thousands of jobs and providing the sorts of civic services that make communities safer and more prosperous.

The city’s new mayor must make supporting the Latino nonprofit sector a priority. That means increasing financial support through programs like New York City’s Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund, increasing access to funding through a more transparent Request for Proposals (RFP) process, and, once and for all, modernizing and accelerating the payment systems upon which so many organizations depend.



The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:

## **FUNDING EQUITY & RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

- Increase New York City’s Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund to \$50 million over five years to strengthen the long-term sustainability of nonprofit organizations led by people of color. This expanded investment will support critical capacity-building needs such as hiring Development and Finance Directors and securing ongoing technical assistance. Eligibility criteria should be broadened to include larger organizations that often lack flexible funding for infrastructure and management development — especially those primarily reliant on government contracts.
- Establish a nonprofit emergency response fund for social services to support rapid implementation of programs and services during periods of city-level crises, such as public health emergencies, natural disasters, or humanitarian challenges like the migrant influx. The fund should provide flexible, short-term financial support to help nonprofits scale operations, respond to urgent community needs, and maintain continuity of services during unpredictable events.
- Require that a minimum of 20% of funding from public-private partnerships be allocated to diverse, culturally competent agencies serving communities of color. In the absence of existing funding benchmarks or requirements, setting this baseline promotes equity and accountability in how public-private resources are distributed.
- Expand equitable foundation funding for culturally competent, diverse organizations while investing in their internal capacity to ensure they can successfully access, manage, and sustain these resources.
- Existing city initiatives, such as capacity-building workshops and the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services, should be expanded and more effectively promoted to reach under-resourced organizations.
- Increase capital funding for nonprofit organizations and simplify the application process to allow for upfront payments rather than a reimbursement model. This will enable equitable access to critical capital resources and faster project implementation for organizations that cannot front the cost.
- Ensure funding fully covers the direct costs of programs and projects, ensuring nonprofits are never forced to shoulder the financial burden of delivering essential service delivery costs.
- Expand access to unrestricted funding, giving nonprofits the flexibility to meet urgent needs, drive innovation, and sustain their work beyond project limits.

## **CONTRACTING & PROCUREMENT REFORM**

- Increase Other Than Personal Service (OTPS) funding across all New York City contracts to account for annual inflation and rising operational costs such as rent, utilities, and insurance. The city should continue to honor and apply each organization’s approved Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) to ensure full and fair reimbursement.
- Streamline and accelerate the disbursement process for discretionary funding by improving contract registration timelines and increasing advance payments.
- Strengthen and streamline the City’s Procurement and Sourcing Solutions Portal (PASSport) system to speed up contract registration and invoicing, cutting bureaucratic hurdles and financial barriers for nonprofits.
- Ensure CBOs receive full and timely funding at the start of contracts to cover all program and service delivery costs, enabling them to work without financial strain.

- Expand the availability of advance payments to cover 50% of the total contract value for all city contracts, including those awarded through RFPs.
- Promote new tools to advance funding and simplify contracts for city-funded nonprofits, including partnerships with financial institutions to create a sustainable, zero-interest loan fund.
- Fully fund and empower city offices and roles, including Chief Nonprofit Officers and the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services, to provide centralized support helping CBOs navigate contracting.
- Establish a firm 15-day timeline for registering city contracts to prevent lengthy delays in service delivery and reimbursements that strain CBOs financially.
- Re-engage and strengthen the Nonprofit Resiliency Committee to ensure meaningful dialogue between CBOs and the city, with the authority to address systemic issues such as contract delays and payment processing.

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs) & REVIEW PANEL TRANSPARENCY**

- Increase transparency in the RFP process by publicly sharing how review panelists are selected, including their qualifications and criteria for participation.
- Ensure RFP review panels include panelists who reflect the demographic composition of the service population and possess relevant subject matter expertise.
- Issue an annual public report detailing the demographic composition of RFP review panels, meeting minutes, and related decision-making information to increase transparency and accountability.
- Create a formal process for CBOs to provide input on community needs when composing RFPs, ensuring new city RFPs reflect and prioritize the needs identified.

## **WORKFORCE & ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Work with Latino-led and people of color-led CBOs to adopt a formal and uniform definition of “culturally competent and culturally responsive” services.
- Support hybrid models of service delivery by increasing access to technology and connectivity resources, while allowing flexibility for organizations to choose the approaches that best serve their communities.
- Expand and establish multi-year contracts for nonprofit providers to build long-term capacity and ensure stable, continuous delivery of programs and services.
- Create accessible multi-year grant opportunities specifically for smaller organizations, with clear eligibility criteria and reduced administrative burden.
- Establish dedicated funding and resources to support nonprofit leaders in accessing restorative opportunities, such as sabbaticals or wellness grants, to prevent burnout and promote long-term leadership sustainability.
- Establish living wage salaries in all city contracts, increase investments in the nonprofit workforce and, remove caps on fringe benefits to enable organizations to offer comprehensive, competitive compensation packages.
- Require comprehensive training for City Council members and staff on contracting processes, ethics standards, and proper engagement with nonprofits.

- Mandate regular training and education for city contract staff on contracting processes and ethics standards to improve efficiency, consistency, and compliance.

## MINORITY/WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (MWBE) & VENDOR INCLUSION

- Modify the city’s Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) requirements to allow CBOs and local small businesses owned by people of color to qualify as eligible MWBE providers for city contracts.
- Provide CBOs with targeted training and support to become certified MWBEs.
- Allow vendors with either city or state MWBE certification to qualify for city contracts, simplifying eligibility requirements and expanding access for diverse businesses.

## SUBCONTRACTING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Ensure subcontractors receive equitable benefits, including full indirect cost-rate coverage.
- Increase allowable caps on contracting external capacity-building subcontractors, consultants, and vendors to strengthen nonprofit programs, services, and internal expertise.
- Simplify and shorten the City Subcontractor Agreement form to align with the Consultant Agreement form by removing redundant sections like Exhibit B and integrating key questions directly into the main agreement.
- Allow subcontracted CBOs to include approved indirect cost rates in their budgets to ensure fair compensation for administrative and overhead expenses.



# SECTION 2: IMPROVING EDUCATION



**O**f the nearly one million students enrolled in New York City’s public schools, more than forty percent are Latino. These students represent a wide cross-section of the New York Latino experience. Some are immigrants; some have deep roots in the city. Some speak English with native fluency; others are native-Spanish speakers. Whatever their individual circumstances, however, their collective importance to the success of the city is indisputable. What happens in our schools and classrooms today, and what happens to Latino students specifically, will determine the future of New York City.

It’s precisely because education is so important to our community and our city that the current educational ecosystem raises serious concerns. Latino students continue to have the lowest high school graduation rates and the highest school dropout rates of any group in the city. In fact, the four-year graduation rate gap between Latino students and their white peers has grown since 2020. And while the graduation rate for the city as a whole has remained stable over the last several years, the rate for English Language Learners (ELLs) has declined to just fifty-five percent. For many Latino students looking to enter the city’s most prestigious high schools, their prospects for admission are as grim today as they were a decade ago. In 2014, just 6.7 percent of Latino students who had applied to the city’s eight most competitive high schools were admitted, in 2025 only 6.9 percent were admitted. Add to this the lingering effects of COVID-era learning disruptions, and the educational landscape facing Latino students in the city looks more challenging than at any time in recent memory.

Resolving these issues will be difficult and will require New York City’s next mayor to create a comprehensive educational roadmap for Latino student success. That’ll mean crafting a strategy that addresses the structural inequalities that undermine Latino student achievement, working with community-based partners to increase tutoring and extracurricular activities, empowering parents to actively and effectively advocate for their children, and challenging the city’s vast educational bureaucracy to rethink its current resource allocation models to move monies and high-quality teachers where they are needed the most.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## EARLY EDUCATION

- Ensure salary parity for pre-K and 3-K staffers who are non-unionized.
- Analyze access and enrollment rates in 3-K and Pre-K programs to identify disparities among communities, with particular attention to English Language Learners (ELLs), and assess barriers that may limit participation.
- Develop a public-facing early childhood education access dashboard that maps geographic gaps (early learning deserts) across NYC, to guide equitable investment and targeted advocacy.
- Commit to long-term (25-30 year) strategic investments in early childhood and youth development programs, using longitudinal data to direct sustained funding into underserved neighborhoods.
- Create formal coalitions between city agencies and CBOs to advise and collaborate with the incoming administration on delivering services to high-need communities.
- Expand public-private partnerships to increase funding and resource development for programs serving Latino and other communities of color, with incentives for private sector investment in early childhood education.
- Extend Pre-K and 3-K to a full day (until 6pm) and full academic calendar year (summers included) to allow for working families’ schedules. For Pre-K and 3-K programs under the Department of Education (DOE) whose school day is regulated by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), this must be negotiated between the City and the UFT to better serve families throughout NYC.

- Train 3-K, Pre-K teachers and administrators in culturally responsive and relevant education with input from CBOs.
- Training must also prepare staff to identify and work with special needs students and how to engage parents in the early intervention process.
- Streamline admissions and enrollment processes for 3-K and Pre-K by partnering with CBOs to help families navigate the NYC education system, address language access barriers, and provide timely information.
- Actively engage enrolled families in quality assurance feedback loop(s) — especially families of children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and multilingual learners (MLLs) — to gather feedback and improve program quality citywide.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS)**

- Ensure new programs and policies are clearly communicated to Latino communities in their preferred languages, including Indigenous languages. Provide timely translations of all school documents, policy updates, and community engagement materials to promote transparency and equitable access.
- Expand and invest in the recruitment pipeline and support systems for bilingual teacher certification, including partnerships with higher education institutions, community-based teacher prep programs, and immigrant professional recertification pathways.
- Launch targeted scholarship and loan forgiveness programs for bilingual teacher candidates, with a focus on high-need languages and underrepresented communities.
- Offer annual retention bonuses for certified bilingual teachers working in high-need schools with significant ELL populations to ensure sustainability and promote long-term commitment.
- Expand the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) and Multilingual and Immigrant Student Support programs to all schools where ELLs make up 30% or more of the student body, prioritizing culturally responsive outreach, bilingual staff, and partnerships with trusted community organizations.
- Provide monthly parent workshops in home languages to equip families with tools to support their children’s academic progress, understand school systems, and access critical resources.
- Require the NYC Department of Education to collect and publicly report disaggregated data on ELL outcomes across all public schools, including by language group, program type (Dual Language, ESL, Transitional Bilingual), and geography, to reveal disparities in access, performance, and resources.
- Link funding incentives to measurable improvements in ELL outcomes, providing extra support to schools that make progress in equity and access for multilingual students.
- Increase funding for immigrant-serving school models, including International High Schools, newcomer and night-and-day academies.
- Expansion should prioritize boroughs and neighborhoods with high concentrations of older ELLs, recently arrived youth, and unaccompanied minors.
- Establish dedicated funding for high-need schools to offer extended learning opportunities for ELLs, including after-school programs, summer academies, and targeted interventions for students below grade level and those with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE).
- Require all NYC public schools to report annually on key ELL performance metrics — such as graduation rates, course completion, and access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs — disaggregated by language group and program type.

- Identify factors driving under-enrollment and collaborate with non-designated Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools to ensure equitable access to CTE for their ELL students.
- Increase support for ELLs in CTE schools and classrooms by training teachers working with ELL CTE students, ensuring work-based learning opportunities are accessible to all ELLs.
- Establish a Blue-Ribbon Commission advisory committee focused on ELLs and CTE programs to guide the development of bilingual CTE pathways.
- This advisory committee should support the creation of industry-aligned, bilingual CTE programs and recommend partnerships with CBOs to provide wraparound services.

## **COMMUNITY BASED SCHOOLS**

- Create dedicated attendance liaisons in community schools to address chronic absenteeism through proactive engagement with students and families. These liaisons should collaborate with parent organizers and CBOs to identify root causes and implement culturally responsive, community-driven solutions.
- Increase funding and support for CBOs working in neighborhoods with high absenteeism rates.
- CBOs should serve as trusted partners in communicating with families, identifying barriers to attendance, and connecting them with needed supports, particularly in immigrant and low-income communities.
- Expand and strengthen community-based schools as protective hubs for asylum-seeking and recently arrived immigrant youth, integrating trauma-informed services, legal support referrals, and multilingual family engagement to foster belonging and academic continuity.
- Leverage community school infrastructure to work with city and local agencies to create safe passage routes for students, especially in communities where fear of immigration enforcement contributes to school avoidance and chronic absenteeism.



- Leverage community-based schools to deliver early childhood health education focused on nutrition, healthy eating habits, and oral health. Partner with and fund CBOs and health organizations to integrate culturally competent health promotion into school programming and family workshops.
- Significantly reduce and sustain class sizes in Renewal schools for subgroups, including ELLs, Latino/Hispanic students, and students with special needs.
- Institutionalize funding for community schools that have improved and sustain funding for schools as they move out of the bottom five percent.
- Expand training, support, and resources for school and district staff to become skilled in using culturally responsive pedagogy, curriculum, and practices.
- Eradicate zero tolerance discipline policies for children and replace them with restorative practices including, but not limited to, positive conflict resolution, restorative practices, and student leadership development.
- Streamline and strengthen the Request for Proposal (RFP) and procurement processes by fully funding contracts, ensuring timely payouts, and expanding eligibility to small and mid-sized CBOs for equitable access.
- Leverage low-no interest loan programs like the Fund for the City of New York to alleviate upfront procurement costs for CBOs, ensure procurements cover the actual cost of programs, pay competitive wages, and improve communication systems with approved vendors.
- Increase transparency and strengthen the Family and Community Engagement Office as a central resource to share best practices, guide school leadership, and expand Parent Engagement Coordinators' roles in school governance to ensure meaningful family input.

### OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME SUPPORT

- Broaden eligibility for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and other city-funded youth employment programs to include newly arrived immigrant youth.
- Develop afterschool program models centered on civic education, community engagement, leadership development, and workplace learning opportunities.
- Revive stipend-based afterschool models, where youth are compensated for consistent participation in place-based learning, civic engagement, and community enrichment programs.



- Support after-school initiatives that provide hands-on training in trades and technical fields.
- Expand high-quality, no-cost trade skills training programs for high school students within the DOE and community-based after-school programs.
- Revitalize and expand funding for models like the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Job Corps that connect students, especially ELLs, with civil service jobs and sustainable career pathways. Such programs provide both immediate income and long-term opportunities with union protections, pensions, and career mobility — offering proven pathways to the middle class.
- Integrate financial literacy, conflict resolution, wellness practices (yoga, meditation), and soft skills into afterschool programs and summer learning.
- The administration should proactively engage leading NYC employers and corporations to invest in afterschool and summer opportunities that provide resources for STEM, workforce readiness, and enrichment programs at little cost to the companies but with significant impact for Latino and immigrant students.

## **INCREASING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

- Guarantee that all students and parents receive culturally relevant and timely information — through translations, bilingual staff, and interpreters to ensure equitable access, understanding, and engagement in school programs and decisions.
- Ensure continued funding, teacher professional development, and equitable rollout of the Latine Curriculum Initiative co-developed by United Way of New York City, Hispanic Federation, and Teachers College.
- Mandate equity reviews of admissions practices for specialized high schools, Gifted & Talented (G&T), and other selective programs. This includes monitoring enrollment demographics while expanding G&T access and programming in Latino-majority neighborhoods and ensuring outreach is multilingual and inclusive of ELL students.
- Reduce the overreliance on single standardized tests as gatekeepers for admissions. Introduce performance-based assessments such as portfolios, interviews, arts evaluations, and writing samples that capture broader definitions of student talent.
- Require the DOE to conduct equity impact analyses for new admissions policies, budget changes, and program expansions.
- Partner with trusted community organizations to offer culturally responsive guidance for families navigating G&T, specialized high schools, and selective program applications, ensuring immigrant and Spanish-speaking families receive accurate, timely, and empowering information.

## **POST SECONDARY AND CAREER SUCCESS**

- Launch a CUNY Completion Fund to help students return after financial stop-outs without penalty.
- Provide last-dollar scholarships for Latino and immigrant students to reduce reliance on debt.
- Create clear dual enrollment pathways that start in high school and seamlessly lead to associate and bachelor's degrees.
- Eliminate unnecessary barriers and invest targeted funding to ensure low-income and first-generation Latino students can fully access early college opportunities.
- Cover hidden costs — like transportation, books, meals, and fees — to eliminate equity gaps and ensure full participation.

- Expand dual enrollment in schools with large Latino student populations and link programs directly to high-demand careers in fields like green jobs, healthcare, and technology.
- Establish a Latino Student Success Initiative at CUNY with mentorship, peer advising, and culturally responsive first-year programming.
- Guarantee access to legal services, mental health counseling, and language supports for immigrant students.
- Expand English language and high school equivalency programs connected to workforce pipelines.
- Incentivize employer partnerships to integrate literacy into job training and career advancement.

## **STRENGTHEN DATA & ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Invest in a city longitudinal data system aligned with the New York State Education Department's P20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Initiative to track Latino students across K-12, higher education, and the workforce.
- Establish a cross-agency governance structure to align data, set shared goals, and ensure equity for Latino learners.
- Mandate public reporting of outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income, and immigration status to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- Protect community trust with strong privacy safeguards and invest in dedicated staff to manage and analyze the data system effectively.

## **DIGITAL FLUENCY**

- Use data to target neighborhoods and schools with high numbers of Latino and ELL students lacking broadband or devices and prioritize them for new technology and connectivity.
- Provide portable hotspots or devices with built-in broadband so students in unstable housing or device-sharing households can reliably access learning.
- Expand Neighborhood Tech Help and similar programs to reach more Latino communities. Offer sessions in Spanish and other languages, led by trainers familiar with Latino and immigrant experiences. Provide workshops on digital skills, online safety, DOE portals, and remote learning tools — targeting parents and older family members who are often left out.
- Subsidize monthly broadband for eligible Latino / immigrant families where out-of-pocket cost is still a barrier, possibly through vouchers or city-state partnerships.
- Prioritize affordable housing units, NYCHA complexes, and other public/government-subsidized housing in Latino-majority areas for in-building broadband wiring, high-speed fiber access, and building-wide Wi-Fi.
- Provide free or low-cost building-wide connectivity — not just household-level — to ease the burden on families.
- Integrate digital literacy from early grades through high school — including media literacy, critical thinking online, and coding or computational thinking — and provide bilingual or scaffolded instructional materials to ensure all students have equal access.
- Require DOE and city/state broadband programs to track and publicly report data by race, ethnicity, language, immigration status, and geography to identify and address gaps affecting Latino students.
- Partner with tech companies, philanthropies, and community organizations to provide resources, mentoring, internships, and training alongside connectivity.

# SECTION 3: SUPPORTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



**T**he COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragile health of Latino New Yorkers. In Latino communities across the city, rates of infection and mortality were higher than they were in virtually any other corner of the city. Latino immigrants were especially susceptible to the virus in large part due to the jobs they performed and their lack of access to health care. As researchers have noted, the causes of the disparity and mortality from COVID demonstrated “overlap with socioeconomic disadvantage.”

The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Latino New Yorkers was as terrible as it was unsurprising. Our communities have spent decades confronting conditions that have contributed to high rates of infant mortality, obesity, asthma, and diabetes. These diseases, and others like cancer and heart disease, have effects that stretch beyond mortality rates. Indeed, while premature mortality rates for Latino New Yorkers have decreased over the last decade, the impact of chronic diseases can be felt in lower economic output, higher rates of poverty, and disruptions to educational advancement. Given the important role that Latinos play in New York City’s economy and the significant population of Latinos in New York City’s public schools, having a healthy Latino community is essential to the success of New York City.

New York City’s next mayor and City Council can shape and improve health outcomes for Latino New Yorkers by increasing access to community-based health care, promoting and supporting mental health services that are culturally competent, improving access to green spaces to facilitate physical activity, and facilitating access to nutrition information, and planning services through public schools, hospitals, and clinics.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES**

- Fund citywide, culturally and linguistically competent and relevant outreach — partnering with trusted CBOs — to help Latino and immigrant communities navigate health insurance renewals, appeals, and re-enrollment.
- Provide emergency and sustained municipal funding to safety-net community health centers and frontline workers, including Community Health Workers (CHWs), ensuring living wages and preventing closures.
- Expand CBO and medical/healthcare school partnerships to deliver multilingual outreach, health literacy programs, implicit bias training, and telehealth access campaigns.
- Invest in community-informed data collection to guide targeted public health interventions, preventive screenings, and culturally tailored outreach campaigns.
- Design and implement continuous, culturally competent public education campaigns to increase awareness and access to telehealth services, partnering with CBOs to ensure these initiatives reach vulnerable Latino communities.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- Ensure that all city-funded mental health and crisis services are explicitly separated from immigration enforcement.
- Launch culturally competent public education campaigns to reassure documented and undocumented New Yorkers that they can safely report abuse, seek care, or access crisis resources without fear of deportation or police involvement.

- Expand funding for domestic violence prevention and trauma-informed mental health services in immigrant communities, in partnership with trusted CBOs that can provide linguistically and culturally relevant support.
- Expand access to mental health and tele-mental health services for vulnerable and underserved communities, including online and text-based options, ensuring services in multiple languages.
- Integrate digital literacy training into city-supported mental health and telehealth programs, ensuring that Latino and immigrant residents can access virtual care platforms, schedule appointments, and engage in remote counseling without technological barriers.
- Provide a significant infusion of funding for mental health services in public schools to address longstanding disparities in access to counselors, social workers, and psychologists — with priority given to the most vulnerable and high-need schools.
- Fund peer-led and community-based mental health education programs for students, with culturally responsive messaging that helps normalize conversations around anxiety, depression, trauma, and emotional well-being, and reduces stigma within Latino and immigrant communities.
- Ensure public schools establish strong partnerships with nonprofit behavioral health providers that offer multilingual and culturally sensitive services, guaranteeing students with mental health needs receive professional support both inside and outside the school system.
- Establish mentorship and intergenerational support initiatives in schools and community centers to connect youth with trusted adults.
- Create and fund non-police emergency response models, with culturally responsive education campaigns to build trust and protect immigrant families.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

- Focus on physical activity for students by enforcing city compliance with school physical education requirements (daily gym classes for grades K-3 and at least 3 days per week for higher grades).
- Expand partnerships with parks, cultural institutions, and initiatives within the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Education (DOE) to increase safe outdoor activity spaces.



- Invest in technology, apps, and school-based tools that promote healthy activities and integrate them into curricula.
- Implement public reporting on school nutrition education outcomes and use findings to strengthen programs.
- Expand suicide prevention programs for vulnerable youth (especially Latina teens and undocumented youth).
- Increase school-based prevention education on gender-based violence and discrimination, including xenophobia, Islamophobia, and antisemitism, and expand access to culturally competent mental health first aid and awareness programs.

## **COMBATING OBESITY**

- Expand culturally competent and linguistically relevant anti-obesity and physical activity outreach campaigns — in partnership with CBOs — to raise awareness about daily movement and safe use of public spaces, existing exercise opportunities, including Citi Bike and other bike share programs focusing on affordability options, and subsidy programs.
- Create partnerships with bodegas and grocery stores to ensure access to affordable, healthy food and provide incentives for offering a wider selection of culturally relevant fruits and vegetables in low-income communities.
- Protect baseline funding for the Health Bucks program to ensure its long-term stability, while continuing to support access to green markets and expanding the use of Health Bucks in supermarkets and bodegas in Latino communities to improve the affordability of fresh, healthy food.
- Improve equitable access to biking and exercise by expanding subsidies for low-income residents, green spaces, Shape Up NYC programs, safety education, and culturally relevant walking/biking groups.
- Expand access to affordable or free healthy food by increasing subsidies for local distribution programs and funding culturally relevant nutrition education that teaches families how to shop and eat healthy on a budget, in partnership with CBOs.
- Support the development and maintenance of community gardens by strengthening partnerships between CBOs, schools, and city agencies, ensuring equitable access to fresh produce in underserved neighborhoods.



- Encourage schools to expand gardening programs that allow students to grow and take home fresh produce, fostering early nutrition education and family engagement.

## **HIV/AIDS, VIRAL HEPATITIS, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION (STI) PREVENTION & TREATMENT**

- Expand multilingual Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) prevention campaigns that include biomedical interventions, safe sex materials, and outreach tailored to aging and immigrant populations.
- Expand safe, accessible, and disability-friendly housing options for aging and immigrant populations with HIV.
- Ensure health coverage for vulnerable populations, including undocumented individuals, with the goal of increasing access to HIV primary care.
- Expand and support syringe access programs throughout all five boroughs.
- Educate New Yorkers through multilingual outreach about syringe access and its life-saving benefits in reducing rates of HIV and viral hepatitis prioritizing vulnerable communities.
- Expand the distribution of safe sex materials across all five boroughs, with a focus on low-income and vulnerable communities.

## **SUBSTANCE USE — ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC & CRYSTAL METH USE**

- Expand multilingual public education campaigns that provide guidance on safer drug use practices and raise awareness about the dangers of substances such as fentanyl and other contaminants.
- Support and sustain safe consumption spaces across New York City, alongside robust community engagement strategies to build trust and address neighborhood concerns.
- Expand access to naloxone (Narcan) through free distribution in high-need neighborhoods, prioritizing youth and vulnerable populations, and ensuring police, schools, and community organizations are equipped and trained.
- Train and deploy peer navigators to connect those struggling with substance abuse to culturally competent prevention, treatment, and recovery services.
- Scale community-based prevention and treatment programs, with funding directed to trusted CBOs in Latino neighborhoods.
- Strengthen partnerships between the New York Police Department (NYPD) and CBOs to expand naloxone training, reduce stigma, and support community-oriented approaches.
- Implement restorative justice approaches and incorporate new federal regulations in the least restrictive way possible, prioritizing alternatives to incarceration over punitive enforcement.

## **REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE**

- Protect and strengthen abortion rights under the Reproductive Health Act by expanding access to comprehensive services, sustaining funding for providers, and ensuring culturally competent outreach to Latino and immigrant communities.

- Promote the use of female condoms and make them accessible to all women across the city.
- Create a multi-year and multilingual social marketing and community mobilization campaign with non-profit organizations as stakeholders to promote a full range of reproductive health services.
- Design and implement a culturally competent reproductive health education program for adults ages 18+.
- Design and implement youth reproductive health education programs that include comprehensive information, such as cyberbullying, gender-based violence, online predators, sex trafficking, and access to birth control.

### **SAFE SPACES & LGBTQ+ SERVICES**

- Increase access to face-to-face group support sessions for survivors of domestic violence by investing in open, peer-supported forums that encourage healing through dialogue.
- Sustain and expand funding for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Homeless Prevention Programs, including chosen family housing models, to ensure long-term stability and access for vulnerable youth.
- Strengthen and expand safe spaces particularly for young Latino gay men, trans, and other LGBTQ+ individuals by investing in existing community-based programs that provide culturally responsive support around experiences of violence, discrimination, and mental health.
- Expand and sustain anti-stigma campaigns addressing transgender, immigrant, and older adult communities, building on current initiatives to reduce discrimination and promote inclusion.
- Mandate cultural sensitivity and trauma informed training for all NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) workers.
- Work with CBOs that serve the Latino community to establish relationships and communication with ACS personnel to advise upon trauma informed practices.
- Provide sustainable funding for CBOs to conduct outreach and education to immigrant communities about essential mental health resources available to them.
- Partner with LGBTQ+ CBOs to train law enforcement officials and constituent service staff on how to better serve and support LGBTQ+ populations.

### **DIVERSIFYING HEALTHCARE SPACES**

- Partner with local medical, nursing, and allied health schools to improve training on cultural competency and health literacy, with a focus on better serving marginalized communities.
- Increase representation of people of color in the healthcare workforce by addressing barriers that prevent Latinos and other underrepresented groups from entering and advancing in medical careers, including access to education, mentorship, and financial support.
- Increase the pipeline of bilingual and culturally competent professionals into public and community health spaces by expanding outreach, internships, and practicum opportunities for students and practitioners.
- Reform the NYS social work licensure exam to reduce inequities for Latino and other candidates of color.
- Allocate additional resources to CBOs partnering with academic institutions to facilitate healthcare student engagement in Latino neighborhoods, focusing on culturally responsive care and effective patient communication.

**SECTION 4:**  
**PROTECTING AND**  
**SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS**



**N**ew York City prides itself on its deep immigrant roots. For centuries, people from across the globe have arrived in the city looking for an opportunity to chase the American Dream. In the process, they have contributed their hard work, their culture, their innovation, and their commitment to New York and made it more vibrant than any other city in the United States. When New York City thrives, it's because immigrants, to borrow a phrase, "get the job done."

Yet, over the course of the last decade, nativism has made a comeback. Emboldened by hateful rhetoric, misinformation, and fear, the nation is living through one of the most anti-immigrant periods in recent history. And while much of the attention seems to be on Washington, D.C., the truth is that even here in New York City, the lives of immigrants are increasingly difficult and in danger.

Immigrants have always been the targets of misinformation and have historically been accused of bringing disease and crime to New York City. In recent years, senior officials have perpetuated these myths, going so far as to state that new immigrants would "destroy" the city. That rhetoric isn't just dangerous — witness the increase in anti-immigrant violence in recent years — it also obscures the important role that immigrants play as workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers. The problems facing immigrants in New York City have been further compounded by the punitive measures taken by federal authorities, including, most especially, the agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The images of families being torn apart at court hearings or on city streets by ICE agents have terrified immigrant communities, driving many into the shadows of our society where they are more likely to be abused and taken advantage of by employers and scammers.

The next mayor has an opportunity to open a new chapter in the immigrant history of New York City that is grounded in support for immigrant communities. That begins by making clear that immigrants' rights are sacred and that the city's assets will not be used to support federal enforcement actions that are inconsistent with our values. It continues by increasing legal services for immigrants, targeting unscrupulous businesses that exploit immigrants, and supporting CBOs that provide wrap-around social services to immigrant families.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **PROMOTE IMMIGRANT SERVICES**

- Maintain and expand Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) funding to ensure sufficient staffing, programmatic capacity, and client services; baseline funding should support longer-term planning.
- Increase cost per student for Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to account for full programmatic needs, including case management, workforce training, and wrap-around support.
- Expand New York Immigrant Family Unit Project (NYIFUP), ActionNYC, Immigrant Children Advocates' Relief Effort (ICARE), Unaccompanied Minors Family Integration (UMFI), and IOI programs to include wraparound services addressing legal, mental health, and employment needs.
- Expand program flexibility so that CBOs can implement services in ways that best meet community needs and respond to changing federal immigration policies.
- Support service delivery options that include nontraditional hours and virtual platforms to reduce barriers and mitigate deportation risk.
- Provide information, technical support, and incentives for CBOs to gain DOJ recognition, increasing the number of culturally competent immigrant service providers.
- Provide programmatic multi-year funding to reduce annual advocacy fatigue and delays.

- Increase funding to programs like NYC Community Interpreter Bank, to provide multilingual staffing and translation services across all programs, including indigenous languages.

## **PROTECT VULNERABLE IMMIGRANTS FROM FRAUD**

- Strengthen enforcement against fraudulent immigration service providers, including notarios and unscrupulous attorneys who exploit evolving federal policies.
- Fund culturally competent outreach and information campaigns to educate immigrants about safe, legal service options (e.g., Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Excluded Workers Fund) and reduce fear and misinformation.
- Coordinate with District Attorneys (DA) offices and the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) to ensure immigrant protections and enforcement of labor laws.
- Maintain funding for the Construction Fraud Task Force and other investigative units, including culturally competent outreach to immigrant workers.
- Develop clear linguistically and culturally competent guidance and public information campaigns for immigrants to reduce fear and misinformation in the community.

## **TAKE ACTION TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER**

- Ensure NYIFUP universal civil representation for all immigrants facing detention or removal proceedings.
- Minimize low-level arrests and encourage DA discretion to prevent immigration consequences.
- Protect sensitive locations such as schools, courthouses, hospitals, churches and surrounding areas from immigration enforcement.
- Pilot low-interest bail loan programs to help low-to-moderate income immigrants afford bond payments, including immigration detention bonds, to reduce unnecessary detention and support family stability.
- Expand virtual/remote criminal, civil, and administrative hearings and provide wraparound family supports to reduce detention risk and strengthen family stability.



## **DON'T SHUT OUT IMMIGRANTS**

- Enforce comprehensive translation and interpretation policies — including indigenous languages — for all in-person and remote/online city programs.
- Expand access to city programs for undocumented immigrants, including use of New York City's municipal identification program (IDNYC) and Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) as identification.
- Support programs that fill gaps left by federal exclusions, e.g., health and nutrition programs, student aid, hunger relief, and housing.
- Ensure equitable funding, staffing, and service delivery across immigrant populations, with explicit attention to aging immigrants, LGBTQ+ immigrants, immigrants living with HIV, survivors of violence, and other marginalized groups.
- Engage the City Council Committee on Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to prioritize regular dialogue with immigrant-serving organizations.
- Institutionalize CBO-City roundtables for ongoing policy input (building on the Asylum Seekers Roundtable model).

## **SUPPORT DAY LABORERS**

- Continue and expand funding for day laborer workforce initiatives in all boroughs.
- Fund organizing and advocacy programs for day laborers.
- Support legal assistance for wage theft cases.
- Expand pre-apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- Design training and workforce programs with flexible, nontraditional hours to meet workers' needs.
- Partner with neighborhood businesses for workforce development, apprenticeships, and hiring pathways.

## **END HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANTS**

- Expand tenant rights education campaigns targeting immigrant communities.
- Allow alternative IDs (ITINs, IDNYC) for housing access and city programs.
- Expand affordable and safe housing opportunities.
- Provide incentives and support for landlords to complete safety upgrades in low-income or climate-impacted areas, without penalizing tenants.
- Strengthen awareness campaigns on tenant rights and fair housing access.

## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

- Support immigrant business owners with loans, credit access, and technical assistance.
- Expand street vendor license access by reducing caps and eliminating unnecessary barriers.
- Encourage city contractors and unions to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities for immigrants.
- Create formal partnerships between CBOs, shelters, and neighborhood businesses to provide workforce training, hiring pathways, and social enterprise opportunities.
- Invest in immigrant worker-owned cooperatives by funding outreach, technical assistance, and long-term support.

**SECTION 5:**  
**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
AND FINANCIAL SECURITY**



**T**he contributions of the Latino community to the economic life of the United States are indisputable. Latinos make up important segments of the U.S. labor force, contribute to consumer spending, and they are driving small business growth. A recent report found that Latino Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$4.1 trillion in 2023 and growing. If Latinos in the United States were their own country, they would rank fifth among nations in GDP.

Nevertheless, the economic landscape for Latino New Yorkers presents a number of different and complex challenges. New York City's poverty rate is twice the national average. Research suggests that the single most important factor in this disparity is New York City's skyrocketing housing costs. The lack of affordable housing in New York City forces Latino families to spend a higher percentage of their income on shelter than virtually anywhere else in the nation.

The ripple effects of high housing costs are felt in the lack of savings, food insecurity, and increased rates of homelessness, including among Latino children. The city's own data suggests that Latino New Yorkers are more likely than any other group to experience serious psychological distress (SPD) because of socio-economic determinants such as poverty, food scarcity, and housing instability. The crisis of affordability in the city is especially acute among young Latinos who face significantly higher rates of unemployment than their non-Latino peers. The economic picture has grown murkier in recent months as the impact of federal economic policies — including tariffs and cuts to social safety net programs — threaten to make life for Latino New Yorkers even more costly.

The city's next mayor will need to create a holistic approach to affordability that includes the construction or rehabilitation of thousands of new units of affordable housing, making public transportation more affordable, and increasing employment opportunities for Latino youth, especially young Latino men.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **BOOSTING JOB QUALITY & CAREER PATHWAYS**

- Strengthen enforcement of the \$16.50 minimum wage in NYC, including tipped sectors and informal employers. Prioritize proactive audits, outreach, and culturally competent enforcement.
- Significantly increase New York City's minimum wage.
- Implement a comprehensive, culturally competent Know Your Rights campaign targeting immigrant, women, and nontraditional workers covering labor protections such as minimum wage, paid sick leave, contractor rules, childcare access, and pay equity, with targeted outreach to ensure broad accessibility and understanding.
- Expand Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and workplace safety training in NYC languages as well as emergency-management planning at the city level.
- Fund expanded OSHA training capacity to meet demand (especially in Spanish) and measure timely course access.
- Design a city-level program to allow informal and nonprofit workers to opt into retirement savings and benefits building on New York State's Secure Choice Savings Program (auto-IRA rollout) by offering purchasable group benefits or city-facilitated pooled plans for small nonprofits and informal workers.
- Strengthen collaboration between Workforce1 and CBOs for recruitment, training, and job retention; expand accountability for outcomes.
- Expand apprenticeships and credentialing programs beyond schools to reach adult, immigrant, and nontraditional workers, with targeted training in green jobs, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital skills aligned with NYC's climate and economic goals.

- Develop a comprehensive workforce training and credentialing program for immigrant and Latino communities that integrates English as a Second Language (ESL) and linguistically competent instruction, digital literacy and AI/technology training with generational translation, and short-term bridge programs to help adult learners meet language and credential requirements for resilient jobs and apprenticeships.
- Guarantee paid internships and jobs for all Latino youth, building equitable workforce entry points.
- Create a clear, accessible city hotline/portal and CBO intake points for Fair Chance Act complaints and expand outreach so jobseekers can report violations and receive rapid city responses.

### SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESSES

- Support Latino and immigrant neighborhood businesses through city-backed, borough-specific shop local campaigns, ensuring equitable distribution of tourism marketing funds across all boroughs — including areas with limited tourism traffic such as Staten Island, East Harlem and the Bronx — and investing in CBO-led outreach with accountability measures.
- Expand access to credit and financial education for small businesses through one-on-one financial counseling and stronger Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) partnerships.
- Expand entrepreneurial training and apprenticeships by connecting small businesses and CBOs to city and state programs; address the gap in access for adult/immigrant workers.
- Expand microlending and fintech access, leveraging programs like the NYC Small Business Opportunity Fund and NYS Certified Business Incubators and Innovation Hot Spots initiatives.
- Establish a robust technical assistance initiative for both new and existing small businesses that builds on Small Business Forward 2.0 and Local Law 151 by simplifying permitting, consolidating funding portals, and providing support for lease renewal, procurement readiness, and regulatory compliance.



- Reform street vending policies by decriminalizing vending, creating safe marketplaces, and ensuring intersectional, immigration-safe protections that shield undocumented and immigrant vendors from federal enforcement risks.
- Support women- and immigrant-led cooperatives through a comprehensive program that provides technical assistance, seed grants, legal and accounting support, and pathways to city contracting opportunities.
- Utilize vacant New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) spaces for small business incubators, coworking, and arts/culture uses, especially for Latino and all other Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) entrepreneurs.
- Fund and mandate multilingual outreach channels (hotlines, field teams, CBO partners) so all Latino small business owners know about free city/state technical assistance, permitting guidance, and financing supports.

### RESILIENCY, STABILIZATION, AND ASSET BUILDING

- Increase funding for the NYC Human Rights Commission to expand enforcement of anti-discrimination protections.
- Develop and implement a data-informed, CBO-partnered city strategy that strengthens citywide data collection on Latino communities' needs, requires agencies to publish disaggregated outcomes (employment statistics, small business support, benefit enrollment), and institutionalizes CBO involvement in program design, implementation, and investment decisions to ensure targeted, accountable outcomes.
- Invest in digital access and literacy programs to close divides affecting work, education, and financial security.
- Expand Fair Fares beyond discounts to include free or further reduced fares for vulnerable groups, including undocumented immigrants.
- Evaluate and pilot expanded reduced/free fare eligibility for targeted groups (youth, jobseekers in training, recent arrivals) and institutionalize multilingual enrollment supports through CBOs.
- Expand culturally competent financial literacy campaigns through schools, CBOs, and media outlets.
- Direct the City to audit contractor licensing rules and propose legislative changes that tie license eligibility and renewals to verified wage-theft compliance with expedited complaint processes and restitution pathways.
- Support wage equity policies that address inequitable wage structures, executive overcompensation, and contribute to a more circular economy.

### COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY

- Transition pandemic-era food supports into permanent programs with guaranteed baseline funding.
- Supplement recent federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cuts by establishing a city-funded nutrition assistance program that provides direct benefits or food vouchers to low-income households, ensuring families can maintain access to fresh and culturally appropriate foods despite reductions in federal support.
- Expand access to fresh produce and SNAP, with culturally competent food education in Latino neighborhoods.

- Establish long-term, dedicated capacity-building funding for CBOs and food pantries in Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) and high-need Latino neighborhoods, converting temporary grants into stable investment streams that support staffing, infrastructure, and sustainable operations to ensure food security and community resilience.

## **PROMOTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- Ensure accountable and equitable NYCHA redevelopment by mandating transparency, resident engagement, and community oversight in Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)/Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) conversions.
- Require binding resident benefit agreements, independent tenant counsel, and relocation/return guarantees to prevent displacement and protect tenant rights throughout the redevelopment process.
- Advocate for zoning reform to ease requirements and allow the construction of additional affordable housing units.
- Implement legally binding community-based agreements for new development projects that prioritize inclusionary policies and provide new opportunities for homeownership.
- Increase capacity and salary incentives of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-certified housing counselors to provide aspiring homeowners with the resources necessary to gain access to vital grant opportunities related to homeownership.
- Modernize Housing Connect and city affordable housing programs by accepting alternative documentation and credit algorithms, providing mandatory status updates, multilingual support, and CBO navigators to improve accessibility and reduce applicant attrition for Latino and other underserved communities.

## **COMBATING HOMELESSNESS**

- Protect tenants by strengthening eviction prevention and expanding legal assistance for at-risk renters.
- Invest in culturally and linguistically competent outreach to homeowners on foreclosure prevention, access to credit, and legal supports to help families remain in their homes including accountability and transparency in NYCHA redevelopment (e.g., RAD/PACT conversions) to prevent displacement, alongside programs that expand access to first-time homebuyer assistance and alternative credit pathways.
- Expand supportive housing models with wraparound services for immigrant, youth, and low-income populations, including culturally competent mental health and addiction services.
- Reform shelter stays and recertification policies to ensure families and individuals are not arbitrarily displaced or left without housing. This includes eliminating stay thresholds that delay access to housing vouchers (e.g., City Family Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS)), establishing clear extension criteria, accessible appeals, culturally competent outreach, transparent outcomes, and prioritizing permanent housing placements over repeated short-term shelter rotations.
- Establish formal and funded partnerships between shelters, CBOs, and neighborhood businesses to provide workforce training, hiring pathways, and social enterprise opportunities, while ensuring shelters offer culturally and linguistically competent wraparound services — including legal, mental health, and family support — and measure outcomes for Latino families.
- Ensure NYCHA communications with tenants during renovations are clear, culturally competent, and accessible.

# SECTION 6: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



**C**limate change is real. The science is clear. Everyone will feel the impact. Those three facts are visible to anyone in New York City and especially to Latino New Yorkers.

Environmental impact assessments of New York City offer a series of stark warnings. The average temperature in the city will increase between 4 degrees and 6 degrees in the next 20 years. The average number of cold days will decrease during the same period. Average rainfall is expected to increase between 4 and 12 percent by the 2050s. As sea levels rise in New York City, flooding will make areas from the Battery in Lower Manhattan to extended reaches of Queens and Staten Island uninhabitable.

While all New Yorkers will feel the impact of these changes, Latino New Yorkers are especially at risk. In 2021, when Hurricane Ida struck the city, Latino communities were devastated. Forced to live in housing in low-lying areas, many Latino immigrants lost their homes and some lost their lives to fast-moving flood waters.

These climate-related challenges complicate already fragile environmental conditions in Latino communities. The lack of green spaces and exposure to air and water contaminants have a negative impact on Latino families' health and wellness. Indeed, in Latino majority neighborhoods such as East Harlem and Hunts Point/Mott Haven, asthma-related hospital admissions are more than double the citywide rate.

The next mayor has an opportunity to strengthen New York City's climate change resiliency, especially for Latino New Yorkers. Among other initiatives, City Hall must invest in green spaces in Latino communities, support the creation of environmentally sustainable and resilient affordable housing, and work with community partners to build Community Preparedness Plans that reflect the unique characteristics of Latino communities across the city.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- Ensure top standards for recycling, worker safety, and community impacts during Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) rollout.
- Minimize heavy-duty truck miles, direct waste to nearby Marine Transfer Stations (MTS), and include enforceable equity protections for historically overburdened neighborhoods (North Brooklyn, South Bronx, Southeast Queens).
- Require the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to publicly report Marine Transfer Station (MTS) capacity, throughput (total volume or weight of processed materials), and vehicle traffic data to ensure transparency and accountability in waste management operations.
- Set utilization targets for CWZ haulers and enforce penalties for underuse of MTS.
- Establish mechanisms for public input on truck routing (e.g., avoiding overburdened residential streets, schools, and communities disproportionately burdened by environmental and climate impacts) and on facility impacts (e.g., throughput, odors, noise, air quality, truck idling, and compliance with capacity limits).
- Ensure government accountability by creating transparent public dashboards that show progress on waste, recycling, landfill capacity and other environmental justice commitments.
- Require DSNY to incorporate frontline community feedback into routing decisions and facility oversight.
- Phase capacity reduction for land-based transfer stations with diversion to MTS and offer just transition support for displaced workers.

- Develop a state-level landfill strategy, prioritizing overcapacity communities.
- Establish a permanent commercial waste and worker safety task force with unions, community groups and independent recyclers, and require the release of quarterly recommendations, incident reporting, and truck-route health mitigation.
- Recognize, protect, and fund informal waste collectors (canners) and ensure containerization policies don't exclude or criminalize them.
- Pass city legislation requiring companies to develop packaging reduction and recycling plans.
- Prepare a city readiness plan for smooth integration of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy to shift the responsibility for managing waste from the public to the companies that make and sell products.
- Expand the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) with an Environmental Justice-Plus process for siting and expansion of waste facilities.
- Require multilingual outreach, paid technical assistance, and transparency on health/environmental impacts.
- Strengthen participatory budgeting in districts hosting waste facilities and ensure budgets and legislation affecting frontline communities are evaluated using NYC racial and ethnic impact assessment tools.
- Fund CBO-led outreach and education campaigns to ensure communities understand new and evolving environmental policies, such as composting, containerization, and CWZ. Campaigns must be culturally and linguistically competent, provide translation, food, and childcare at meetings, and be sustained to build trust. Funding should also support CBO capacity-building so they can lead to ongoing engagement, reduce confusion seen in past rollouts, and help residents use equity tools (e.g., racial impact assessments) meaningfully.
- Ensure frontline communities have meaningful decision-making power in all planning.
- Prioritize sustained investment in legacy environmental justice groups and CBOs and formally recognize the expertise of community members including informal waste collectors in shaping waste management policies and programs.



## **ENERGY**

- Enable NYC residents to generate renewable energy locally and sell it back to the grid.
- Support community-owned microgrids and incentivize distributed energy through tax credits, rate adjustments, fee structures, and zoning incentives.
- Require meaningful local community input and ownership in renewable energy and microgrid projects.
- Prevent outside companies and developers from exploiting communities by ensuring protections that prioritize local control, affordability, and long-term community benefits.
- Provide resources and technical assistance for planning renewable energy, storage, and microgrids, prioritizing New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and marginalized communities to enhance buy-in, reduce displacement pressures, and improve energy security.
- Expand green job training, placement, and certification programs for young people of color, building intentional pipelines into climate science, heat mapping, urban planning, infrastructure design, and policy.
- Foster youth leadership as a core component of climate governance.
- Ensure that compliance with Local Law 97 does not force transfers of affordable housing to private developers.
- Establish a public fund to help mission-driven housing owners retrofit buildings while preserving community ownership.
- Address high energy bills for low-income households and explore community compensation funds financed by penalties on energy companies, modeled on successful initiatives in other cities.
- Maintain opposition to waste-to-energy technologies, including gasification and incineration, which disproportionately harm communities of color.
- Expand Community Retrofit NYC and other green building retrofit programs with CBO-led outreach, providing culturally competent education for Latino and immigrant families about retrofits, cost savings, and healthier homes.
- Continue divesting NYC pension funds from fossil fuels and reinvest in community-based renewable energy development.
- Ensure renewable energy, retrofits, and green workforce initiatives prioritize CBOs and frontline residents, building capacity for communities to lead planning and advocacy while integrating their solutions into city energy policies.

## **CLIMATE JUSTICE**

- Mandate climate risk and health impact assessments for infrastructure and industrial facilities in flood-prone or overburdened areas, with transparent reporting, multilingual community summaries, and enforceable remediation timelines.
- Analyze vulnerabilities in subways, buses, sidewalks, and bike infrastructure under climate stress.
- Create a transportation resilience fund to subsidize alternatives for workers unable to commute during extreme weather and require employer continuity plans during disasters.
- Fund CBOs to design and run culturally competent Community Preparedness Plans and resiliency hubs equipped with solar power, energy storage, communications, and medical resources, with secure multi-year maintenance funding.

- Deploy air monitors in neighborhoods with poor air quality and supplement the Environmental Justice New York City (EJNYC) Mapping Tool with insights from the Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) Plan NYC 2023-2024 reports.
- Invest in tree planting, maintenance, green walls, and buffers with CBO-led stewardship programs.
- Accelerate implementation of the Green Wave Bicycle Plan and Safe Streets Plan with dedicated funding and updated timelines, prioritizing transit deserts and environmental justice neighborhoods.
- Expand warming and cooling centers, ensure operational support during utility outages, and integrate them with resilience hubs for stronger community coverage.
- Adapt open spaces to mitigate extreme heat and flooding, guided by the Heat Vulnerability Index and blue infrastructure planning, prioritizing environmental justice neighborhoods.
- Create a community green fund sourced from developer fees and community benefit agreements to finance resilience, green jobs, and neighborhood adaptation.
- Establish dedicated emergency funds and services for unsheltered residents before, during, and after climate disasters.
- Require annual public reporting on climate equity measures with opportunities for community review and feedback.
- Embed climate justice goals into 2030 and 2050 planning and integrate young leaders as future decision-makers.
- Build permanent infrastructure, including resilience hubs, multilingual education campaigns, and clear evacuation and resource maps, ensuring accessibility regardless of language, immigration status, disability, or housing status.
- Develop city- and state-level mechanisms to relieve climate-related household financial burdens and establish penalty-based funds from large energy companies to offset costs for vulnerable residents.
- Recognize, fund, and institutionalize support for grassroots organizations and CBOs already leading resilience work to ensure their expertise guides city planning.



# SECTION 7: CRIMINAL JUSTICE



**M**ore than half of Latinos in the United States report some contact with the criminal justice system for either themselves or a family member. These interactions have an enormous impact on Latino communities by eroding trust between Latinos and the criminal justice system, increasing rates of incarceration, and disrupting local social and familial networks that are essential to community stability.

In New York City, Latino encounters with law enforcement and the criminal justice system have been the subject of research, protest, and reform for decades. At the turn of the twentieth century programs such as the NYPD’s “stop and frisk” led to the nearly-indiscriminate detention of hundreds of thousands of Latino New Yorkers with no discernible impact on crime rates. For many Latino New Yorkers, these detentions led to incarceration in the city’s over-burdened and poorly managed corrections system. While “stop and frisk” was banned after a federal court ruling, other issues such as disproportionate conviction and sentencing of Latinos continue to plague the system.

The next mayor must address the blatant injustices facing Latino New Yorkers in the current criminal justice system. That includes expanding services for youth that disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, providing critical services for the formerly incarcerated so as to promote successful reintegration into communities, increased transparency of policing data and collaborations with community-based groups, and finally closing the Rikers Island prison complex.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **UPLIFT & PROTECT YOUTH**

- Reinstatement and expansion of Youth Domestic Violence (YDV) Courts across all five boroughs by reactivating the successful models piloted in the Bronx and Brooklyn.
- Adequately resource YDV Courts to provide trauma-informed, culturally responsive interventions for youth involved in domestic violence cases.
- Increase access to services that help parents and caregivers identify youth behaviors that are connected to trauma or mental health and provide culturally grounded strategies that work to prevent youth from interacting with disciplinary systems.
- Create a structured collaboration among the New York City Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the City University of New York, and the Mayor’s Office to track youth pathways, identify service gaps, and coordinate support for youth facing educational, housing, and mental health challenges.
- Build on existing New York City regulations that allow foster youth to remain in care until age 21 to expand a bridge program for youth aging out of foster care. The program should prioritize a housing-first approach and include accelerated engagement with DYCD and other relevant city systems.
- Establish cross-sector funding partnerships to support youth prevention programs that focus on education, career readiness, mental health, and skill-building, including financial literacy, and digital literacy.
- Provide comprehensive economic, emotional, and social support for families and children impacted by parental incarceration, detention, or deportation, prioritizing those who have lost a primary caregiver or source of income, through coordinated funding from government, philanthropic, and private-sector partners.
- The categorization of youth in the criminal legal system should be increased to age 24 instead of the current 13-18, based on scientific research regarding brain development.

- Expand public-private funding for mentoring initiatives that serve youth of color ages 13-24 by partnering with CBOs and mentors with lived experience in the criminal legal system. Programs should provide culturally responsive guidance and career pathways beyond traditional after-school settings.
- Ensure that youth and mentoring programs are culturally and linguistically responsive by partnering with CBOs specializing in youth development, and recruit mentors from diverse sectors — including nonprofits, faith-based institutions, the private sector, and the arts — to provide youth of color with culturally affirming and relatable role models.
- Ensure that youth who have encountered the criminal legal system receive sustained mental health evaluations, including referrals to appropriate services and treatment, for a period of at least six months to one year, or until it is determined that services are no longer needed.
- Create a community program resource tool and resource coordinators to make program recommendations to judges, public defenders, and district attorneys to ensure youth and their families receive high-quality program referrals.
- Prioritize alternatives to incarceration, including restorative justice and other community-based interventions, as the first option for sentencing youth ages 13 to 24.

## **REINTEGRATING NEW YORKERS BACK INTO CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Expand funding for supportive housing services for reintegrating New Yorkers.
- Review jobs listed on the NYS Justice Center System and ensure that the city is not reducing jobs available to returning New Yorkers.
- Invest in and support partnerships with organizations like the Fortune Society, which provides transitional supportive housing for New Yorkers reintegrating back into civil society.
- Expand and increase employment programs for returning New Yorkers, including training programs for youth and adult New Yorkers.



- Continue funding comprehensive job training and re-entry services through the Jails to Jobs initiative for all individuals leaving city jails, ensuring that each participant receives a minimum of 90 days of service.
- Launch an internal city evaluation to ensure that employers are abiding by the Fair Chance Act and Clean Slate Act.
- Ensure that returning New Yorkers have fair treatment and equal access to NYCHA public housing.

## **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH COMMUNITY**

- To reduce over-policing and limit NYPD stops for low-level offenses, ban harmful practices like broken windows policing and prohibit the use of surveillance tools such as the NYPD Criminal Group Database otherwise known as the “Gang Database” which disproportionately target communities of color.
- Strengthen police accountability by publishing disaggregated data on stops, arrests, use-of-force incidents, and 911 calls, and by expanding independent community oversight — ensuring Latino representation within bodies like the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) and local safety councils.
- Resources must be reallocated from police budgets used for low-level offense enforcement, school policing and surveillance technologies to community-based programs focused on housing, education, mental health, and youth development in historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.
- End enforcement of low-level quality-of-life offenses in Latino neighborhoods, as they perpetuate over-policing and racial disparities.
- Eliminate formal quotas and informal performance measures tied to stops, summonses, or arrests for NYPD advancement.
- Require enhanced NYPD training to identify sex trafficking victims and provide trauma-informed responses for survivors.
- Mandate sustained, accountable partnerships between NYPD precincts and anti-trafficking organizations, with clear performance metrics to ensure fair, transparent, and survivor-centered practices.
- Coordinate with city agencies to ensure victims of trafficking are diverted from criminalization and connected to relevant services.
- Cease arrests for individuals engaging in consensual sex work and shift focus to referring sex workers to various programs, while still prosecuting exploiters and traffickers.
- Establish survivor support programs across city agencies (e.g. NYC Department of Health - DOH, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development - DYCD) to provide wraparound care for trafficking victims.
- Move jurisdiction over sex work matters from the NYPD to social service or health agencies that can offer assistance and referrals to needed services.
- Allocate additional funding to CBOs serving sex workers and trafficking survivors.
- Expand non-police responders (mental health, social workers) for crisis events instead of defaulting to police deployment.
- Phase out School Safety Agents and transfer responsibility for school disciplinary issues to the NYC Department of Education (DOE) under restorative justice models.

- Partner with non-police organizations and trained professionals such as social workers and mental health providers to address behavioral issues in schools to reduce reliance on law enforcement.
- Ban use of riot gear at peaceful demonstrations, fully prohibit kettling, and end mass arrests at protests.
- Grant the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) final authority over disciplinary decisions in NYPD misconduct cases.
- Publish anonymized 911 and calls-for-service data — detailing call type, location, responder, and outcome trends — to increase transparency and ensure equitable, data-driven allocation of public safety resources while protecting community privacy.
- Create a citywide, precinct-level process for community input on policing priorities.

## **COMBAT HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING**

- Launch a culturally competent public education campaign on safe, anonymous sex trafficking reporting in high-risk communities, especially those distrustful of NYPD.
- Strengthen partnerships between CBOs and District Attorney’s Offices to allow safer, community-trusted reporting of sex trafficking.
- Develop public education campaigns that center the dignity of trafficking survivors and emphasize community accountability, including tailored messaging for men, women, trans, and non-binary individuals.
- Evaluate and improve programs for people soliciting sex to better highlight the real harms of sex trafficking and reduce community participation in exploitative behavior.
- Expand training to recognize labor trafficking alongside sex trafficking.
- Shift from “victims” to “survivors” and recognize youth engaged in survival sex.
- Launch citywide, culturally competent public awareness campaigns on sex and labor trafficking.
- Create fast-track programs that connect survivors of trafficking to sustainable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Prioritize expedited licensing for industries where survivors often seek work (e.g., street vending, cosmetology, culinary, construction, home health) to reduce barriers like long wait times and complicated certification processes.
- Link expedited licensing programs to city funding streams (workforce development, small business support, immigrant services).

## **RESOURCES AND RELIEF FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES**

- Create partnerships and cross-agency collaborations with the Mayor’s Office to End Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) to convene recurring roundtables with service providers, generating actionable policy recommendations and strengthening services for survivors.
- Require specialized, trauma-informed training for law enforcement in all warrant-related interactions with individuals who may be survivors of gender-based or domestic violence to close critical gaps in awareness and survivor protection.
- Ensure courts adopt survivor-centered mechanisms so that defendants who are survivors of domestic or gender-based violence are not criminalized for conduct tied to self-defense or their victimization.
- Develop a comprehensive support system for justice-involved mothers returning to New York,

ensuring access to information, legal assistance, and family reunification services through culturally competent CBOs.

- Establish Overdose Prevention Centers that combine medical supervision with harm reduction strategies, moving individuals from high-risk substance use toward treatment, managed use, or abstinence.
- Expand the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) to include substance use treatment specialists who can identify and refer individuals to community-based treatment centers, ensuring coverage across all five boroughs.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

- Reform mandatory and dual arrest laws to eliminate practices that harm survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, ensuring protections for marginalized groups including immigrants, women of color, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ individuals, and low-income women.
- Launch a community education campaign to inform community members about the language access capabilities via NYPD issued cell phones intended for use by victims of domestic violence.
- Launch multilingual public education campaigns to inform communities on safely and anonymously reporting abuse and trafficking, including widely promoting reporting hotlines.
- Continue, strengthen, and expand Mayor's Office to End Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) task force to continue the work to help survivors of domestic violence or gender-based violence.
- Provide culturally competent training and non-punitive guidance for small businesses to safely report domestic and gender-based violence, following up-to-date policies from the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Retail Worker Safety Act.

## **INCARCERATION REFORMS**

- Support the permanent closure of Rikers without expanding or building new jails and invest in non-carceral alternatives.
- Expand use of release mechanisms (e.g., the 6-A Early Release Program) to reduce jail populations.
- Enforce compliance with the HALT Solitary Confinement Act and end abusive practices in City jails and detention facilities.
- Guarantee humane conditions for incarcerated people, including sanitary housing, nutritious food, and timely access to medical, dental, and mental health care.
- Eliminate correctional officer triple shifts and provide counseling support for correctional officers framed as protecting the safety of incarcerated people and staff alike.
- Support passage of parole and sentencing reform legislation, including the Fair and Timely Parole Act, the Second Look Act, the Earned Time Act, and ending mandatory minimums.
- Provide ongoing training for correctional staff in de-escalation, mental health response, and culturally responsive practices to reduce violence.
- Strengthen NYC's sanctuary protections and create clear accountability measures for officials who cooperate with ICE in violation of those policies.

# SECTION 8: ARTS & CULTURE



**N**ew York City is a canvas. Whether it's music or film, dance or theater, the city has always welcomed artists and artists have embraced the city. Artists do more than just enrich our culture; they also drive our economy. In 2023, more than 270,000 New Yorkers worked in the “creative economy” generating billions of dollars in revenue and spending that keeps our communities thriving.

Still there are real challenges. While estimates show that the average wage for people in the creative sector is nearly \$150,000 per year, for most artists in New York the reality is far different. This is especially true for Latino artists and artistic institutions. Often deprived of critical exposure to audiences and the support of government and private philanthropic dollars, Latino artists and organizations operate on lean margins. When disaster strikes — such as the COVID-19 pandemic — many artists cease to create or leave the city entirely. The cost of living in New York — and the lack of access to affordable housing and workspace makes it difficult for the arts to flourish consistently in our communities.

The next mayor can address these issues by making sure that the city provides ample support — especially through the Department of Cultural Affairs — for Latino artists and arts organizations. That includes increasing and guaranteeing access to municipal dollars through competitive and transparent Request for Proposals (RFPs), support for affordable housing for artists, and adopting culturally competent policies that support Latino artists and institutions as engines of economic activity and growth.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **STRENGTHENING DCLA SUPPORT**

- Conduct a comprehensive equity audit of the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) funding to ensure Latino-led and emerging arts organizations receive proportional support for both administrative and programmatic needs.
- Establish dedicated, permanent line-item funding for Latino cultural institutions to secure sustainability, staffing, and long-term capacity building.
- Revise grantmaking models (including the Cultural Development Fund and Cultural Institution Groups (CIG) processes) to prioritize long-term investment in mid- and small-sized organizations, focusing on growth and sustainability rather than short-term projects.
- Reform reimbursement policies so small organizations are not penalized for lacking upfront capital.
- Streamline and diversify funding processes by simplifying applications, consolidating portals, reducing redundant reporting, and offering multilingual guidance, using the New York State Council on the Arts as a benchmark.
- Rebalance equity in allocations: while continuing support for the 34 established CIG members that currently receive 80% of funding, intentionally direct greater resources to the hundreds of smaller organizations that share just 20%.
- Increase direct support for arts and cultural CBOs to fully fund programs and strengthen organizational capacity.
- Expand funding for individual artists to honor their multi-generational expertise as a vital resource for the city's cultural fabric.
- Extend CIG employee benefits packages (health, dental, vision, retirement) to all nonprofit cultural institutions, with a focus on smaller organizations under \$250K that otherwise lack access.

- Scale models like the NYC Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF) for arts and culture, creating stable, long-term funding opportunities for smaller organizations.
- Create a Latino legacy fund to preserve long-running Latino cultural organizations through sustained public and private investment, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Designate new public revenue streams — such as a 1% tax earmark for the arts and reinstating the air rights tax project — while leveraging public-private partnerships with major venues (e.g., Madison Square Garden, casinos, commercial spaces) to expand cultural funding.
- Institutionalize Latino leadership in decision-making by elevating equity proposals from Latino arts and culture leaders to shape funding priorities.

## **FOSTERING NYC’S LATINO CULTURAL COMMUNITY**

- Recognize arts as a public good that advances mental health, intergenerational healing, and community cohesion, while leveraging its \$110B economic impact and safeguarding freedom of expression.
- Integrate non-traditional approaches — such as expressive arts therapy, co-created programming, and ancestry/history documentation — into city health, education, and youth development strategies.
- Embed Latino arts and cultural organizations into initiatives like the NYC Department of Education (DOE) culturally responsive Latinidad in Schools Curriculum to strengthen education and cultural identity.
- Institutionalize cross-agency collaboration among Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), Department of Education (DOE), Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks), Office of Mental Health (OMH), and other agencies to expand funding access and cultural resources.



- Strengthen education-to-career pipelines by promoting partnerships between Latino arts organizations and schools, developing mentorships, and expanding workforce pathways in arts and culture.
- Expand workforce development by mandating equitable wages, paid internships, and benefits for arts workers, and by elevating arts as a driver of workforce training and economic growth.
- Adopt a culture-first framework in city arts policy, recognizing Latino institutions as community anchors for education, workforce development, and social justice — not solely as arts presenters.
- Protect and expand critical programs — CASA (Cultural After-School Adventures), SU-CASA (senior arts engagement), the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, and the Coalition of Theatres of Color — while restoring arts-based dropout prevention programs that keep young people engaged in school, connected to community, and on pathways to success.
- Leverage vacant public spaces for community arts use — studios, rehearsals, and programming — to increase equitable access to cultural resources.
- Encourage the establishment of cultural districts that celebrate Latino heritage, promote cultural tourism, and stimulate economic development.
- Support legislation and policy reforms that mandate equity reviews, redistribute resources to correct systemic disparities, and integrate arts into public health and community well-being initiatives.
- Actively foster relationships with private entities to generate supplemental funding and resources for arts and cultural organizations.
- Leverage venues and commercial spaces to support arts programming and fill gaps left by limited public funding, increasing the sector’s resilience and sustainability.



# SECTION 9: CIVIL RIGHTS



**T**he history of civil rights for Latino New Yorkers is long and fraught. After decades of voter suppression and discrimination from the ballot box to the schoolhouse, the civil rights achievements of the last six decades have fundamentally altered the lives of Latinos in the city, for the better. Or at least, that’s what we thought.

Over the last decade, the civil rights environment for Latino New Yorkers has worsened. Changes to long-standing constitutional protections have endangered and weakened our communities. That’s true whether we’re talking about housing discrimination, limited language rights, or the increase in hate crimes. Buoyed by anti-Latino rhetoric, attacks on our communities have grown and look to expand.

To our good fortune, the civic leadership of New York City has attempted to shield our communities from this onslaught. Yet, City Hall and the next mayor must do more. That means improving relations and increasing trust between our communities and municipal authorities, like the police and our school system. It also means increasing access to quality legal representation for immigrants and other vulnerable populations and strengthening awareness of constitutional rights. Just as importantly, the next mayor needs to be an outspoken and clear-voiced advocate for Latino communities by reinforcing the narrative that we belong here and must be respected, even if that means challenging federal attempts to demonize and criminalize us.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **STRENGTHEN TRUST BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT**

- Strengthen the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) and other oversight bodies through the creation of a centralized public database that tracks complaints across all city agencies, documents outcomes and timelines for resolution, and records officer accountability. Agencies must also require ongoing cultural sensitivity training for staff, with clear consequences for noncompliance.
- Create permanent, neighborhood-based advisory councils made up of community leaders, advocates, and residents to provide direct input on enforcement policies, review practices, and foster accountability. These councils will serve as vital bridges between enforcement bodies and the communities they serve.
- Invest in community-led training and partner with trusted CBOs to design and deliver mandatory, ongoing cultural sensitivity and anti-bias training for all enforcement personnel — including the New York Police Department (NYPD), the CCRB, and constituent services staff. Training must be localized to reflect the unique cultural and linguistic dynamics of each community.
- Require agencies to publicly report on training progress, including length, frequency, content, and participation data for every cultural sensitivity and anti-bias training session.
- Provide dedicated funding for CBOs to expand cultural sensitivity training and citywide Know Your Rights campaigns, recognizing this as a shared responsibility across all communities.
- Expand multilingual outreach and strengthen the CCRB’s communications to Hispanic and immigrant communities by investing in multilingual digital literacy initiatives that improve access to CCRB services and encourage greater Latino participation.
- Launch a robust citywide Know Your Rights campaign focused on community interaction with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), leveraging subway posters, public service announcements (PSAs), and existing city advertising platforms on public transportation to share critical information and resources.

- Increase access to legal services by expanding funding for CBOs that provide free or low-cost, high-quality legal services, including support for police misconduct cases, complaint filing, and legal guidance.

## COMBAT DISCRIMINATION IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

- Increase targeted funding and structural support for the Partners Against the Hate (P.A.T.H.) FORWARD initiative, which has provided safe and trusted spaces for reporting hate crimes and discrimination over the last four years. Resources must be deployed strategically, using data to prioritize neighborhoods experiencing high rates of bias, harassment, and violence, with full transparency and public accountability for how funds are allocated.
- Establish multilingual, culturally responsive legal resource hubs — both digital and print — that equip CBOs to help residents file discrimination, harassment, and hate violence complaints. Resources must cover free or low-cost varying legal services, like remedies for housing discrimination and pathways for reporting discriminatory policing or profiling.
- Build formal, well-funded partnerships between city government and trusted CBOs and advocacy organizations to serve as intermediaries and safe points of contact. Investments should support staffing, training, and infrastructure that enable CBOs to provide Know Your Rights education, organize community-led response networks, and act as trusted liaisons for individuals who face barriers to engaging government systems.
- Expand proactive anti-bias and inclusion programming in schools, libraries, and cultural institutions to counter rising anti-Latino and anti-Black racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, and xenophobia. Programming must reflect the lived experiences of New Yorkers and be co-designed with youth, educators, and community leaders.
- Strengthen citywide data collection and reporting on hate incidents, discrimination, and bias trends, disaggregated by race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, and other key demographics. This data must directly inform citywide equity strategies, policy reforms, and budget allocations.

## INCREASE CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- Establish a municipal interpreter corps to provide consistent, high-quality services across city agencies — including during elections, community board meetings, and public hearings. Interpreters must reflect NYC's linguistic and cultural diversity and be trained in civic, legal, and electoral terminology. Recruitment should prioritize underserved language communities, including Indigenous, African, and Caribbean languages.
- Diversify and strengthen translation services by piloting community-sourced translation models and offering culturally accurate alternatives to Language Line.
- Train city workers and poll site staff to effectively use translation tools, including vetted AI-based options, to ensure accuracy and security.
- Provide year-round training for poll workers, site coordinators, and community members to reduce disenfranchisement caused by misinformation, disorganization, or bias. Training should cover cultural competency and language access, disability accommodations, conflict resolution, and timely updates on election law changes.
- Launch a multilingual campaign highlighting paid civic opportunities — such as poll working, census outreach, participatory budgeting, and community boards. Target outreach to youth, multilingual residents, and underemployed populations to expand civic pathways.

- Fund and formalize partnerships with trusted CBOs to increase engagement in redistricting, participatory budgeting, and other democratic processes.
- Provide resources for CBOs to create accessible materials and events that educate residents of color, immigrants, and historically excluded communities about how civic processes impact representation and resource distribution.
- Establish a permanent commission to address the 2020 Census undercount of Black, brown, immigrant, and low-income communities. The commission should develop strategies for the 2030 Census while coordinating year-round outreach to strengthen civic trust and participation.
- With no-excuse absentee voting now law in NYC, invest in robust, culturally responsive education campaigns to ensure voters understand vote-by-mail procedures, deadlines, and how to make their ballots count. Materials must be accessible to elders, people with disabilities, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) communities.
- Strengthen Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Education and fund grassroots campaigns to explain RCV, dispel misinformation, and highlight how it expands diverse representation — particularly for women, LGBTQ+ candidates, and candidates of color.
- Expand and standardize early voting by increasing the number of early voting days and hours, and ensure sites are equitably distributed, transit-accessible, and ADA-compliant in historically under-resourced areas. Standardize early voting hours and practices across boroughs and require the NYC Board of Elections to release timely, multilingual outreach materials well ahead of each election cycle.

## **ENSURE LANGUAGE ACCESS ACROSS AGENCIES & SCHOOLS**

- Ensure all students and parents receive clear, timely, and culturally relevant information in their preferred language — including Indigenous languages — through translated school documents, policy updates, and engagement materials, and provide ongoing language support to guarantee full understanding, access, and meaningful participation in educational programs and decisions.
- Create a permanent community-based oversight council to monitor and ensure that city agencies comply with language access laws and regulations. The council should have the ability to recommend enforcement actions, including the establishment of a private right of action, and advocate for annual, dedicated funding to support full implementation and compliance across all agencies.
- Establish a transparent public submission platform that allows parents to submit comments, concerns, and feedback related to their children’s English Language Learner (ELL) programs. Submissions may address issues such as the quality of bilingual instruction, teacher and staff performance, or lack of clear communication about program updates. Data should be reviewed regularly to inform program improvements and ensure accountability.
- Encourage the Human Rights Commission to publish a quarterly report that shares the types of complaints received to assist in addressing trends of discrimination within communities of color.
- Develop formal collaboration systems between CBOs and the Department of Education to deliver culturally responsive training for all teachers and school staff. Training should prioritize meeting the needs of students who speak other languages, including Indigenous languages within the Latino community, and ensure compliance with the Dignity for All Students Act.
- Require all schools to provide consistent, high-quality interpretation at parent meetings and events, and mandate city agencies to identify and address gaps in translation and language access services.
- Ensure schools use culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools to accurately evaluate the needs of English Language Learners and avoid misclassification into special education programs.

## ESTABLISH CITY POLICY LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- Establish a centralized climate accountability system for transparent, citywide tracking of all climate resiliency projects and investments. The system should monitor progress, assess outcomes, and publicly report on equity impacts to ensure resources are allocated where they are most needed.
- Integrate climate goals into the city’s budget process by strengthening the Climate Budgeting initiative, embedding resilience and sustainability criteria into all budget decisions, and requiring semi-annual multilingual progress reports that transparently track investments, outcomes, and equity impacts.
- Empower communities by mandating formal partnerships between CBOs and community boards to ensure low-income neighborhoods are prioritized for sustainability funding, including green building upgrades, resilient infrastructure, and clean energy.
- Provide stable, dedicated funding for CBOs to translate city agency rulings and environmental policies into accessible multilingual documents, ensuring Latino and immigrant communities can fully participate in public comment and decision-making processes.
- Prioritize climate-vulnerable neighborhoods by adopting a bottom-up resiliency approach that directs resources first to low-income and at-risk communities before expanding citywide, ensuring investments close infrastructure gaps and address historic inequities.
- Upgrade local infrastructure to advance equity and safety by investing in community-level improvements — such as ventilation upgrades, sewage drainage, storm-preparedness training, and timely sanitation services — that protect the health and well-being of vulnerable residents.



# SECTION 10: LATINO APPOINTMENTS



**C**itizens should see themselves reflected in the officials who serve them: people who share their experiences, understand their neighborhoods, and know their struggles firsthand. This isn't tokenism; it's essential. New York City's government only grows stronger when its hiring and appointment processes draw from the full spectrum of our city's talent and perspectives.

Latinos comprise nearly 30% of the city's population. A government that truly represents all New Yorkers demands Latino leadership at every level — yet we're far from that reality.

New York City has a long history of systematic discrimination against Black and Latino communities, and this is visible in city government. For decades, municipal jobs were barred to workers based on skin color, birthplace, or language. While civil service reforms addressed the most egregious practices, the city's leadership ranks remain overwhelmingly unrepresentative of the Latino community. Progress on diverse hiring and retention has been painfully slow.

Real change requires transparency from city leaders — including the next mayor and City Council — about available leadership positions. This is complicated by the fact that hundreds of influential city roles remain invisible to our communities. Many positions that shape policy and wield real power are simply unknown. You can't pursue opportunities you don't know exist.

The representation gap spans every sector: political appointees, cabinet positions, courtrooms, boards, and commissions. In fact, no Latino occupies a city-wide elected position. Opportunities abound for Latino leadership, but closing this gap demands deliberate human capital strategies and systematic implementation. If the city wants to benefit from the insights and expertise of Latino New Yorkers, it must actively recruit and appoint qualified Latino candidates.

**The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:**

## **1. LATINO REPRESENTATION IN NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

- The next New York City Council Speaker must be Latina/o. Given the size of the Latino population, its continued growth, the disproportionate impact of recent federal policies and the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Hispanic families throughout the five boroughs, the election of a Latino/a NYC Speaker must be a top priority for the leadership of the New York City Council and the city's next mayor.
- Establish a permanent Hispanic appointment advisory committee that makes appointment recommendations to the Speaker, and that works to increase the number of Hispanic staff members working in the City Council.

## **2. INCREASE DIVERSITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

- Implement efforts to increase the submission rate of resumés to city boards and commissions by Latinos to increase Latino representation.
- Increase transparency in city boards and commissions by establishing a database that breaks down the membership of all city boards and commissions by race, gender, county of residence, and occupation.
- Create educational campaigns that discuss the role of city boards and commissions and how they affect the daily lives of city residents.
- Include CBOs in the efforts to diversify boards and commissions, including the establishment of a CBO appointment advisory committee.

- Allow temporary increases in board and commission membership to increase diversity within the membership.

### **3. INCREASE LATINO REPRESENTATION IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

- Appoint more Latinos to the Mayor's Judiciary Advisory Committee, which is in charge of screening and recommending judicial candidates to the mayor.
- Establish a program to identify and train Latino judicial candidates, and work to increase the percentage of Hispanic judges in the city's courts to close the gap between the Latino share of the population and the Latino share of appointed judges.
- Evaluate and modify hiring practices to increase the number of Hispanic staff and clerks in the city's judicial system.
- Pass legislation that requires the city's judicial branch to publish a yearly report that summarizes the demographics of the staff and judges of all three courts.

### **4. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF LATINO APPOINTED OFFICIALS AND CITY STAFF**

- The incoming mayor should commit to hiring Latino staff in senior positions within their transition team.
- Recruit Latinos for key political staff positions and teams like Chief of Staff, Communications Director, Community Affairs team, Intergovernmental Affairs team, Legislative Affairs team, and other advisory roles.
- Appoint Latinos to cabinet positions that have not traditionally been offered to Latinos. Some examples include Police Commissioner, Transportation Commissioner, Corrections Officer, FDNY Commissioner, and Budget Director.
- Establish a city task force dedicated to increasing the percentage of Hispanic staff within the city's workforce.
- Work with Latino-serving CBOs to better promote employment opportunities within city positions among the Latino community.

# CONCLUSION

Not since 9/11 has New York's future seemed so uncertain. The city faces compounding crises: a desperate need for affordable housing, shrinking economic opportunities, immigrant communities under federal threat, and the accelerating dangers of climate change. The next mayor will inherit a city that demands bold, principled leadership.

For the 2.5 million Latinos who call New York home, the stakes are existential. Our communities are young and dynamic — their success will determine the city's success. As we said four years ago: the future of New York is Latino.

This latest edition of *La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for Latino New Yorkers* offers the incoming mayor and City Council a roadmap built on the expertise and frontline experience of our most respected nonprofit leaders. These are practical, proven strategies to strengthen Latino communities — and by extension, the entire city.

But roadmaps are worthless without leaders willing to follow them. We have no illusions about what lies ahead. The city is complex, the challenges deeply entrenched, and the political ground constantly shifting. But we believe the next mayor can choose bold leadership over safe incrementalism. Most importantly, we refuse to accept that the failures of the past must define our future.

For more than three decades, Hispanic Federation and its member agencies have partnered with mayors and City Council members to make New York work for Latinos. We've achieved significant victories. We've also watched critical issues languish year after year. Scan our previous *La Gran Manzana* reports and you'll find the same stubborn problems recycled across administrations. As New York opens a new chapter, we're ready to work collaboratively — but collaboration requires commitment, not just conversation.



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