

NEW YORK CITY'S 2021 ELECTIONS



# **THE BLAC MANIFESTO:** **A POSTMORTEM 2021**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part 1 - The 2021 Primaries</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	4
The Landscape of the Election	4
Offices and Contenders – The Numbers	4
Ranked Choice Voting	6
The 8:1 Match	6
The Results Overall	8
By the Numbers	8
On RCV and Voting	9
First Round Citywide Votes by Office	9
First Round Votes for Office by Borough	9
Race and the Primaries	12
Campaign Finance in the Primaries	15
Campaign Finance in the Mayoral Primary	19
Campaign Finance in Other Primaries	21
In the Wake of the Primaries	25
On RCV	25
Degradation of Campaigns	26
Board of Elections Bungling	27
Term Limits and Office Shopping	28
<b>Part 2 - The 2021 General Election</b>	<b>29</b>
Race and the General Election	34
Campaign Finance in the General Election	37
Campaign Consultancy in the 2021 Election	39
In the Wake of the General Election	44
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Footnotes</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>54</b>



## NEW YORK CITY 2021 ELECTION CYCLE: The BLAC Postmortem March 2022

**Prepared by:** Jacob X. Scupp of  
BLAC

© 2022 BLAC  
Designed by The Advance Group

Printed in the United States  
of America.



### For more information about BLAC

470 Vanderbilt Ave., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
212.871.6899

info@blackleadershipactioncoalition.org  
www.blackleadershipactioncoalition.org

**t** @BLAC\_NYC

# INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the 2020 election, one might have thought that there would be a period of respite before the pivotal elections of 2022. Yet for New Yorkers, this was not the case, as 2021 brought with it perhaps one of the most important elections for the city in years. Not only was the successor to the controversial administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio at stake, but a host of other critical offices in the city also were due for replacements, with a record number of City Council seats in contention. To make matters even more interesting, the resignation of Governor Andrew Cuomo raised the stakes even higher as the dynamic of New York City's relationship with the State was left uncertain in his absence. This cycle saw hundreds of candidates running for offices, tens of millions of dollars spent in advertising, and wild promises of what the city could be and should be in this new era of politics.

We, the Black Leadership Action Coalition (BLAC), were paying special attention to the 2021 cycle in no small part because of those aforementioned reasons, but had our own as well. Before the primaries had begun in earnest, we had compiled a BLAC Manifesto ([www.blackleadershipactioncoalition.org/the-blac-manifesto-original](http://www.blackleadershipactioncoalition.org/the-blac-manifesto-original)) outlining policies and principles that would lead to a New York City that is more racially equitable. We are invested in the future of New York as much as any candidate was, as any voter should be. As such, in addition to wishing to help shape the future of New York, we have an interest in examining both the process and the outcome of the various positions.

In this special report, The Black Leadership Action Coalition (BLAC) will be undertaking the task of doing a “post-mortem” on the 2021 New York City primaries and general elections, examining just what happened during this election and issuing its conclusions and commentary on what is arguably one of the most historically significant elections in New York City's history. From the unusual circumstances that the election was conducted under to the messy aftermath of the primaries, it is BLAC's intent to see this election in its truest form, and what it means for the Black and brown communities of New York City.

# PART 1: THE 2021 PRIMARIES

## I. INTRODUCTION

The 2021 New York City Primary was officially conducted on June 22nd, 2021. The NYC Board of Elections erroneously reported official results on June 27th, including hundreds of thousands of test ballots, and after nearly two weeks officially certified most of the results from the June 22nd primary on July 14th, 2021. These two statements should set the tone for this analysis of NYC's most recent primary election – a bungling, confusing mess that was awesome in its sheer size, complexity, and extenuating factors.

## II. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ELECTION

Discussing the major factors leading into the 2021 Primary Cycle and setting the stage for the 2021 General Cycle

The 2021 primaries were unique for multiple reasons. A confluence of events, changes to the election formula, and the scope of what was at stake in the elections came together to form the backdrop of this historic event, shaking up what is normally a formulaic, nondescript viewing experience of watching politicians seek their political rewards.

### Offices and Contenders – The Numbers

Examining the almost unprecedented number of open offices and candidates to fill them

One of the key reasons this election was so unique, and so important, was the sheer number of positions open – as well as the sheer number of candidates for those positions.

Of all the races for offices that were up for election in 2021, the one that outshone the rest was the race to replace Bill de Blasio – the office of Mayor of New York City. As Mayor, de Blasio is term limited in 2021 and is barred from seeking re-election, leaving behind a highly divisive legacy in office and largely unfavorable in the eyes of the city. Given de Blasio's unpopularity, and the fact that he would not be an incumbent in the race, this primary offered tenured politicians and normal citizens alike a rare opportunity. As a candidate, one had an easy task of explaining how they would not be like de Blasio (and score points with a city weary of said Mayor) while having a chance to lead the city into a new decade of political development. And indeed, this office saw particular interest amongst New Yorkers and was the most hotly contested office this primary season – a total of 66 individuals filed with the New York City Campaign Finance Board<sup>1</sup> and 15 of those candidates appeared on the ballot on primary day.<sup>2</sup> But while the race for mayor was arguably one of the most important, and certainly the one that received the most attention, it is far from the only one.

In fact, what set up this primary cycle to be so much more interesting was the fact that many of the senior positions in New York City government, both citywide and borough-specific, were open for challengers. City Hall was undoubtedly the star, but the full roster of positions open include:



- Mayor
- Comptroller
- Public Advocate<sup>3</sup>
- Borough Presidents (all five<sup>4</sup> boroughs)
- City Council (35 seats)
- Manhattan District Attorney
- Numerous local judge seats
- Numerous state-level party positions

This confluence is partially because of an amendment to Chapter 2, Section 25 of New York City's Charter that voters approved in 1993.<sup>5</sup> This amendment holds that every 20 years, beginning in 2001,<sup>6</sup> City Council terms were restricted to two years per term for two consecutive terms – an allowance created to account for demographic changes in the city and possible redistricting. This is the second time that this provision has had effect,<sup>7</sup> the first time that the full 20 years has elapsed as dictated by the city's Charter, which added a great level of significance to the City Council elections occurring this year. While under the 1993 amendment city council members serving a full two-year term technically have not served a full term according to Section 1138 of the city's Charter<sup>8</sup> and are eligible to serve a full eight years on the council provided re-election (two full, consecutive two-year terms plus a full four-year term), it still dictates that council members elected in 2021 must run again in 2023 to defend their seat, and again in 2025. While BLAC has some qualms with this, which will be expounded on later in this post-mortem, for now it will suffice to say that this adds a very different dimension to how the city must evaluate the incoming City Council.

Adding to this already significant confluence was that many current office holders, both in the City Council and in most of the other positions up for election, were term limited in their positions. This is critical, as it meant that many of the primary races (and thus the general election) were without an incumbent holding an electoral advantage. This was the case for the office of City Comptroller, long seen as the elevator office for mayoral hopefuls in New York City, as well as multiple borough presidents. But this phenomenon is most pronounced, again, at the City Council level. An amazing 28 council members from the outgoing council were prevented from retaining their seats due to term limits, with another three members retiring from their offices. Thus, out of the city's 51 city council seats, there were 31 seats that were open without incumbents – 61% of the city council in total.

It should be apparent by this point that this triple threat – a large number of offices open, a field largely devoid of incumbents, and an unusual opportunity for incoming elected to make an impact on the city – was bound to inspire not just the political elite of New York to vie for office. To be sure, many heavyweights in New York politics made bids for various positions; Scott Stringer's bid for Mayor and Cory Johnson's "bid" for Mayor and later Comptroller come to mind specifically. But what was perhaps more astonishing, and exciting, was the sheer number of ordinary citizens that mounted campaigns for office. According to the city's Campaign Finance Board, at the peak there were an astounding **608 candidates**<sup>9</sup> vying for elected office, with **531 participants** whom mounted campaigns of some level.<sup>10</sup> This is compared to the previous election cycle in 2017, which saw only 325 total candidates and 218 participants,<sup>11</sup> and in 2013 where there were 347 total candidates and 238 total participants.<sup>12</sup> It would be untrue to attribute this massive amount of interest

solely to the number and character of contested offices in this primary, as will be discussed shortly, but it is undeniable that far more of New York City's citizens felt the call of public office in this primary than in most others.

## **Ranked Choice Voting**

### The mechanisms and import of Ranked Choice Voting in the primaries

One of, if not the, most important aspects that set the 2021 primary apart was the first large-scale implementation of ranked choice voting (RCV) in New York City. Almost two years ago in November of 2019, a clear majority of almost 74% of voters voted to implement RCV in New York.<sup>13</sup> Long touted by activists as a “new frontier” of democracy and democratic voting, RCV new system was packed with promises – it would be faster and cheaper than the city's previous runoff systems, and more importantly, would make the voting process far more democratic and inclusive by allowing voters to “stretch” their vote. How is that possible? Ranked choice allows voters to, as the name suggests, “rank” the candidates for a position in order of personal preference. Candidates then go through a series of elimination rounds that see the candidates with the least number of votes eliminated, with their votes being re-allocated to the remaining candidates based on voters' second, third, fourth, and any more choices that they made on their ballot.

It is BLAC's opinion that this system is more democratic because it helps eliminate the influence of “spoiler” candidates that may siphon small, but critical vote margins away from other candidates – long a problem in city elections where candidates could win an election with significantly fewer votes. It also allows for candidates that are more specific or nuanced in their positions and campaigns to have a better chance at office by allowing voters to rank their most favored candidate first without fear of “wasting” their ballot on a long shot. In New York, this meant that voters could rank up to five candidates running for a position in order of preference. If no other candidates were ranked, the ballot was “exhausted” and did not count in future rounds. This is a marked improvement over the previous system, which only allowed voters a single pick unless a runoff occurred, and far more democratic to boot.

As one might imagine BLAC, and our sister organization The Black Institute (TBI), were particularly excited for this particular aspect of the 2021 primaries. We have long believed that RCV represents a strong, positive step forward in making elections more inclusive and democratic, not the least for our communities of color. When the scale of candidacies became clear, we were happy – what better way to demonstrate the power of this system than by having multiple candidates running for a position? It was our expectation that this primary would serve as an excellent demonstration to not only our city, but to the rest of the country that our voting systems can still be improved, made more democratic, and give both our communities of color and candidates of color a better chance at offices that have been historically difficult for them to achieve. Notwithstanding the fearmongering of New York's right wing, which claimed over and over that the system would lead to the end of the world (or so it seems from their rhetoric),<sup>14</sup> as well assertions that the new system would be confusing to voters,<sup>15</sup> we were confident that the system would prove to be a massive success.

## **The 8:1 match**

### The NYC Campaign Finance Board's revisions to the Matching Funds Program and what it meant for the primary

One of the other major considerations going into the 2021 primaries was an unprecedentedly generous

matching funds program implemented by the NYC Campaign Finance Board. This expansion of the matching funds program was approved back in 2018 during the city Charter revision of the same year and expanded in 2019 by the City Council, which saw increases in the matching rate, maximum matchable amount, and lowered contribution rates (among other changes).<sup>16</sup> The general formula remained the same - candidates that meet the eligibility criteria, including a minimum number of contributors and minimum amount raised,<sup>17</sup> as well as being registered with the Board (which is required to run for public office). The difference, as stated, comes in the matching ratio and the maximum amount of funds that were available to candidates. As you will see in Figure 1, taken directly from the Campaign Finance Board's website, in this cycle the Board made it so that campaigns were able to choose between the new matching plan, which had two categories of office with different contribution minimums and maximums (Plan A) and the old plan with a flat contribution minimum and maximum, but with an even more generous matching ratio of \$1 for every \$6 raised (Plan B).<sup>18</sup>

**FIGURE 1: PUBLIC MATCHING FUNDS RATE**

Public Funds Matching Rate

New Program (Option A)			
Office	Matching Rate	Amount Eligible for Match Per Contributor	Maximum Public Funds Per Contributor
Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller	\$8-to-\$1	\$250	\$2,000
Borough President, City Council		\$175	\$1,400
Old Program (Option B)			
Office	Matching Rate	Amount Eligible for Match Per Contributor	Maximum Public Funds Per Contributor
All Offices	\$6-to-\$1	\$175	\$1,050

While the old plan was more generous in its matching ratio, what made the new plan so unprecedentedly generous was the increased maximum funds limit. For the same minimum matching amount as the old plan Borough President and City Council Candidates could get an additional \$350 per contributor, while Mayoral, Comptroller, and Public Advocate candidates could receive almost double the old maximum for only an additional \$75 in minimum contributions. To wit, very few candidates in this cycle opted to choose the old plan – taking a look at the list of candidates on the Board's website will reveal long, almost uninterrupted strings of “A” next to each candidate, denoting that they did in fact choose Plan A.

The stated goal of these changes was to democratize the financial aspects of running for office.<sup>19</sup> One of the greatest challenges that potential office seekers face is knowing where their money will come from, as well as how to fight candidates that may have wealthier backers. And to be sure, there is some evidence that the generous matching terms present in this cycle help to boost the number of candidates running for office – though whether it attracted the sort of candidates these reforms were trying to target is another story.

### III. THE RESULTS OVERALL

#### Listing and analyzing the results of city primary contests

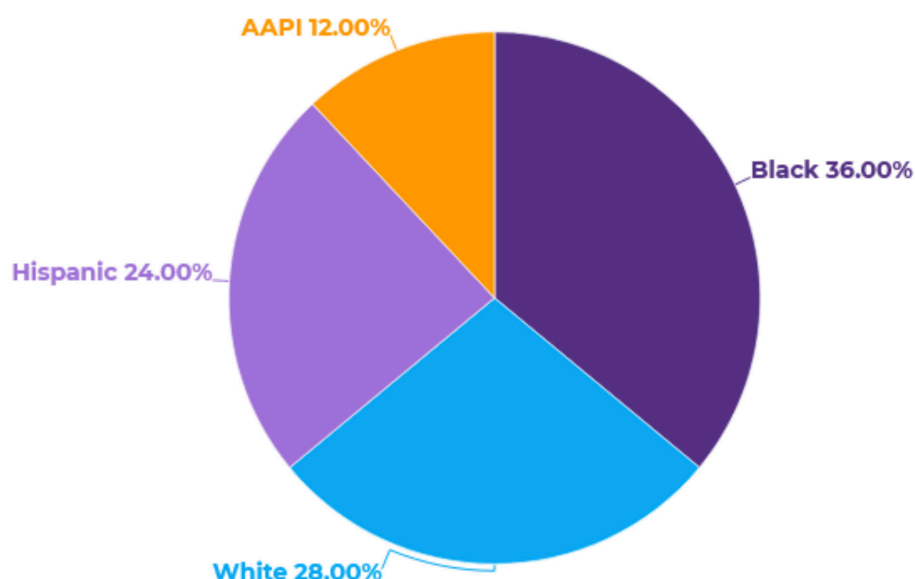
#### By the numbers

##### General analysis of the results, participation, and winning candidates

According to analysis done by FairVote, we are looking at what will probably be the most diverse city government in the history of the city.<sup>20</sup> For the second time in its history,<sup>21</sup> New York will be led by a Black Mayor in the form of Eric Adams. The mayor's race in particular showed strong promise for future elections with two women and two people of color placing in the top three finishers.<sup>22</sup> The majority of New York's Borough Presidents will be people of color with one, Vanessa Gibson, being a woman of color. Jumaane Williams will return as Public Advocate. For the first time in the history of the city, the City Council will have more women members than male members, with 29 out of the 51 seats projected to go to women in November.<sup>23</sup> The Council will have a solid majority of people of color, with a record 35 races being won by non-white candidates<sup>24</sup> and making the council one of the most demographically representative in the city's history. Six incoming members are LGBTQA+, notably Crystal Hudson and Kristin Richardson Jordan, who are also women of color.

The groundwork for this diverse government can be clearly seen when looking at the demographic breakdown of the candidates who ran for office. According to FairVote, almost three-quarters of all candidates were persons of color – an amazing display of representation.<sup>25</sup> Over 40% of candidates were women or identified as non-binary. As previously discussed, far more people outside of the traditional candidate pool ran for office than ever before, which can be attributed both to the introduction of RCV and new Board of Elections financing programs.

**FIGURE 2: RACE OR ETHNICITY OF PRIMARY WINNERS. IMAGE CREDIT TO FAIRVOTE**



*Figure 2: Race or Ethnicity of Primary Winners. Image credit to FairVote<sup>26</sup>*

## On Voting and RCV

### Noting voter engagement with and response to RCV in the primaries

Analysis shows that this primary had the highest turnout in New York City for a local election since 1989, just over three decades ago, and double that of the 2017 primaries with over 941,000 ballots cast.<sup>27</sup> Considering that New York is home to over 3.7 million registered Democrats,<sup>28</sup> it is encouraging to see that over a quarter of voters turned out to participate in this primary.

The good news largely continues as one reads into the numbers surrounding RCV. A reported 87% of voters in the mayoral election ranked more than one candidate, and almost half of all voters ranked the maximum of five candidates.<sup>29</sup> The number of voters who ranked multiple candidates in other races drops slightly, down to just over two-thirds, but these numbers should be celebrated for being the first time RCV was used in such a broad scale in New York City. There were just over 140,000 ballots in the mayoral race that were exhausted, roughly 15% of the votes cast for that office,<sup>30</sup> and disappointingly this seems to have been the result of “voluntary abstention,” whereby voters did not rank the maximum number of candidates on their ballot – that being said, it is understandable that voters may not have felt that ranking more than what they did was necessary.

Perhaps most encouragingly was the fact that exit polling showed significant enthusiasm and comprehension of the new voting system. An astounding 95% of voters surveyed stated that they found the ballots simple to complete, with over 75% stating that they hope the system will continue to be used in future local elections.<sup>31</sup> This is amazing news, and shows that the system has significant appeal to voters. In contrast to fearmongering statements that communities of color would not understand the system or fail to use it properly, over 75% of Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters reported that they understood the system very well, with even greater percentages of all groups reporting that they found the ballots easy to fill out.

## First Round Citywide Votes by Office

### Primary victors are bolded

#### **i. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 10)**

- 1. Eric Adams – 289,403 (30.8%)**
2. Maya Wiley – 201,127 (21.4%)
3. Kathryn Garcia – 184,463 (19.6%)
4. Andrew Yang – 115,130 (12.2%)
5. Scott Stringer – 51,778 (5.5%)
6. Dianne Morales – 26,495 (2.8%)
7. Raymond McGuire – 25,242 (2.7%)
8. Shaun Donovan – 23,167 (2.5%)
9. Aaron Foldenauer - 7,742 (0.8%)
10. Art Chang - 7,048 (0.7%)

#### **ii. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- 1. Curtis Sliwa – 40,794 (70.9%)**
2. Fernando Mateo – 16,719 (29.1%)

#### **iii. Democratic Primary for Comptroller**

- 1. Brad Lander – 268,064 (30.9%)**
2. Corey Johnson – 195,025 (22.5%)
3. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera - 117,134 (13.5%)
4. Brian Benjamin – 66,276 (7.7%)
5. David Weprin – 62,641 (7.2%)
6. Kevin Parker – 49,555 (5.7%)
7. Reshma Patel – 45,601 (5.3%)
8. Zachary Iscol – 27,756 (3.2%)
9. Alex Pan – 24,266 (2.8%)

#### **iv. Republican Primary for Comptroller**

1. No primary was held – according to The Washington Post, Daby Carreras will be the Republican candidate



**v. Democratic Primary for Manhattan District Attorney**

1. Alvin Bragg – 85,720 (34.3%)
2. Tali Farhadian Weinstein – 76,892 (30.7%)
3. Tahanie Aboushi – 27,458 (11%)
4. Lucy Lang – 18,910 (7.6%)
5. Diana Florence – 12,246 (4.9%)
6. Elizabeth Crotty – 11,453 (4.6%)
7. Eliza Orlins – 10,610 (4.2%)
8. Dan Quart – 6,984 (2.8%)

**vi. Republican Primary for Manhattan District Attorney**

1. No primary was held – according to The Washington Post, Thomas Kenniff will be the Republican candidate

**d. First Round Votes for Office by Borough**

**i. Manhattan**

**1. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 5)**

- a. Kathryn Garcia – 71,211 (31.7%)
- b. Maya Wiley – 50,276 (22.4%)
- c. Eric Adams – 43,088 (19.2%)
- d. Andrew Yang – 22,382 (10%)
- e. Scott Stringer – 14,660 (6.5%)

**2. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- a. Curtis Sliwa – 4,112 (70.1%)
- b. Fernando Mateo – 1,758 (29.9%)

**3. Democratic Primary for Comptroller (Top 4)**

- a. Brad Lander – 74,410 (36.3%)
- b. Corey Johnson – 47,556 (23.2%)
- c. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera – 24,948 (12.2%)
- d. Brian Benjamin – 18,245 (8.9%)

**4. Democratic Primary for Borough President (Top 5)**

- a. Mark Levine – 67,375 (28.3%)
- b. Brad Hoylman – 61,706 (26%)
- c. Ben Kallos – 30,465 (12.9%)
- d. Lindsey Boylan – 24,475 (10.3%)
- e. Elizabeth Caputo – 23,489 (9.9%)

**ii. Brooklyn**

**1. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 5)**

- a. Eric Adams – 102,973 (36.4%)
- b. Maya Wiley – 75,751 (26.8%)
- c. Kathryn Garcia – 44,402 (15.7%)
- d. Andrew Yang – 29,224 (10.3%)
- e. Scott Stringer – 9,810 (3.5%)

**2. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- a. Curtis Sliwa – 8,203 (77.3%)
- b. Fernando Mateo – 2,409 (22.7%)

**3. Democratic Primary for Comptroller (Top 4)**

- a. Brad Lander – 97,158 (37.6%)
- b. Corey Johnson – 49,727 (19.2%)
- c. Kevin Parker – 26,320 (10.2%)
- d. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera – 25,838 (10%)

**4. Democratic Primary for Borough President (Top 5)**

- a. Antonio Reynoso – 80,867 (27.9%)
- b. Robert Cornegy – 55,285 (19.1%)
- c. Jo Anne Simon – 30,465 (17.9%)
- d. Mathieu Eugene – 24,475 (8%)
- e. Khari Edwards – 23,489 (6.3%)

**iii. Queens**

**1. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 5)**

- a. Eric Adams – 56,414 (32.9%)
- b. Maya Wiley – 32,316 (18.8%)
- c. Andrew Yang – 28,998 (16.9%)
- d. Kathryn Garcia – 25,713 (10.3%)
- e. Scott Stringer – 9,254 (5.4%)

**2. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- a. Curtis Sliwa – 10,871 (72.2%)
- b. Fernando Mateo – 4,180 (27.8%)

**3. Democratic Primary for Comptroller (Top 4)**

- a. Brad Lander – 37,173 (23.5%)
- b. Corey Johnson – 35,539 (22.5%)
- c. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera – 24,066 (15.2%)
- d. David Weprin – 18,887 (12%)

**4. Democratic Primary for Borough President**

- a. Donovan Richards – 80,320 (41.1%)
- b. Elizabeth Crowley – 80,142 (41%)
- c. James Van Bramer – 34,210 (17.5%)
- d. Write-ins – 919 (0.5%)



#### **iv. The Bronx**

##### **1. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 5)**

- a. Eric Adams – 42,812 (45.7%)
- b. Maya Wiley – 15,946 (17%)
- c. Kathryn Garcia – 9,268 (9.9%)
- d. Andrew Yang – 8,377 (8.9%)
- e. Scott Stringer – 4,499 (4.8%)

##### **2. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- a. Curtis Sliwa – 1,723 (61.2%)
- b. Fernando Mateo – 1,094 (38.8%)

##### **3. Democratic Primary for Comptroller (Top 4)**

- a. Corey Johnson – 25,111 (29.6%)
- b. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera – 20,549 (24.2%)
- c. Brad Lander – 15,471 (18.2%)
- d. Brian Benjamin – 8,491 (10%)

##### **4. Democratic Primary for Borough President (Top 5)**

- a. Vanessa Gibson – 40,097 (39.5%)
- b. Fernando Cabrera – 34,022 (33.5%)
- c. Nathalia Fernandez – 14,397 (14.2%)
- d. Luis Sepulveda – 10,407 (10.3%)
- e. Sammy Ravelo – 1,958 (1.9%)

#### **v. Staten Island**

##### **1. Democratic Primary for Mayor (Top 5)**

- a. Eric Adams – 7,947 (30.9%)
- b. Kathryn Garcia – 5,218 (20.3%)
- c. Andrew Yang – 4,310 (16.7%)
- d. Maya Wiley – 3,433 (13.3%)
- e. Scott Stringer – 2,021 (7.9%)

##### **2. Republican Primary for Mayor**

- a. Curtis Sliwa – 11,963 (70.7%)
- b. Fernando Mateo – 4,951 (29.3%)

##### **3. Democratic Primary for Comptroller (Top 4)**

- a. Corey Johnson – 6,925 (29.1%)
- b. Brad Lander – 4,809 (20.2%)
- c. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera – 3,815 (16%)
- d. David Weprin – 1,731 (7.3%)

##### **4. Democratic Primary for Borough President (Top 5)**

- a. Mark Murphy – 13,221 (46.5%)
- b. Lorraine Honor – 6,083 (21.4%)
- c. Cesar Vargas – 4,097 (14.4%)
- d. Brandon Stradford – 2,610 (9.2%)
- e. Radhakrishna Mohan – 2,086 (7.3%)

##### **5. Republican Primary for Borough President (Top 5)**

- a. Vito Fossella – 8,585 (43.7%)
- b. Steven Matteo – 7,885 (40.1%)
- c. Leticia Remauro – 2,476 (12.6%)
- d. Jhong Kim – 549 (2.8%)
- e. Write-ins – 151 (0.8%)

## I. Race and the Primaries

Analyzing primary outcomes through a racial perspective

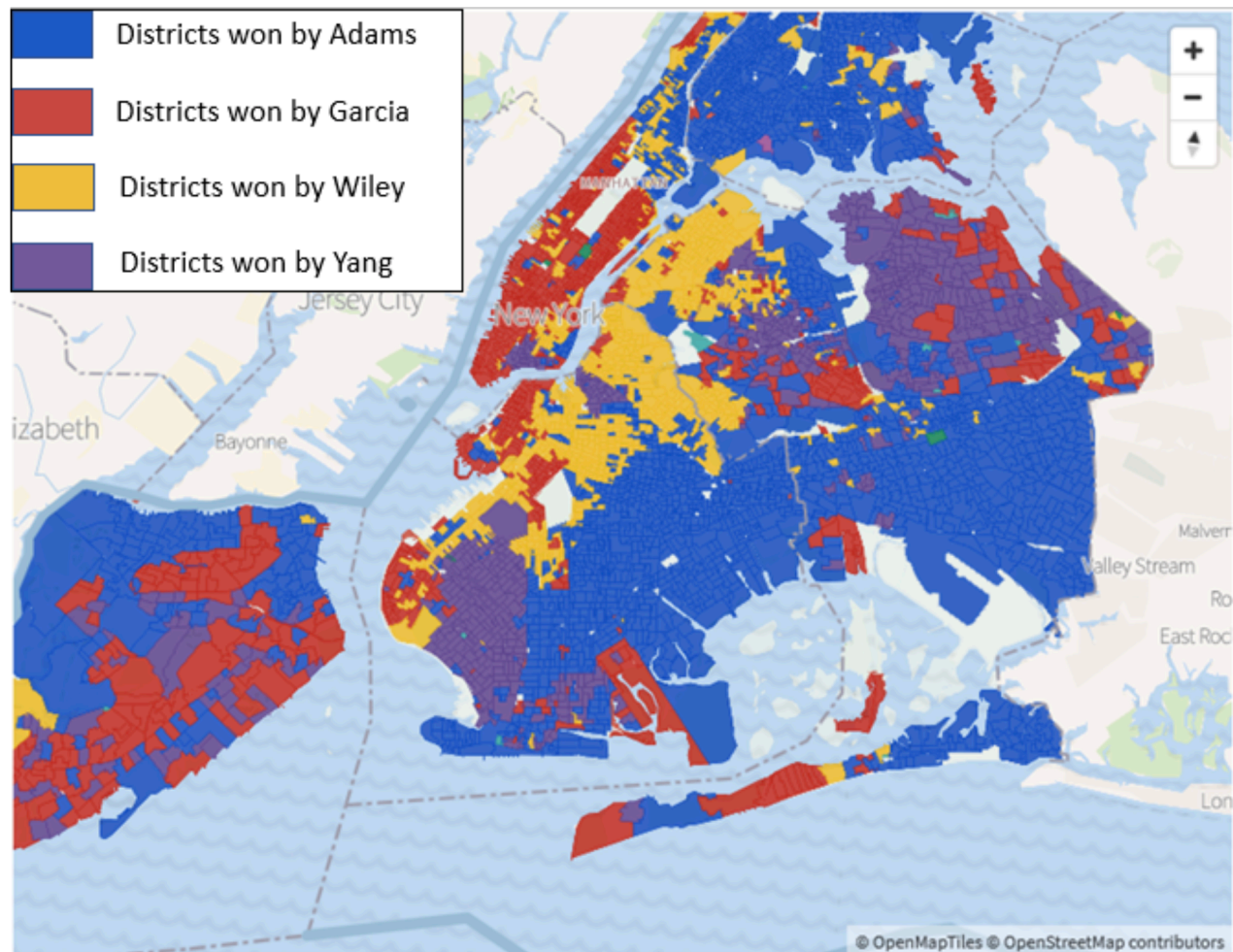


Figure 3: First round voter breakdown by district, courtesy of ABC 7

above demonstrates, very important in understanding where exactly voter sympathies lay in the first round. In turn, this allows us a greater understanding of what exactly the primary means for the communities that voted, not to mention the tones of the general election.

Ultimately, Adams' focus on communities of color and their struggles is what led to his victory – a message that resonated with (most) of the city's communities of color. While this victory admittedly narrowed in later rounds, Adams was able to establish himself as the leader in the first round precisely because of his strategy and appeal to lower-income and middle-class New Yorkers.<sup>32</sup> As Figure 3 demonstrates, Adams drew his power from neighborhoods that have a larger concentration of the city's Black and Hispanic/Latino populations, which make up roughly 25.1% and 27.5% (respectively) of the city's overall population.<sup>33</sup> Historically Black New Yorkers have higher engagement in city elections than even white New Yorkers, and the power of engagement was shown by Adam's sweeping early lead. As such, in the below Figure 4, one can see that of the city's Assembly districts, Adams' capture of a higher proportion of both Black and Hispanic/Latino districts in the city was almost unmatched by his competitors.

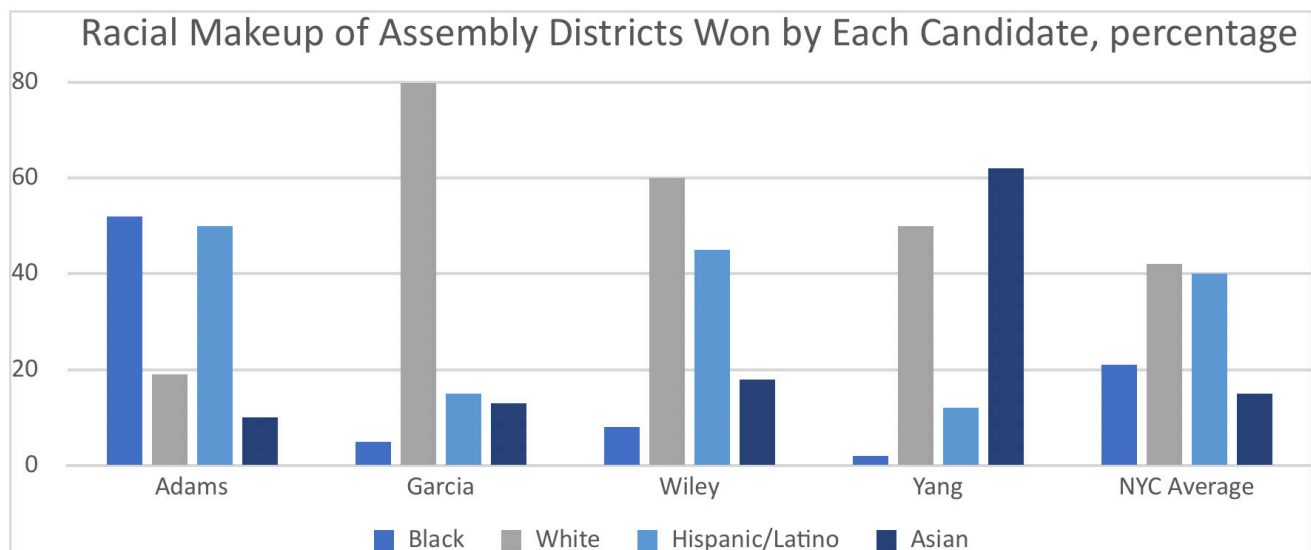


Figure 4: Racial makeup of NYC Assembly districts won by each candidate, based on the Racial Lines chart courtesy of Bloomberg (see footnote 33)<sup>34</sup>

This, however, brings our analysis of the racial breakdown of the election to another point of interest – Adams, while dominant overall, lacked the support of the two other major ethnic groups in the city – Caucasians and Asians. Indeed, as Figure 4 makes abundantly clear, the first round saw him significantly miss the mark with the city’s White population, which is almost humorous when compared to Garcia’s first round results, which show her missing the mark even more dramatically with the populations Adams himself did so well with but utterly crushing his and other candidates’ support with white voters. Ditto for Yang, whose performance amongst Asian voters was unmatched by other candidates but somewhat lackluster amongst other racial demographics, though he did perform better with white voters as well.

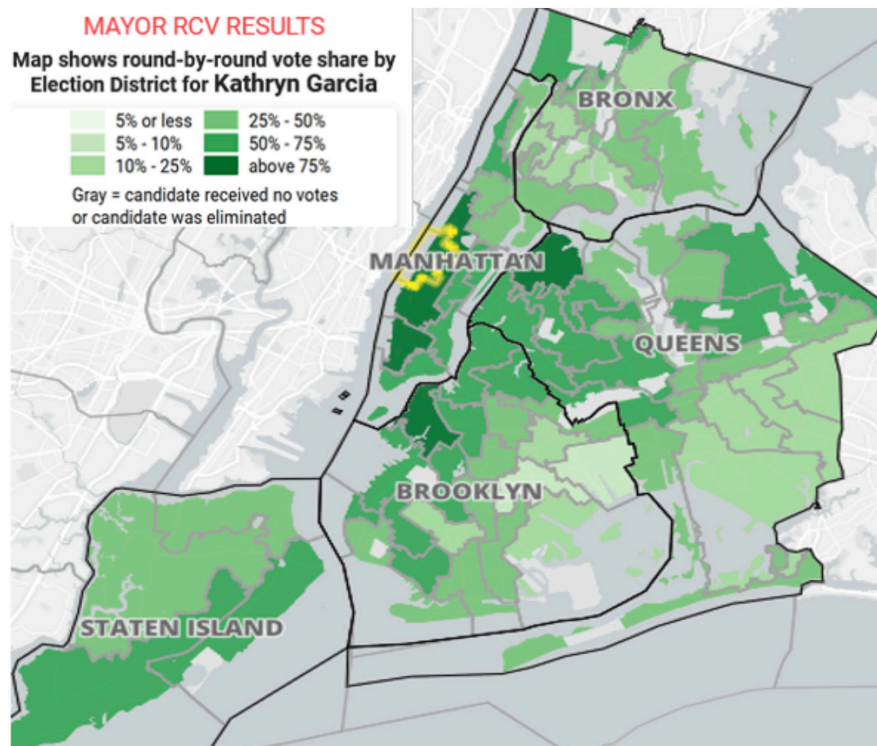


Figure 5: Ranked Choice Voting Results for Garcia, Final Round. Courtesy of the Center for Urban Research

This does, however, set up what is perhaps the most important takeaway from the discussion of racial influence in these primaries. That is, socioeconomic status and racial status are not only strongly linked, but that there is a clear divide between the affluent/gentrifying areas of the city and the poorer outer borough areas. Garcia's ultimate victory in many of New York's wealthiest areas demonstrates that, notwithstanding Adams' battery of wealthy donors, the city's wealthy were not warm on him. Note Garcia's incredibly strong showing in the Upper West Side and overall stronger showing in Staten Island and the western, more heavily gentrified neighborhoods of Brooklyn in Figure 5. What this implies is that, while Adams indeed has the support of numerous wealthy and prominent New York City residents, he does not appear to have entirely commanded the political allegiance of the white, wealthy upper class in the city. Whether this was racially motivated or a divergence in policy objectives is not entirely clear, though the assumption can be made that the wealthy whites of these areas were less appreciative of Adams' focus on the poorer and more marginalized non-white communities in the city.

This is brought up as a point that Adams should consider as he prepares for a likely win in the general election and his mayoral policies hereafter – the wealthy have a demonstrated tendency to flee areas that become hostile to their existence, whether it be in the form of taxes or as the target of policies that aim to strip away the privilege they enjoy. While BLAC is hardly sympathetic to the idea that the wealthy may be getting their feelings hurt by the notion Adams is not catering to their interests, we respect the fact that they are a politically powerful influence in the city and, though small, can do a lot of hurt. We are reminded in particular of de Blasio's cultivation of groups interested in racial justice, including our sister organization TBI, to support his mayoral aspirations. Upon ascending to the office, he promptly forgot and sometimes acted entirely contrary to the aims of the groups who supported him in his rise, and when those groups abandoned him, he was left an island without any bridges; isolated from those who already disliked him and those he had alienated with his lack of action, resulting in him doing nothing at all. We are more confident in Adams' character and his pledges to support the disenfranchised of the city, but we hope that in his quest to affect his promised changes he will not repeat de Blasio's mistakes and make enemies that will hamper said changes.



## V. CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN THE PRIMARIES

### Discussing the role and impact of money in primary contests

Money was a focal point of the elections because of the amount that was both raised and distributed by the NYC Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB).<sup>35</sup> As of the last public filing, candidates have raised over \$72.5 million in private donations and have received over \$126 million in matching funds from NYCCFB as part of the aforementioned matching funds program; a total of almost \$200 million, not including loans and certainly not counting the impact of PAC spending, which in the runup to the primary election totaled over \$15 million.<sup>36</sup> Candidates have spent almost \$180 million in the past year on everything from political advertisements to pens for campaign workers, and more of the money raised by candidates in this cycle has come from small donors than ever before. It is a well understood fact that money and politics are inseparable, but the questions that are not as easy to answer are: who gave it and received it, what was it used for, and what sort of effect it had on the outcomes of the election?

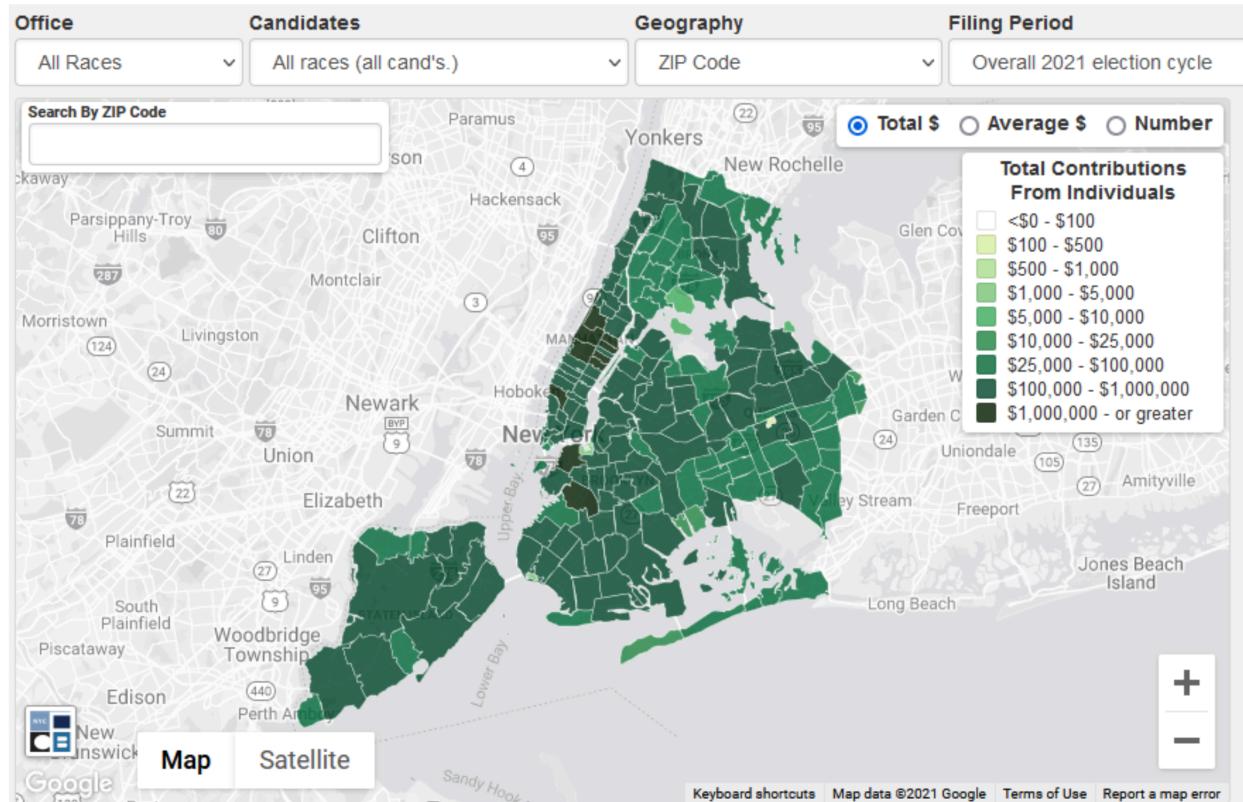


Figure 6: Total Individual Contribution Map for the 2021 Election Cycle, courtesy of the NYCCFB.

Saying where the money came from is perhaps among the easiest, but also the most difficult, questions to answer. The NYCCFB made significant improvements and additions to their system that made tracking the source of private contributions far easier, including diagrams such as the one shown in Figure 6. Examining this map shows that money was given very freely and, for the most part, consistent with the concentrations of wealth within the city. But what is most interesting is what can be seen within Figure 7, which is the same map but instead showing what donation amounts were on average. At first one might be disappointed – after all, the average donation value in 2017 was \$238 and many neighborhoods saw ranges between \$100 - \$150, whereas in 2021 the average across the city was \$144 and the range for neighborhoods sank to the \$50 - \$100 range. However, in 2017 the total value of individual donations was a little over \$32.5 million,<sup>37</sup> whereas the total value of individual donations in 2021 stood at almost \$65 million;<sup>38</sup> almost a 100% increase!

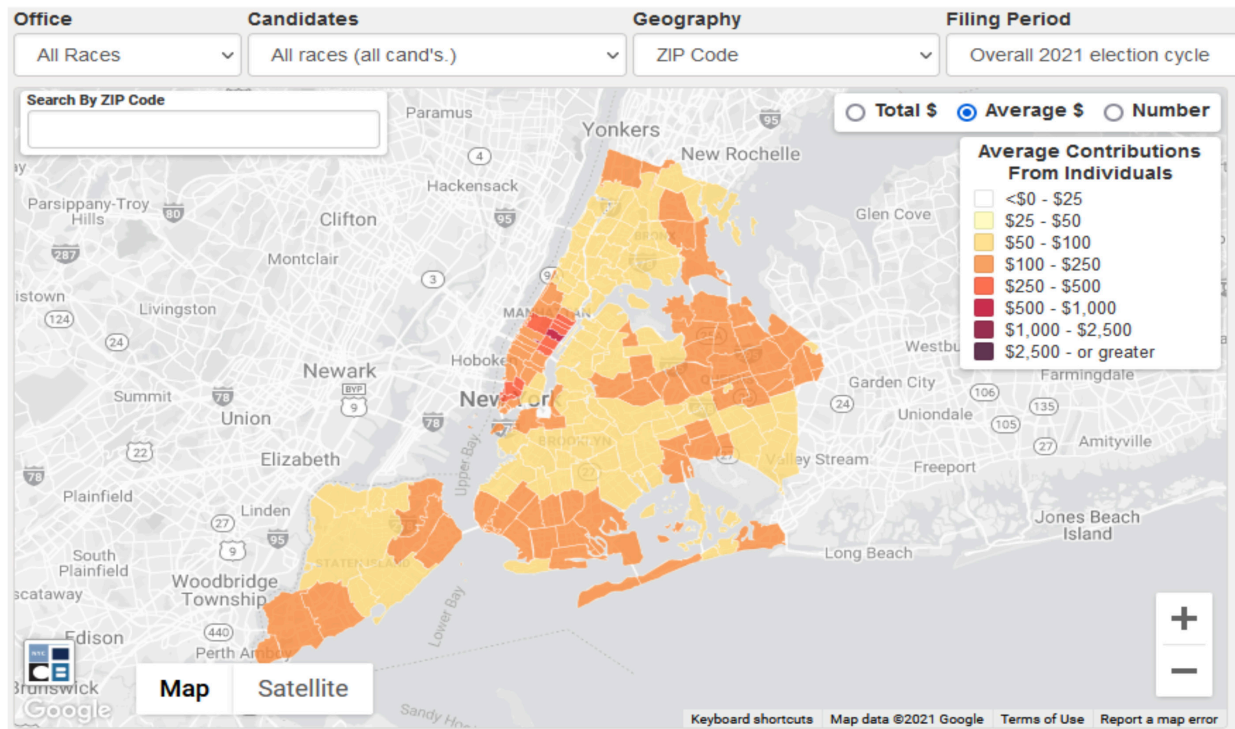


Figure 7: Average Individual Contribution Map for the 2021 Election Cycle, courtesy of the NYCCFB.

This fact is compounded by the fact that share of individual contributions relative to the number of total contributions increased from 87.5% in 2017 to 97.4% in 2021. **Put plainly – more people contributed to candidates than ever, and they were willing to give even if they could not give a lot.** This speaks volumes about the democratizing influence of ranked choice, where people who may have sat out donating in 2017 contributed this cycle because they saw that their dollar might just make the difference for their candidate of choice. In fact, almost 93% of donations in this cycle were under \$250 – direct comparisons to 2017 are not entirely fair, since in that cycle the line was at \$175. The share of donations from organizations like unions decreased accordingly. While BLAC is not so naïve to believe that this means that their influence also fell to the same extent, it is an encouraging sign that the city is moving in the right direction to restore the power of influence to voters. It also indicates that the power of wealthy donors may be eroding as campaigns begin to recognize the power of small money organizing and grassroots fundraising.



Exactly how this money was spent also deserves significant consideration, as the hectic aspects of the primaries in conjunction with the aforementioned funding changes could reveal additional information about the way the primaries, and later the general, election played out. To give a perspective on funding disbursement, the chart on the next page breaks down campaign expenditures according to the general categories given by the NYC Campaign Finance Board. These categories are as follows, along with their sub-categories:

- **Fundraising**  
Fundraising
- **Office & Administrative Costs**  
Advance Repayments; Interest/Investment Expenses; Office Expenses; Office Rent
- **Petition Expenses**  
Petition Expenses
- **Personnel Costs**  
Campaign Consultations; Professional Services; Campaign Workers Salaries
- **Voter Communication**  
Campaign Mailings; Campaign Literature; Polling; Postage; Print Ads (includes Internet ads);<sup>39</sup> Radio Ads; Television Ads (includes video ads);<sup>40</sup> Voter Registration
- **Holding of Public Office**  
Holding of Public Office
- **Other/Unclassified**  
Childcare Services; Expenditure Allocation; Other; Unknown

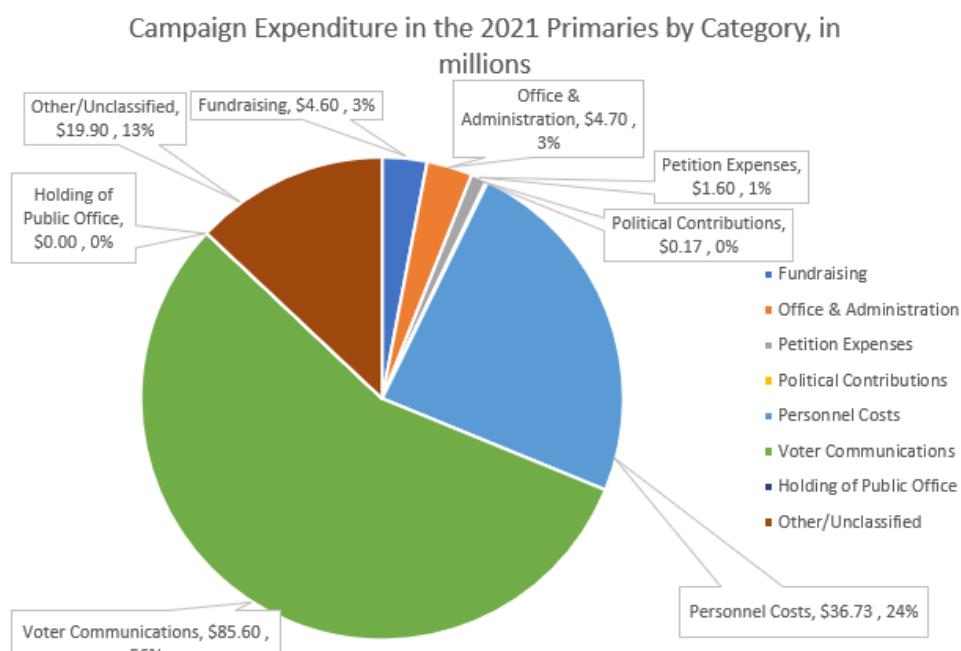
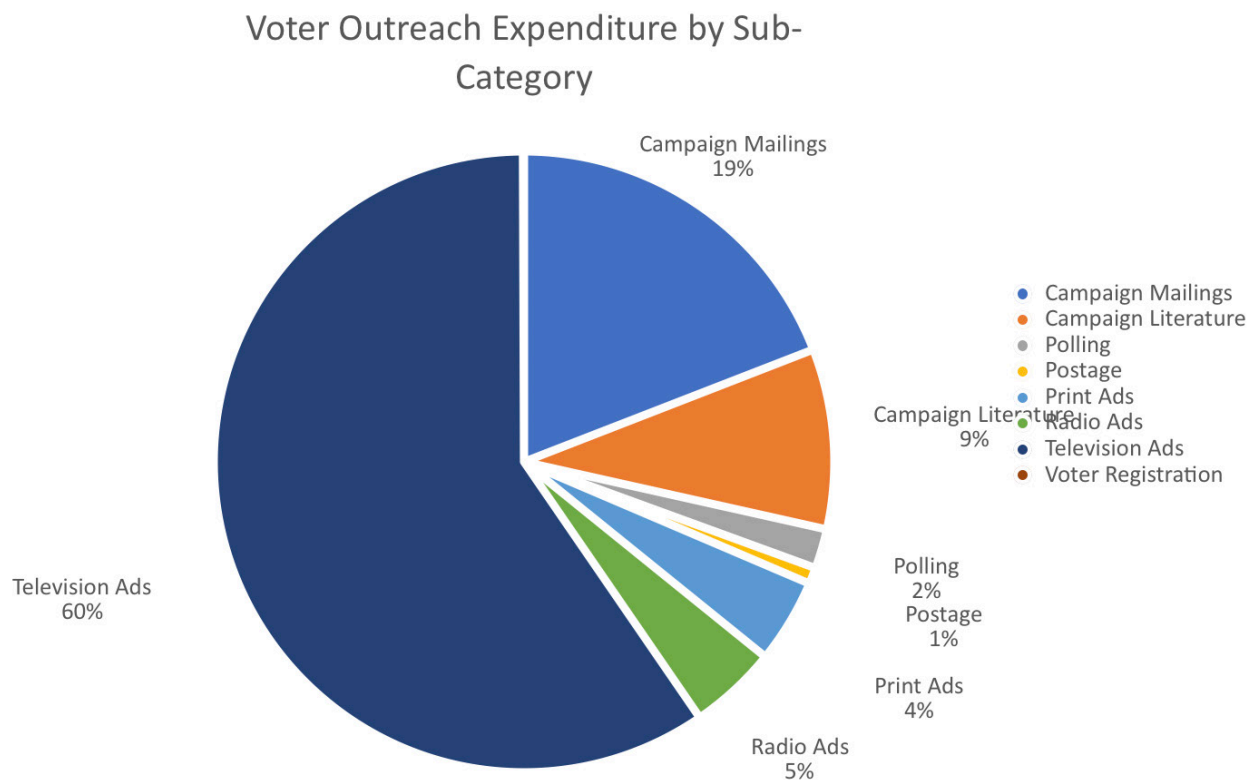


Figure 8: Campaign Expenditure in the 2021 Primaries by Spending Category<sup>41</sup>. Sub-categories are excluded for clarity – data taken from NYC Campaign Finance Board Filings #1 through #10 (01/01/2018 – 07/11/2021).

As depicted above, the overall breakdown of spending in the primaries was consistent with what one might expect – campaigns dedicated the majority of their spending towards reaching voters with their message. However, as will be seen later, the massive amount of spending that this chart represents provides many interesting insights into the role and impact of money in the elections. In particular, as discussed in Section IX(a), there are some interesting discrepancies between the amount paid to campaign staff vs. campaign consultants – an issue that has considerable import within this section, as over \$32 million was spent in the primaries on the services of campaign consultants. However, as the majority of spending in the primary cycle was on voter outreach, it is worthwhile to examine the breakdown of the sub-categories for a general impression of where the money was going. In doing so, as can be seen in the figure below, we can begin to draw some conclusions about the overall efficacy of expenditure in the 2021 election cycle.



*Figure 9: Voter Outreach Expenditure by Sub-Category. Data taken from NYCCFB Filings #1 through #10.<sup>42</sup>*

As shown, nearly two-thirds of Voter Communications expenditure was allocated towards the Television Ads sub-category. Unfortunately, due to limitations with the NYCCFB's Follow the Money tool, determining the split between traditional TV ads and video advertisements found on streaming services such as YouTube is not currently possible. This is unfortunate as, due to the pandemic, the emphasis on digital campaigning via social media was high. It implies that there was a heavy reliance on sharing campaign content such as video ads.

## Campaign Finance in the Mayoral Primaries

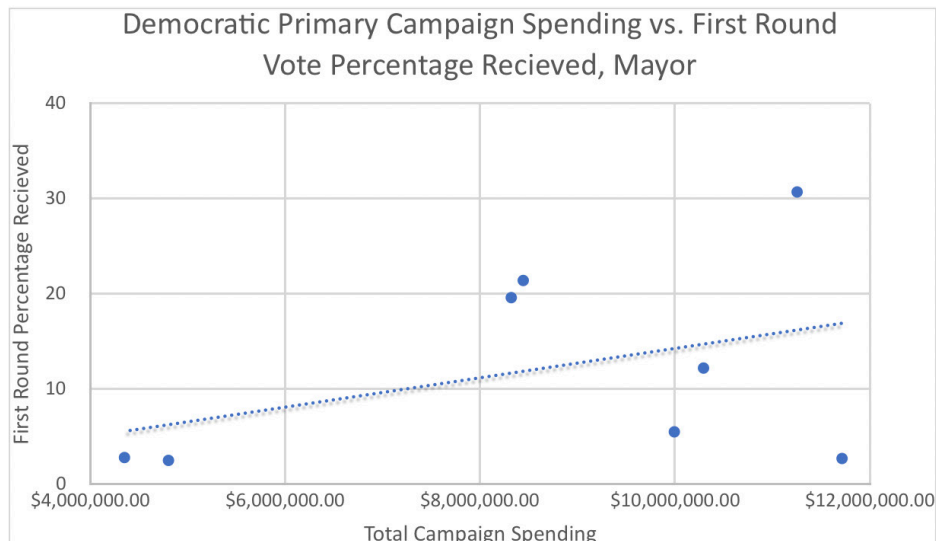
### A focus on the role of money in the mayoral primary

At this point it may be helpful to examine how much money candidates raised in both the primaries and the general election, to add a sense of scope to these discussions. On the whole, the majority of candidates in serious contention raised millions, or close to it, for their cause and received millions from the NYCCFB through the matching funds program. The table below,<sup>43</sup> which is current as of the 13th filing period<sup>44</sup> and the October 29th, 2021, NYCCFB meeting displays the scope of funding that went into the mayoral race alone.

Candidate	Private Funds	Public Funds	Unpaid loans	Total raised	Spending	Est. Balance
<b>Adams (D)</b>	\$9,351,366	\$10,135,914	n/a	\$19,487,280	\$15,315,914	\$4,171,330
<b>Donovan (D)</b>	\$2,849,377	\$2,002,483	n/a	\$4,851,860	\$4,803,097	\$58,764
<b>Garcia (D)</b>	\$2,150,634	\$6,475,819	n/a	\$8,626,453	\$8,459,577	\$166,876
<b>Mateo (R)</b>	\$541,854	\$2,033,918	n/a	\$2,575,772	\$2,481,383	\$94,338
<b>McGuire (D)</b>	\$12,066,496	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$12,066,496	\$11,714,799	\$351,697
<b>Morales (D)</b>	\$880,477	\$3,942,947	n/a	\$4,823,424	\$4,449,016	\$373,958
<b>Sliwa (R)</b>	\$1,177,599	\$4,223,838	n/a	\$5,401,437	\$4,111,059	\$1,290,373
<b>Stringer (D)</b>	\$3,810,817	\$6,475,594	n/a	\$10,286,411	\$10,003,717	\$282,694
<b>Wiley (D)</b>	\$2,188,843	\$5,410,882	n/a	\$7,599,725	\$8,443,454	\$(843,728)
<b>Yang (D)</b>	\$4,074,675	\$6,438,528	n/a	\$10,513,203	\$10,481,415	\$31,788
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$39,092,138</b>	<b>\$47,139,923</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$86,232,061</b>	<b>\$80,263,431</b>	<b>\$6,821,818</b>

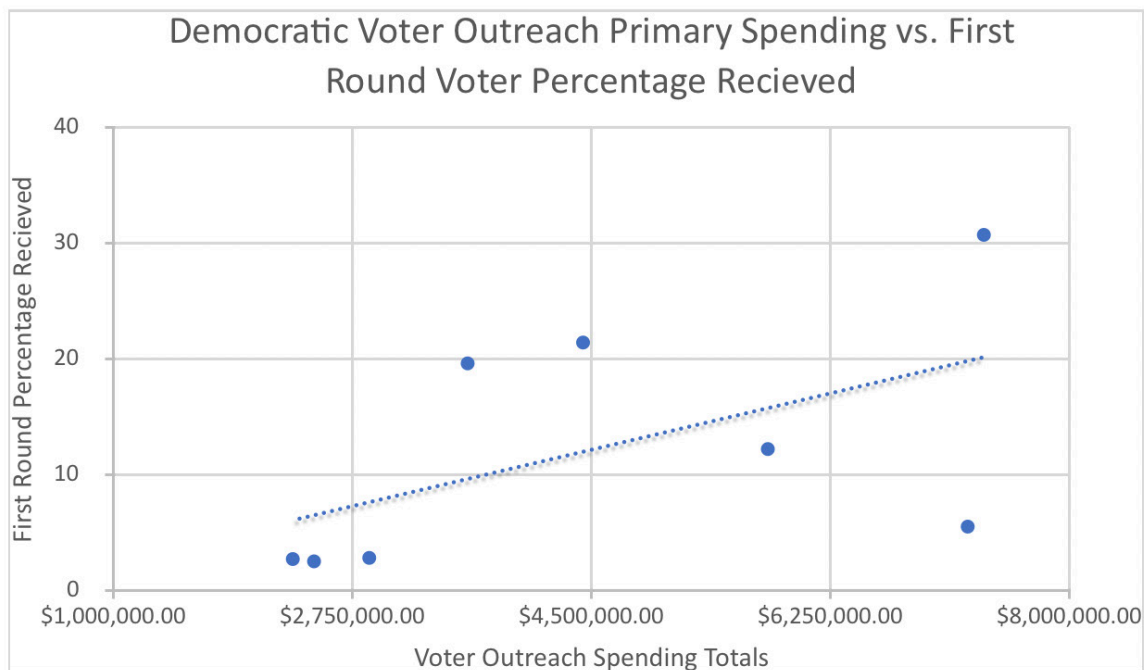
*Candidate Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Summary for the 2021 Mayoral election. Data ordered alphabetically.*

As the data shows relative to the total figures provided by the NYCCFB, over a third of the money given to primary and general candidates was invested in the race for mayor alone, as befitting the most visible office in NYC politics. Yet now comes the question of just what, exactly, did that money do for the candidates? How useful did money end up being for candidates this cycle?



Money obviously had its place in this election, and at first the above chart comparing first round performance to primary spending<sup>45</sup> results seem to be consistent with general observations about its impact. The trend clearly demonstrates that spending more leads to a higher turnout in favor of those spenders. Yet upon further inspection, one can see that while the overall trend holds, the actual data is highly variable relative to the trendline. In particular, we noticed that two data points between \$5 and \$10 million, which represent Wiley and Garcia's spending vs. first round primary performance. These candidates spent far less than their competitors yet received a disproportionately higher share of votes by comparison. Moreover, when we removed Adams and McGuire's data from the chart, the trend became negative, indicating that spending more money did not imply a better standing with voters.

Naturally this raises a lot of questions about why spending more did not inherently guarantee more votes. When looking at what each candidate spent on voter outreach,<sup>46</sup> moreover, the trend and data points appear to largely mirror what is seen in the previous graph. However, this paints a far clearer picture of how influential money was by comparison as it directly correlates campaign advertising to first round performance.



We can see that McGuire, who was previously the outlier in terms of spending to first round performance, actually spent the least of the charted candidates on voter engagement. This makes it far easier to understand why Wiley and Garcia were outliers on the last chart, as despite spending far less than McGuire overall, both spent much more on advertising. Adams again remained the top spender of the group, but not by much. Stringer spent only a few hundred thousand less yet performed far worse, though this is likely attributable to publicization of his sexual misconducts while in office.

## Campaign Finance in Other Primaries

### Reviewing campaign finance data for all other races

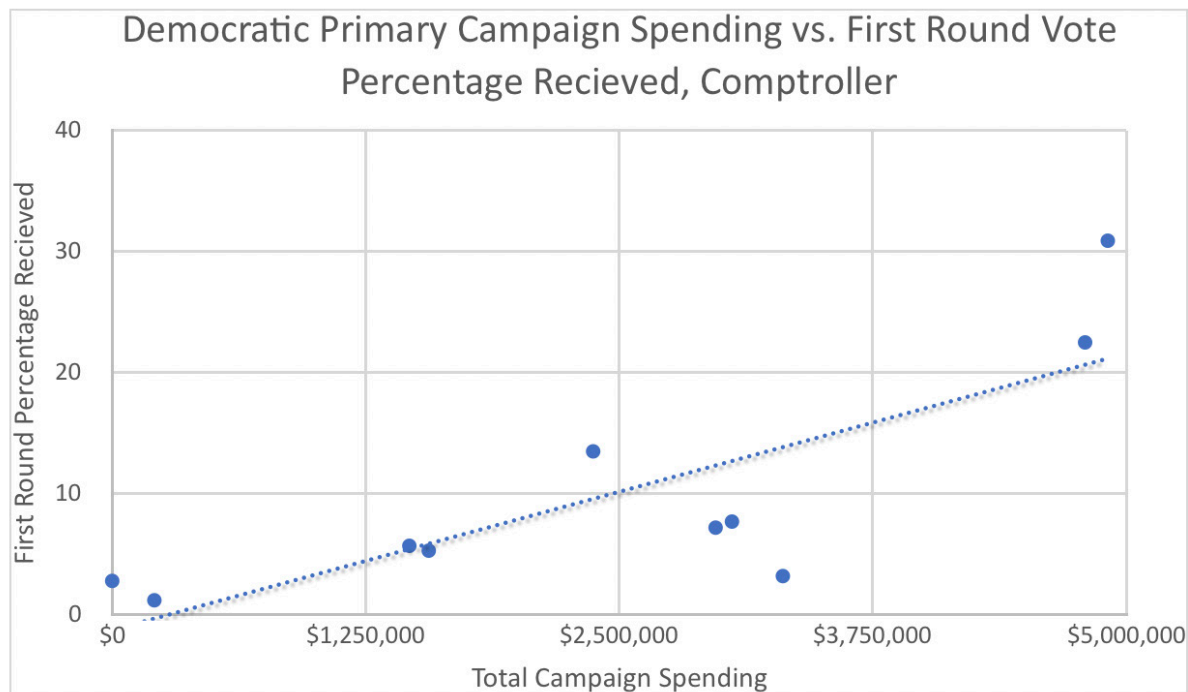
While campaign finance in the mayoral primaries is perhaps the most interesting of all races in the 2021 primaries, it is important to remember that of the impressive sums raised privately and given from public funds, only about a third were given to mayoral candidates. It is worth considering, therefore, just where the remaining two-thirds of the money went, which can be seen in the table below, and considering what impact it had on the races that it was directed towards. The table below,<sup>47</sup> which is current as of the 13th filing period and the October 29th, 2021, broadly summarizes the funding breakdown for all races<sup>48</sup> (including the mayoral race) to give perspective on the overall distribution of funds.<sup>49</sup>

Race	Private Funds	Public Funds	Unpaid loans	Total raised	Spending	Est. Balance
<b>Mayor</b>	\$41,664,484	\$47,139,468	\$2,039,700	\$88,803,952	\$82,024,928	\$6,779,024
<b>Public Advocate</b>	\$569,936	\$1,010,572	\$13,350	\$1,580,508	\$811,952	\$768,556
<b>Comptroller</b>	\$6,849,133	\$18,951,724	\$310,000	\$25,800,857	\$25,397,694	\$403,163
<b>Borough President (all)</b>	\$6,487,900	\$19,164,373	\$206,035	\$25,652,273	\$24,067,621	\$1,584,652
<i>Brooklyn</i>	<i>\$1,746,286</i>	<i>\$4,872,270</i>	<i>\$175,000</i>	<i>\$6,618,556</i>	<i>\$7,150,213</i>	<i>\$(531,657)</i>
<i>Bronx</i>	<i>\$812,334</i>	<i>\$2,869,242</i>	<i>\$535</i>	<i>\$3,681,576</i>	<i>\$3,442,680</i>	<i>\$238,896</i>
<i>Manhattan</i>	<i>\$1,807,694</i>	<i>\$5,361,384</i>	<i>\$500</i>	<i>\$7,169,078</i>	<i>\$6,902,451</i>	<i>\$266,627</i>
<i>Queens</i>	<i>\$1,119,243</i>	<i>\$2,556,423</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$3,675,666</i>	<i>\$3,433,281</i>	<i>\$242,385</i>
<i>Staten Island</i>	<i>\$1,002,343</i>	<i>\$3,505,054</i>	<i>\$30,000</i>	<i>\$4,507,397</i>	<i>\$3,138,996</i>	<i>\$1,368,401</i>
<b>City Council</b>	\$16,014,717	\$40,413,514	\$311,062	\$56,428,231	\$46,678,282	\$9,749,949
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$71,586,170</b>	<b>\$126,679,651</b>	<b>\$2,880,147</b>	<b>\$198,265,821</b>	<b>\$178,980,477</b>	<b>\$19,285,344</b>

*Candidate Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Summary for the 2021 Mayoral election. Data ordered according to the NYCCFB.*

As one might expect, the next highest share of the total funding within the entire 2021 election cycle belongs to the combined total of all City Council races. This works out to about \$1,106,436 per race, a total that appears to be consistent with the majority of funds raised within each individual council race. However, by and large individual candidates only raised in the tens of thousands, with only a few candidates privately raising more than \$100,000.<sup>50</sup> This should reinforce what has become a common theme – the unprecedentedly generous matching funds program made candidacies far more competitive, especially in races with smaller constituencies. It is clear that increased public funding played a large role in ensuring that the field in this cycle was diverse and competitive, and represents a positive development in New York where interested persons can throw their hat in the ring without necessarily having a personal war chest or strong support from outside source – 63% of the funds in this cycle's City Council races came from public sources, compared to 34% in the 2017 cycle.<sup>51</sup> Spending saw an average of \$915,260 per race, with comparative divisions of spending amongst candidates; more well-funded candidates generally spent more and vice versa. However, it is very clear in these races that the amount of money a candidate had access to directly impacted their victory.

The Comptroller's race had the next highest total funds raised and, after the mayoral race, is the race with the second highest funding per individual office. This is understandable given not only the highly important practical functions the Comptroller serves in the day-to-day function of the city, but because of its high visibility in the political world and the tendency of many occupants to follow it with a bid for mayor. With a total of 14 participants in the primaries, the average candidate funding averaged at \$1,836,011, with private and public funds averaging at \$489,227 and \$1,353,695, respectively. The average spending was consistent with the average raised, with the average campaign spending coming in at roughly \$1,807,215. It should be said that the below chart comparing primary spending to first round performance largely holds to the established rule that more money generally leads to more votes.



However, it should be noted that, like the mayoral race, the relationship was not entirely consistent. The performance of Lander and Johnson, the two candidates who both spent close to \$5 million each in the primaries, is understandable and unremarkable in that regard. However, of particular note is the performance of Alex Pan, who according to campaign filings only spent a little over \$200 yet captured 2.8% of the first-round vote. This is even more shocking when compared to the \$3.3 million spent by Zachary Iscol, who despite spending thousands of dollars for one of Pan's managed only a 0.4% lead in the first round and was eliminated the round after Pan. This is an extreme example, but it should also be clear examining the chart that two other candidates managed performances exceeding or coming close to dramatically more well-funded candidates, and should be an indicator to future political aspirants that money is not the only route to strong performance or even victory.



Public Advocate was the third largest race with regards to funding concentrated on a single office, and was largely unsurprising in terms of actual results. The race was unique in the sense that it was the only one of the three city-wide elections that had an incumbent in the running, and Jumaane Williams not only won the primary handily with 70% of the first-round vote but in the realm of fundraising. Williams was the only candidate of the race to have received public funding, a total of over \$1 million, and raised the largest private sum of the five candidates in the primary at \$230,345. It is worth noting that the runner up in the primary, one Anthony Herbert, was actually third place in private funds with \$75,948 raised behind Williams' total and Devi Nampiaparampil, who raised \$170,667. Given Williams' incumbency, there is also little to be said about spending in the Public Advocate's race as Williams outspent all his opponents and appears to have kept the majority of his funding in reserve for the general election, or future campaigning – Williams has since declared his intent to seek the Governor's office in Albany.

Lastly are the races for Borough President, which generally played out according to the rules that have been established in other races. The Manhattan race had the highest total funds raised, private and public, and was unremarkable concerning the relationship between money raised and spent compared to first round performance. The average total candidate funding and spending averaged at \$1,021,977 and \$983,884 respectively. Ben Kallos and Elizabeth Caputo's spending to performance ratio is perhaps the most indicative in this race of the general theme of less funded candidates performing better than better funded ones. Caputo raised and spent half that of Kallos yet made it further than Kallos, though not in a way that was particularly outlandish, as she was eliminated next round. The two candidates who went beyond, Mark Levine and Brad Hoylman, both received and spent double that of Caputo and were able to make it further than her.

The Brooklyn race was only slightly behind the Manhattan race in terms of total funds raised but differed in part because of the sheer number candidates within the race, nearly double that of Manhattan. The average total funding and total spending was \$507,908 and \$549,175 respectively. This was the most high-profile race to feature deficit spending by campaigns, though this was primarily driven by two campaigns, that of Robert Cornegy and Anthony Jones.<sup>52</sup> There is little to note about this race relative to campaign finance – the most well-funded and highest candidates made it the farthest as one might reasonably expect. While Cornegy spent the most in the primary by over \$100 thousand and eliminated in the penultimate round, final round participants Reynoso and Simon each spent over \$1.3 million and performed in such a way that leads one to believe that the difference came down to political platforms rather than a lack of political messaging.

The Bronx race saw the overall lowest private fundraising of the Borough President races but, overall, the third highest spending. The average total funds raised and total spending was \$613,596 and \$573,780, numbers generally consistent with most of the campaigns present in this race. There is again a relationship between first round performance and spending, with top spenders Vanessa Gibson and Fernando Cabrera capturing a combined 73% of the votes. However, Gibson was second to Cabrera in spending by just over \$200 thousand yet not only placed above him in first round results by 6%, but in the overall election. This further feeds BLAC's overall opinion that the raw advantage of money in New York City elections may be diminishing but is hardly gone, as evidenced in this particular race by the fact that while Gibson triumphed over a more well-funded opponent she did so as the second most well-funded one, with the top two spenders handily crushing their other opponents within a single round.

The Queens race was the lowest ranked race with regards to funds raised and second lowest with regards to spending, but is more important with respects to campaign finance as a demonstration of incumbency power even in the face of higher spending opponents. The average total fundraising and total spending was \$525,095 and \$490,469, but it is important to recognize that these averages are heavily weighed down relative to the three major candidates' (Elizabeth Crowley, Donovan Richards, and Jimmy Van Bramer) numbers. Crowley and Van Bramer both raised over a million dollars each and Richards raised almost a million dollars; the next candidate barely raised ten thousand. However, the Queens race is fairly unique because unlike other races, it had an incumbent in the form of Richards. Richards both raised and spent the least of the top three, likely due to his incumbency status, yet was able to beat both Crowley and Van Bramer despite both spending hundreds of thousands more on their campaigns. Granted, the victory was admittedly narrow with Richards maintaining a lead of less than 200 votes in the first and second rounds and ultimately only winning by roughly 1,000 votes. However, it does not change the fact that Richards did ultimately win while spending half as much as Crowley, and speaks highly to the impact of incumbency advantage.

The Staten Island races, being the only borough with both a Democratic and Republican primary this cycle, are otherwise the second lowest in total funds raised and the lowest in spending. The combined average total fundraising and total spending was \$500,822 and \$348,777, a number consistent with most campaigns in Staten Island. The Democratic averages were \$390,257 and \$288,996; the Republican averages were \$639,029 and \$423,504. The Democratic race went predictably in the sense that Mark Murphy placed highest in the first round and spent the most of the candidates during the primaries, spending about \$75 thousand more than runner up Lorraine Honor. However, the Republican primary was the opposite, with Vito Fossella spending significantly less than the majority of his opponents. Leticia Remauro and Steven Matteo respectively spent over five times that of Fossella, yet Fossella received the most votes in the first round. It should be noted, however, this lead was minor; Matteo trailed the first round by only 700 votes and the contest ended with him narrowing the gap to 443 votes. It speaks as much to the prevailing theory of more money equaling more votes as it does to BLAC's theory that money may be losing its influence, as despite Fossella's victory Matteo's performance was very strong. This is especially clear when examining the breakdowns in Round 2, as the number of votes to be re-allocated not only exceeded the gap present but actually favored Matteo – one wonders, had Fossella spent more or less money, whether the already small gap in the final round might have widened or shrunk.

## VI. THE WAKE OF THE PRIMARIES

A retrospective look on the primaries with specific areas and points of relevance addressed

### On RCV

RCV's implementation, impact, and looking forward for the system

It was anticipated that the new system of ranked choice voting would encourage “cooperation” amongst certain candidates to bolster their chances of reaching further rounds. This would take the form of a quid pro quo between campaigns that would see two candidates endorse each other as their “second rank” pick to pool voters to remain through several RCV rounds with the hope that they would last long enough for voters that may have each candidate as third, fourth, or fifth round picks to be re-allocated. There is a solid theoretical basis for this concept and its theoretical effect on a given race – faced with numerous competitors, a given campaign would undoubtedly look to shore up their campaign by forming an alliance with another campaign, which would by extension facilitate friendlier relationships between candidates as each search for an ideologically similar counterpart that could help deliver them victory. The need to build consensus amongst voters that a given candidate may not be their first choice, but a choice, should have driven greater cooperation amongst candidates. This was not exactly what happened. True, there were some instances of the vote pooling emerging – the last-minute alliance between mayoral candidates Andrew Yang and Kathryn Garcia is the most high-profile example of this,<sup>53</sup> though they stopped short of officially cross-endorsing each other. It was more commonly seen in down ballot races, mostly for City Council seats,<sup>54</sup> but overall was strikingly absent from campaign strategies in this election cycle.

BLAC believes that this is due to several factors, chief among them the newness of RCV and its possibilities. After all, one might very well think that campaigns cross-endorsing each other - telling voters to rank one of your opponents behind you and them doing the same - seems a bit like collusion. However, under RCV it is perfectly legal and a strategy that BLAC hopes to see more of, as it encourages candidates with similar platforms to work together. That way, regardless of whether Candidate A or Candidate B wins, they can ensure that the ideas and plans both shared have a voice at the council level. Ideology is a critical part of creating legislation and broad plans for the future, and as we saw in this election many candidates with similar plans for the future were competing for the same office, such that any one of them could have taken office without noticeable differences. Cross-endorsement will allow candidates with support bases that are not as broad or well-funded to work together against wealthier or more popular candidates and make their voices heard.

There is also a level of psychological conditioning to shake when it comes to New York City's old election system, which is known as first-past-the-post (FPTP). This system, which was replaced with RCV, is why candidates could win office with less than 50% of the popular vote and put candidates without the popular support of most voters into positions they might not have won otherwise. A byproduct of FPTP, in addition to creating the modern two-party system, is that it forces candidates to fight for vote margins. This imperative to scrape away votes encourages empty mass appeals designed to attract voters without providing information or substance that might turn off said voters. Under RCV and the possibility for cross-endorsements, however, a single candidate (A) can be defeated by two campaigns (B & C) with a common ideological goal, since while B and C may lose against A alone in terms of raw votes, by cross-endorsing each other either B or C could potentially have enough votes to beat A. In the 2021 primaries, Yang and Garcia's last minute and incomplete alliance was ineffective but had they worked together more closely earlier in the campaign.

But, as can be seen in the below figure, had Yang and Garcia allied earlier and more closely, the number of votes that were redistributed from Yang to Adams, Wiley, or became inactive could have diminished in favor of Garcia. Of Yang's 135,686 votes in Round 6, roughly 45,000 became inactive after his elimination, of which only a fraction of that number would have been needed to propel Garcia to victory assuming the allocations to Adams, Wiley, and Garcia remained the same. And that says nothing of the impact that an earlier alliance would have had on drawing votes away from the other candidates. Our point here is that cross-endorsements and campaign alliances have immense potential under the new system, but as stated before decades of conditioning cannot be undone in a single election year. Candidates, consultants, and voters need more time to embrace ranked choice and the viability of cross-endorsements.

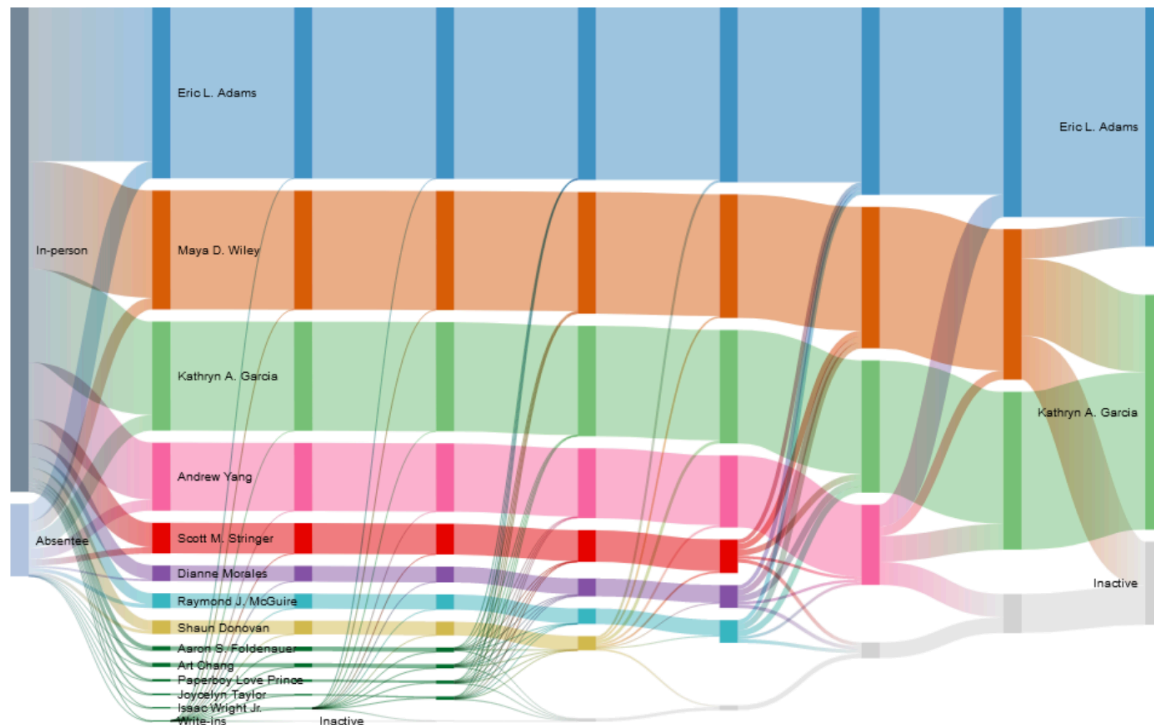


Figure 10: Sankey Diagram of Citywide Ranked Choice Voting vote allocations for Mayor (2021 primary). Courtesy of ElectionAtlas and Valerie Bauer.

## Degradation of Political Campaigns

### Discussing anecdotal and common instances of campaigns lacking civility or accessibility

But perhaps more disappointingly than this was the relative lack of decorum and civility between many candidates vying for the most publicly visible positions, especially that of Mayor. A lack of civility in American politics at all levels has been present for so long that it has become more the rule than the exception, a trend not helped by the tactics of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election and the rise of soundbite culture. That, however, does not and should not stop anyone from holding our elected officials and candidates for elected office to a more polite, more substantial level of discourse. This of course applies to NYC and its recent primary. The debates that the Democratic candidates held were repeatedly marred by banal sloganeering and attacks on fellow candidates<sup>55</sup> in desperate and frankly narcissistic attempts to distinguish themselves from the rest. Trading insults and accusations, petty feuding between frontrunners was so frequent we would consider

any voter not offended by this shameful display to have some of the thickest skin ever seen in our nation. This extends to the advertisements that were aired in the runup to the primary, which ranged from silly to creepy but all of which were insulting in their lack of content and clear contempt of the voters they were trying to court.

BLAC also wished to point out another disappointing development that we observed in the course of our own electoral activities – the degradation of campaign infrastructure. In pandemic times and in the face of an unstoppable march towards further technological integration, it is clear that campaigns have become more adept than ever in utilizing virtual space to promote candidates and ideas to larger and larger audiences, as well as making operations more efficient. But there is a hidden cost – the devolution of more traditional virtual spaces as resources for interested voters, alongside a more egregious neglect of basic communication resources. In attempting to contact many campaigns in the months leading up to the primary, BLAC was astounded to find that many campaigns relied far too heavily on social media as a platform to communicate with voters – far too many campaigns did not even list phone numbers or campaign emails. That is to say nothing of the often sloppy, informationally deficient webpages of candidates; where one might expect to have more detailed policy visions, by and large one would find a *paragraph* or *bullet points* detailing broad, nonspecific stump points that even the most uninformed voter would find insulting.

It is criminal to expect everyone in New York, which despite appearances to the contrary is not just a young person's tech paradise, to just adapt to this new style of campaigning. It disenfranchises so many people – from our poor minorities who cannot afford reliable access to the Internet to the elderly who may not be up to the same speed as the younger generation. Exactly who or what is responsible for this unfortunate development is difficult to determine, but it seems likely that campaign consultants may have had a role in it. With the amount of money spent on consultants this cycle in conjunction with the pandemic, it is not hard to imagine that many campaigns may have been seduced into virtual-only campaigning. While in light of the pandemic and the increasing prevalence of communication strategies using social media may indeed have justified this overwhelming switch, the wholesale abandonment of traditional infrastructure is not justified. BLAC hopes that in future elections, campaigns and candidates will remember that soundbites, 140-character statements, and only putting social media links are not substitutes for actual voter outreach and information.

## **Board of Elections Bungling**

### Examining the NYC Board of Election's previous gaffes in relation to their work in the 2021 primaries

It should be no secret to any New Yorker at this point that the New York City Board of Elections is undoubtedly one of the most, if not the, most corrupt and inefficient institution in the entirety of New York City. The structure of the agency is an inherited illness born of the days when Tammany Hall and Boss Tweed ruled New York City, and it seems that every election cycle there is a new and even more embarrassing story that shows just how rotten this institution is. In 2016, it was the voter purge that saw hundreds of thousands of voters disappear from the voter rolls; in 2018 it was technical incompetence. Last year, during one of the most important presidential elections in our nation's history, we saw the Board bungling implementation of absentee ballots and slow processing at voting sites.<sup>56</sup> And now, in 2021, we see that they forgot to remove over 100,000 test ballots when tabulating the results of the primary and were forced to extend the certification of results to July – weeks after the primary had been conducted.



Yet this only scratches the surface. As mentioned, the structure of the board is a relic of the days where corruption was virtually open in nature – it utilizes a selection system whereby the party chairs of each party choose a commissioner to represent their county, for a total of 10. As the New York Times reported, these appointments are usually either politically connected individuals or the friends of the politically connected – rarely is the selection processes clear their qualifications suitable for the position that they apply for.<sup>57</sup> Hiring is almost never public, and a sizable number of new hires appear to be drawn from relations to current employees or the politically connected. When you add in that there are plenty of incidents that cast doubt on the fairness of the board, such as Liz Kruger’s revelation that ballots cast for her in 2000 were found in an air duct,<sup>58</sup> and you have a pretty smelly organization running an even smellier show.

Despite a laundry list of reports, investigations, and condemnations that stretch back to the early 20th century, the Board manages to trail the rest of the city’s agencies (who themselves seem to exist a decade behind the rest of the world) by at least another decade or two in processes and procedures. The technical failures and shortcomings that have plagued the Board for the last decade are at least partially the result of consistent and unabashed inertia on behalf of the board itself. Of course, one cannot leave the City itself, as well as Albany, without blame. There seems to be a frankly severe lack of political will to fix something that is very clearly broken. Moreover, while the Board is definitely responsible for much of its shortcomings, the fundamental causes of these issues are because the political elites in the city and political parties that are fine with the way things are. It is inevitable that this attitude either trickles down to the elected officials we count on to fix things, or had their misgivings squashed by the powers that be.

## **Term Limits and Office Shopping**

### Discussing the confluence of term limits and their potentially adverse effects on New York’s political ecosystem

A facet of this election that went heavily overlooked in the cycle was the number of term-limited politicians looking for a new office (or a better one.) As previously mentioned, an astounding 28 members of the city council were term-limited out of their positions and thus facing the prospect of being out of work for another four years, since New York City’s charter<sup>59</sup> only forbids serving more than two **consecutive** full terms;<sup>60</sup> not limited to two total terms. Likewise for four borough presidents, the comptroller, and the mayor. This situation, as previously discussed, was a perfect excuse for many elected officials to try and upgrade their standing in New York politics or at least buff out their resume. This ended up reflecting in the primary races we saw – Scott Stringer’s bid for mayor being the most prominent, but far from the only ones. Brad Lander and Corey Johnson were rivals for Comptroller, both term-limited members of the old City Council, ending in the former’s victory; Gale Brewer traded Manhattan Borough President for her old seat in the 5th District and Mark Levine, representative of the 7th District, will take her place after beating out Ben Kallos, who was the term limited representative of the 5th District. Vanessa Gibson traded the 16th District for Bronx Borough President after beating out Fernando Cabrera, who tried to do the same being term-limited as representative of the 14th district, and so forth.

However, this presents something of a problem. All offices in New York operate on the same four-year terms<sup>61</sup> all offices have the same two-year term limits. But in the most complex city government in the world, more than anything, experience is a virtue. For the record, BLAC strongly believes in term limits – they help to keep the political arena from being dominated by individuals for decades with stagnant ideals and help counteract the threat of long-term corruption. But as 2021 showed, a mass exodus of elected officials from term-limited positions creates an uncomfortable situation where elected are compelled to compete for different offices almost from the start. This problem is compounded by the fact that if one loses, the city loses by seeing off



an individual who, for better or worse, has an understanding of how the city works and how to be effective at the job. Electees therefore have to think constantly about where they want to go next or, if they want to run again for the same position they have, what they will spend at least the next four years doing and how they will beat out their successor. It taxes the intellectual resources of the city and forces short-term action to improve public image over long-term planning.

Meanwhile, newly elected officials who may or may not understand how the machinations of their office work in relation to the rest of the city government have to waste valuable time trying to learn – in the words of our founder Bertha Lewis - “where the bathroom is.” Governing is not an easy job, especially at the City Council level, where many newcomers first cut their teeth, and can take years to understand. One could even say that takes the whole first term to truly know the job, at which point they only have another four years to do the job. As stated before, this is bad for the city in the long term since it means that political intelligence is constantly leaving the office or moving to a different one. This again prioritizes short-term actions that lead to larger issues being solved piecemeal or being ignored entirely.

## **Part 2: The 2021 General Election**

### **II. General Election Results<sup>62</sup>**

(winners in respective geographical areas bolded)

*Listing the results of the 2021 general election in New York City and analyzing them*

#### **a. General Election Results by position and party of winner**

- i. Mayor - Democrat
- ii. Comptroller - Democrat
- iii. Public Advocate - Democrat
- iv. Borough President(s)
  - 1. Manhattan - Democrat
  - 2. Bronx - Democrat
  - 3. Brooklyn - Democrat
  - 4. Queens - Democrat
  - 5. Staten Island - Republican
- v. City Council
  - 1. Democrat Seats – 46 (lost two seats)
  - 2. Republican Seats – 5 (won two new seats)

#### **b. General Election Results by position, including: name, party, and votes received**

i. Mayor<sup>63</sup>

##### **1. Citywide**

- a. (D) Adams – 753,801 (67%)
- b. (R) Sliwa – 302,680 (27%)
- c. Other<sup>64</sup> - 92,691 (6%)
- d. Total votes – 1,125,258

#### **2. Manhattan**

- a. Adams – 189,669 (78%)
- b. Sliwa – 33,184 (13%)
- c. Total votes – 279,217

#### **3. Bronx**

- a. Adams – 96,080 (74%)
- b. Sliwa – 24,769 (19%)
- c. Total votes – 129,075

#### **4. Brooklyn**

- a. Adams – 239,999 (69%)
- b. Sliwa – 75,758 (22%)
- c. Total votes – 346,203

#### **5. Queens**

- a. Adams – 168,451 (58%)
- b. Sliwa – 97,111 (34%)
- c. Total votes – 287,514

#### **6. Staten Island**

- a. Adams – 30,226 (28%)
- b. Sliwa – 68,441 (64%)
- c. Total votes – 107,163

#### **c. Comptroller<sup>65</sup>**

##### **i. Citywide**

- 1. (D) Lander – 752,710 (70%)
- 2. (R) Carreras – 245,052 (23%)
- 3. Other - 84,396 (7%)
- 4. Total votes – 1,082,158

## **ii. Manhattan**

1. Lander – 215,365 (82%)
2. Carreras – 35,052 (13%)
3. Total votes – 263,838

## **iii. Bronx**

1. Lander – 90,618 (76%)
2. Carreras – 17,969 (15%)
3. Total votes – 118,706

## **iv. Brooklyn**

1. Lander – 243,169 (75%)
2. Carreras – 61,508 (19%)
3. Total votes – 324,884

## **v. Queens**

1. Lander – 171,998 (63%)
2. Carreras – 76,584 (28%)
3. Total votes – 272,134

## **vi. Staten Island (97.16% reported)**

1. Lander – 31,560 (31%)
2. Carreras – 53,939 (53%)
3. Total votes – 102,596

## **d. Public Advocate<sup>66</sup>**

### **i. Citywide**

1. (D) Williams – 744,183 (68%)
2. (R) Nampiaparampil – 250,823 (23%)
3. Other - 93,664 (9%)
4. Total votes – 1,088,670

### **ii. Manhattan**

1. Williams – 210,620 (80%)
2. Nampiaparampil – 36,226 (14%)
3. Total votes – 264,755

### **iii. Bronx**

1. Williams – 94,640 (78%)
2. Nampiaparampil – 18,234 (15%)
3. Total votes – 121,129

### **iv. Brooklyn**

1. Williams – 240,710 (74%)
2. Nampiaparampil – 60,700 (19%)
3. Total votes – 326,269

## **iv. Queens**

1. Williams – 167,983 (61%)
2. Nampiaparampil – 77,348 (28%)
3. Total votes – 273,885

## **v. Staten Island**

1. Williams – 30,230 (29%)
2. Nampiaparampil – 58,315 (57%)
3. Total votes – 102,632

## **e. Borough President(s)**

### **i. Manhattan**

1. (D) Levine – 223,248 (85%)
2. (R) Puliafito – 34,163 (13%)
3. Other - 5,309 (2%)
4. Total votes – 262,720

### **ii. Bronx**

1. (D) Gibson – 94,886 (80%)
2. (R) King – 15,920 (13%)
3. Other - 7,905 (7%)
4. Total votes – 118,711

### **iii. Brooklyn**

1. (D) Reynoso – 235,118 (73%)
2. (R) Raitport – 66,490 (20%)
3. Other - 21,195 (7%)
4. Total votes – 322,803

### **iv. Queens**

1. (D) Richards – 181,947 (67%)
2. (R) Zmich – 80,353 (29%)
3. Other – 9,830 (4%)
4. Total votes – 272,130

### **v. Staten Island**

1. (D) Murphy – 32,528 (31%)
2. (R) Fossella – 63,331 (60%)
3. Other - 9,565 (9%)
4. Total votes – 105,424

## **f. City Council (name and party of winner only)**

### **i. Manhattan**

1. District 1: Christopher Marte (D)
2. District 2: Carlina Rivera (D)
3. District 3: Eric Bottcher (D)
4. District 4: Keith Powers (D)
5. District 5: Julie Menin (D)
6. District 6: Gale Brewer (D)
7. District 7: Shaun Abreu (D)
8. District 8: Diana Ayala (D)
9. District 9: Kristin Jordan (D)
10. District 10: Carmen De La Rosa (D)

### **ii. Bronx**

- ii. District 11: Eric Dinowitz (D)
2. District 12: Kevin Riley (D)
3. District 13: Majorie Velazquez (D)
4. District 14: Pierina Ana Sanchez (D)
5. District 15: Oswald Feliz (D)
6. District 16: Althea Stevens (D)
7. District 17: Rafael Salamanca Jr. (D)
8. District 18: Amanda Farias (D)

### **iii. Brooklyn**

1. District 33: Lincoln Restler (D)
2. District 34: Jennifer Gutierrez (D)
3. District 35: Chrystal Hudson (D)
4. District 36: Chi Osse (D)
5. District 37: Sandy Nurse (D)
6. District 38: Alexa Aviles (D)
7. District 39: Shahana Hanif (D)
8. District 40: Rita Joseph (D)
9. District 41: Darlene Mealy (D)
10. District 42: Charles Barron (D)
11. District 43: Justin Brannan (D)
12. District 44: Kalman Yeger (D)
13. District 45: Farah Louis (D)
14. District 46: Mercedes Narcisse (D)
15. District 47: Ari Kagan (D)
16. District 48: Inna Vernikov (R)

## **iv. Queens**

1. District 19: Vickie Paladino (R)
2. District 20: Sandra Ung (D)
3. District 21: Francisco Moya (D)
4. District 22: Tiffany Caban (D)
5. District 23: Linda Lee (D)
6. District 24: James Gennaro (D)
7. District 25: Shekar Krishnan (D)
8. District 26: Julie Won (D)
9. District 27: Nantasha Williams (D)
10. District 28: Adrienne Adams (D)
11. District 29: Lynn Schulman (D)
12. District 30: Robert Holden (D)<sup>70</sup>
13. District 31: Selvena Brooks-Powers (D)
14. District 32: Joann Ariola (R)

## **v. Staten Island**

1. District 49: Kamillah Hanks (D)
2. District 50: David Carr (R)
3. District 51: Joseph Borelli (R)

As of these audited results of the 2021 NYC General Election, the major races fell largely as one could expect from a city where Democrats outnumber Republicans over five to one. Eric Adams handily defeated Curtis Sliwa for departing de Blasio's seat with a very comfortable margin citywide and secured a clear mandate from voters as next mayor across the city. In particular, Adams' performance in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx was exceptional, capturing upwards of 70% of the vote from these three boroughs; however, while Adams won Queens as well, it was with a somewhat less decisive margin in comparison, though still leading Sliwa by a comfortable +20% lead. As one might expect, Staten Island was the only borough to choose Sliwa above Adams.

In a similar vein, Jumaane Williams was returned for another term as Public Advocate by the city with a clear mandate, leading opponent Devi Nampiaparampil by over 40% citywide as of the most recent updates to the unaudited results. Like Adams, Williams saw a clear majority in every borough besides Staten Island, in a pattern that is not only expected but will continue to be seen in the remainder of the races.

Brad Lander was decisively chosen to replace outgoing Comptroller Scott Stringer, beating Daby Carreras with the highest proportion of votes of any city-wide race at 68.8%, leading to Democrats once more controlling the trifecta of city-level administrative positions. There was little doubt in BLAC's mind that this would be the case, though we were appropriately cautious of the possibility that the enduring problem of voter turnout by Democrats could prove to be an issue. Happily, this was not the case.

Likewise, the races for borough president fell within BLAC expectations. Democrats handily won Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx with over 70% of the vote, while Queens again was the weakest showing with Richards only capturing 66% of the vote; a victory, to be sure, but one that pales relative to the aforementioned three boroughs and brings to mind Richards' relatively narrow win in the primaries this year. Staten Island remained in the hands of the Republicans with Vito Fossella easily beating out Democratic challenger Mark Murphy, though less handily than his predecessor James Oddo when he won his first term. This was within expectations, and likely at least partially attributable to his endorsement by former President Donald Trump.

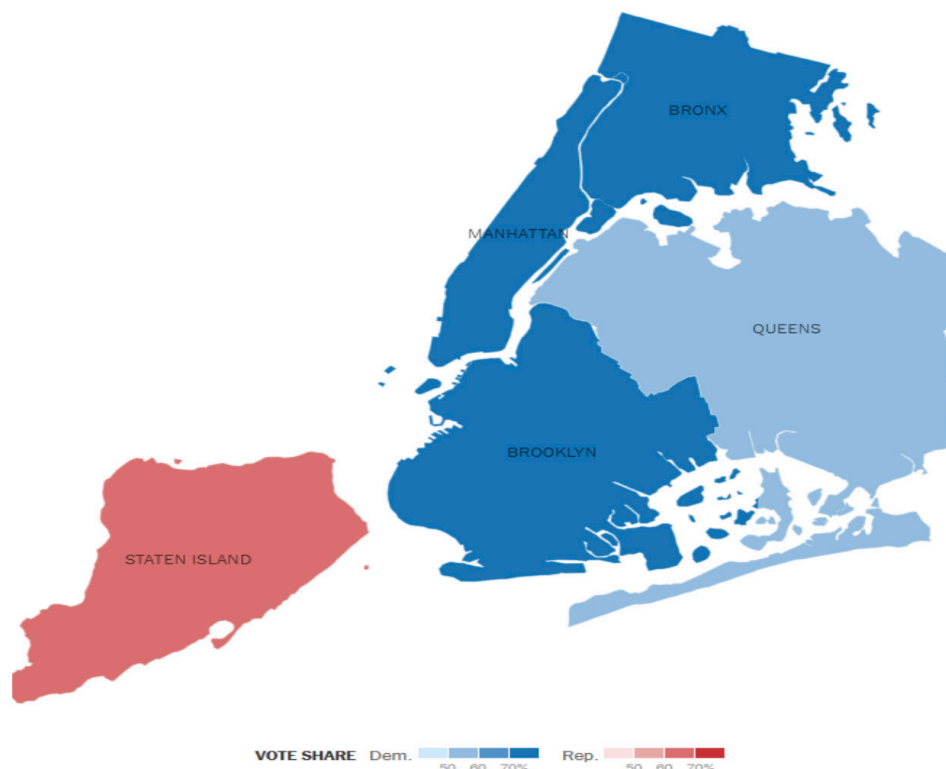


Figure 11: NYC Mayoral Results by Borough, from The New York Times

On the City Council races, however, there was some unfortunate news mixed in with the positives. As expected, Democrats easily retained control of the Council and saw the highest numbers of people of color and women elected or returned to office in history; a positive development for the city as it moves to more fully represent the city's diverse ethnic and gendered populations. In many races Democratic candidates dominated Republican challengers by sizable margins ranging from 5% to over 60% - a clear indication that the city remains a crucial Democratic stronghold and is unlikely to flip anytime soon. However, the predictable blue sweep of the council was tempered by a number of races that either flipped to the Republicans or remain too close to call. Notwithstanding some optimistic predictions that several Republican seats would possibly come into contention, the GOP held onto the 32nd, 50th, and 51st with ease and managed to claim the 48th district by a decisive margin. The 19th district flipped to the Republicans in a close race, and the Democrats were able to hold the 43rd and 47th districts. With the Republicans having won four seats, BLAC believes that they have scored a sizable victory not only by doubling their presence within the City Council, but by demonstrating that the Democrats have been complacent with their dominance and that Republican voters within the city may yet have hope for the future. BLAC celebrates the positive developments seen in this year's election, but hope that, like us, the Democratic leadership begin to take seriously the notion that voters may be cooling on their hegemony.

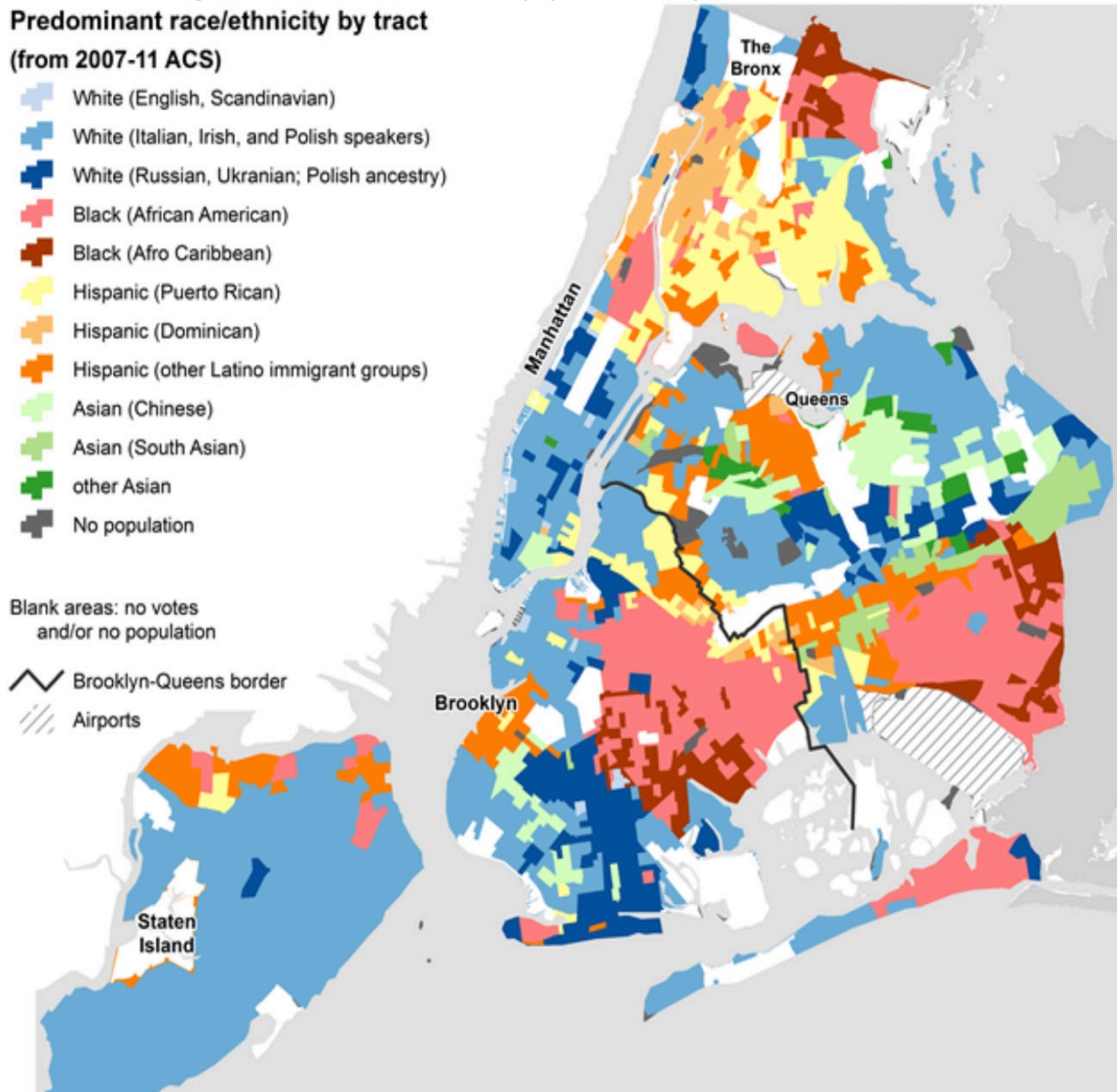
Another somewhat unfortunate development is the disappointing decrease in voter turnout this year compared to the 2017<sup>71</sup> cycle. Only about 20% of New York City's registered voters turned out to vote in this year's general election, a decrease from the 24% participation rate in 2017. The fact remains that despite positive signals from the primaries earlier in the year there remains a significant deficit of participation in the general election relative to the primaries. Moreover, there were massive numbers of city voters who failed to vote on statewide ballot proposals, reaching over a quarter of voters in some neighborhoods.<sup>72</sup> In conjunction with the overall lower turnout in this years' general election, it is clear that dramatic improvements in government and party messaging to voters must be made. While there is a demonstrated downward trend in voter participation across the country that has been going on for decades, voter apathy is simply not an excuse for the apparent disinterest in counteracting this decline.

## VIII. RACE AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

## Examining the role of race in the 2021 general election

Unlike the primaries, the impact of race in the general election appeared to be significantly less by comparison. cursory comparisons between the results of the 2021 primaries, racial demographics across the city, and traditional voting patterns reveals that, ultimately, the impact of race in the election was fairly binary.

Figure 12: Predominant Race/Ethnicity by Census Tract, from the NYC Election Atlas





As can be seen examining Figure 9, Adams had an overwhelming majority of support in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan in the general election, with the former two mirroring his performance in the primaries. It is beyond question that a key part of Adams' electoral strategy relied on heavily on appealing to Black and Hispanic communities, and as was seen in both the primaries and the general election Adams won both Brooklyn and the Bronx handily; neighborhoods with a high proportion of Black and Hispanic voters relative to white voters, respectively. The figure below gives a greater perspective on the ethnic diversity of the city, but note that both boroughs have a much higher number of neighborhoods with non-white populations.

Despite Manhattan's overwhelming number of predominantly white neighborhoods, it is important to remember that New York is a city of Democrats and thus, regardless of race, it can be reasonably assumed that many white Manhattanites were voting for Adams for political reasons. This assertion is further supported by the fact that in the primaries, most Manhattan neighborhoods actually favored Garcia over Adams, Garcia being a white candidate, yet ultimately Manhattan was solidly for Adams in the general election. The same logic applies to predominantly white sections of Brooklyn, which during the primaries also favored Garcia over Adams yet appear to have turned out in support for him during the general. This implies that while racial sympathies may have been in the minds of these voters during the primaries, they were secondary to political concerns or allegiance and thus put aside in the general election.

Queens went for Adams, but as previously stated it was far from the blowout victories seen in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx. Queens has a sizable number of predominantly Black neighborhoods, but they are balanced by a number of other ethnic groups including Asian votes, who were left without a representative horse in the race after Yang was eliminated in the primaries. In the wake of the elections and with more concrete data, it seems that in particular Asian voters may have been one of the racial groups who led to the margins in Queens close as they were.<sup>73</sup>

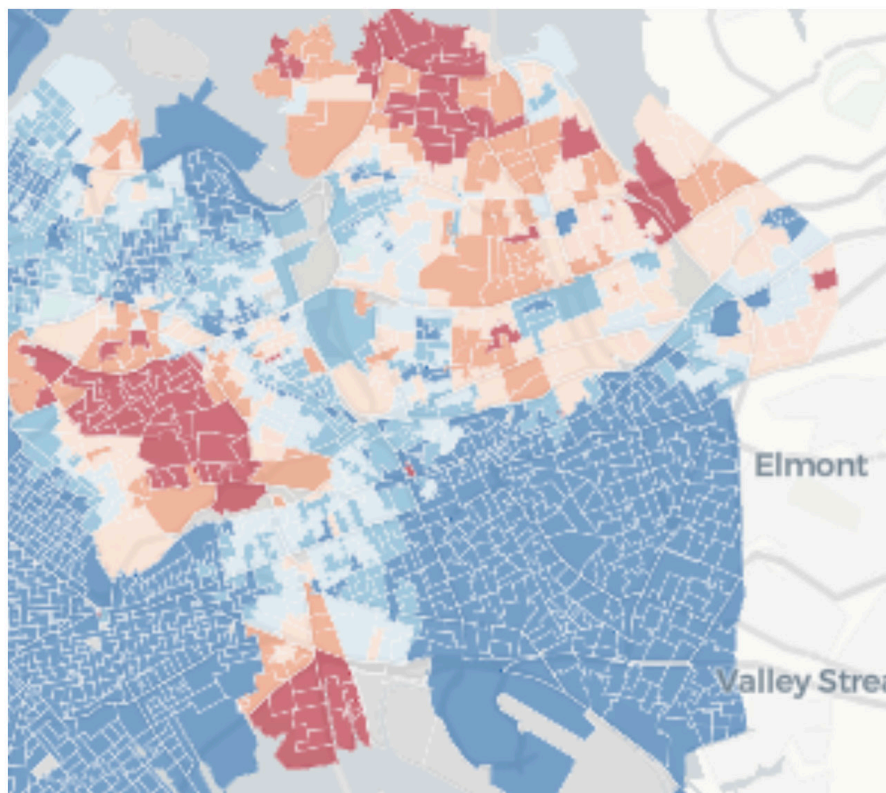


Figure 13: General Election Results for the 2021 NYC Mayoral Race, Queens. Credit to Will Welch and THE CITY - see footnote 70

Given that Sliwa spent significant and active time in Queens and in predominantly white and Asian neighborhoods within Queens, including appearances at anti-shelter rallies and, as an extension of his overall pro-police stances, appeared to be a far more desirable candidate for these neighborhoods in the wake of hate crime sprees against Asian Americans in both New York and the nation overall. Examining Figure 11 and the above figure makes it clear that this was a driving factor in the closeness of not only Adams' victory, but for other races such as Richards' reelection as Queens BP.

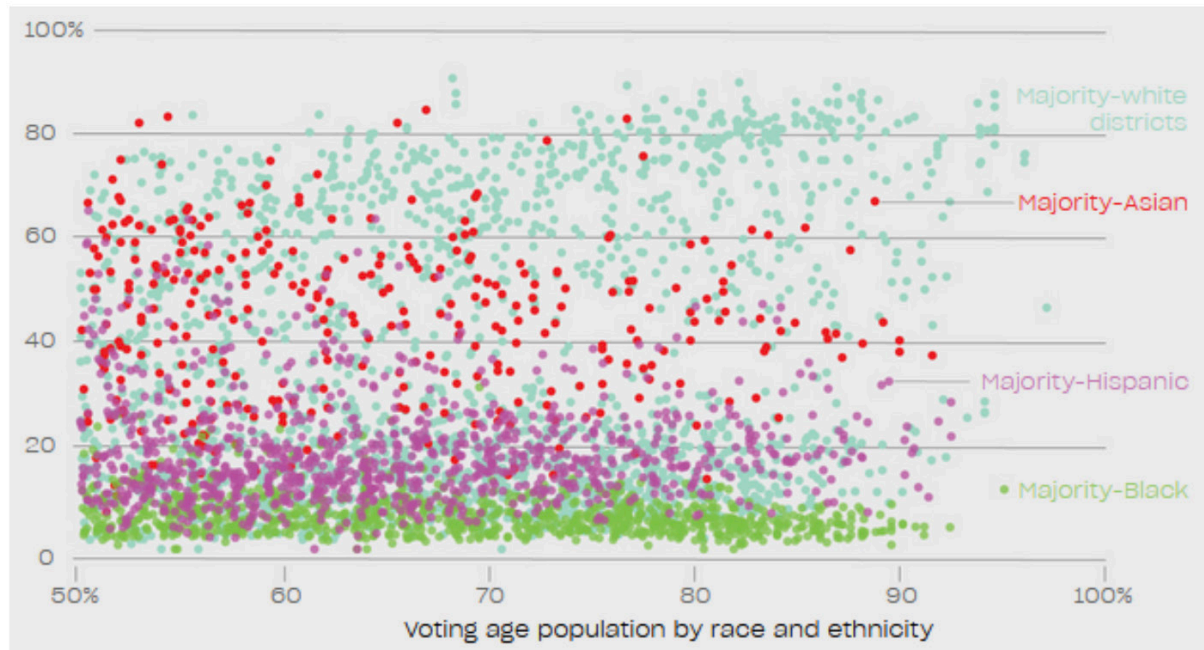


Figure 14: Visualization of Sliwa voting percentages in districts with one dominant race or ethnicity group. Credit to [Suhail Bhat](#) and THE CITY - see footnote 70

Lastly, Staten Island comes as no surprise, since the borough is dominated by white neighborhoods and clearly felt more aligned with Sliwa than Adams for political and racial reasons. As the only significant Republican bastion in the city and said party's general appeal to conservative white voters, it is understandable that Sliwa did as well as he did, being both white and the Republican candidate.

## IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

### Examining the role and impact of campaign finance in the 2021 general election

As previously mentioned in the primary section on campaign finance, the utilization of campaign finance spending in the general election by and large paled in comparison to the primaries. Given that New York is as heavily Democratic as it is, it is undeniable that the majority of spending rests in the primary selections as no matter the contention present in those contests, voters have a demonstrated tendency to regroup under the winner for the general. However, it still bears at least some examination and as of December 2nd, 2021, the latest campaign filing (Filing 14) covering the critical final weeks leading up to the general election on November 2nd, 2021 has been released. The filings of concern for the general election are Filings 10 through 14.

In the race for the Mayor's office, between the date of the primaries (June 22nd, 2021) and the day of the general election, Eric Adams raised \$3.9 million in private funds and spent \$7.5 million<sup>75</sup> – to date, he had raised and received<sup>76</sup> over \$19 million and spent \$18.1 million,<sup>77</sup> leaving just over \$1 million in his campaign bank account. In relation to the primaries, Adams underspent in the general by about \$3 million,<sup>78</sup> thus far demonstrating the example of Democratic primary victors underspending the general in the face of near-guaranteed victory against their Republican opponents. Of Adams' campaign spending in the general contest, just under two thirds went to voter outreach – a comparable spending ratio in relation to the amount spent in the primaries. His opponent, Curtis Sliwa, raised \$813,769 in private funds and spent just over \$5 million in the general.<sup>79</sup> While Sliwa's numbers are unsurprisingly lower than Adams', Sliwa differs from Adams in that he ended up spending over 10 times as much in the general election relative to the primary – a ratio of \$5 million to just under \$500,000. When one considers that Sliwa, over the course of his candidacy, only raised and received just over \$5.5 million compared to total expenditures of nearly \$5.7 million.

This leads to an interesting perspective on the psychology and strategy of the respective campaigns. Adams, as the Democratic candidate in a Democratic city, felt confident enough in his victory that he underspent the general by nearly 30% compared to his primary spending. This allowed him to begin stockpiling funds for future endeavors, but only on the (admittedly correct) assumption that the city would ultimately turn out blue. Sliwa, however, was confident enough in his ability to either win or at least have an above-average showing that he ended up overspending his funds by nearly \$200,000. Oddly enough, the candidates saw significant divergence in their spending patterns for voter outreach as well – Adams spent \$2.2 million (29%) of his total general spending on voter outreach in the final two weeks, while Sliwa spent only about \$800,000 – just over a tenth of his total expenditures. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that around the two week mark, a major debate over vaccination mandates, and specifically the city's intent to enact such mandates, erupted.<sup>80</sup> Sliwa garnered significant media exposure with his opposition of mandates as unnecessary government meddling, a stance Adams justifiably opposed, but which at the time seemed to be a political vulnerability with New Yorkers chafing under de Blasio's heavy handed anti-Covid measures. While it ultimately appeared to have little impact on the race, this discrepancy is notable in showcasing candidate optimism going into Election Day.

The Public Advocate race was largely unremarkable in terms of campaign finance. As explored in the primaries, Jumaane Williams was well-positioned in terms of financing, having spent little in the primaries. However, of the roughly \$1.3 million that he had banked, Williams spent close to a million dollars in the general election, with just over \$430 thousand (over 40%) of that money being allocated specifically to voter outreach. His opponent, Devi Nampiaparampil, also spent the majority of her war chest in the general election – of the \$159,012 raised, she spent \$143,317 – but the obvious discrepancy in war chest size leads one to wonder why, as both incumbent and Democratic candidate, Williams spent so much in the general election. Regardless, however, Williams’ clear victory over Nampiaparampil indicates that this spending was highly effective in achieving that victory, though the extent of this relative to his incumbency is yet unknown.

For Comptroller, the race between Democrat Brad Lander and Republican Daby Carreras had tenors similar to what was seen in the Public Advocate’s race. Lander’s overall war chest and spending dwarfed that of Carreras, though as with all other races Lander’s spending in the general as opposed to the primary was far less. Lander’s overall funds totaled around \$5.49 million, with overall spending totaling around \$5.46 million.<sup>84</sup> By contrast, Carreras only raised \$23,382 and spent \$39,125, having overspent by around \$5,743 and taking a loan for \$10,000 during the general election. As with Adams and Williams, Lander’s position as a Democrat endeared him to far more donations and thus greater spending, though of note is that although Lander spent just over \$600,000 during the general election,<sup>85</sup> less than \$500 of it reportedly went to voter communication. Carreras, meanwhile, spent \$23,266 in the general with exactly \$0 spent on voter communication.<sup>86</sup> While Lander understandable had the confidence to believe he would win, in comparison to the candidates that have been discussed thus far this level of spending (or rather, lack) on voter communication is very interesting.

The Borough President races for Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn were of a similar caliber to aforementioned races in both funding and the results of this funding. The Democratic candidates in these three races followed the general trend of spending much less than they did in the primaries, but which comparatively outmatched their Republican opponents. In particular, Antonio Reynoso in the Brooklyn Borough President race spent over \$316,000<sup>87</sup> while his opponent, Menachem Raitport, spent a total of \$0. These races simply serve to highlight what is both commonly assumed and repeatedly demonstrated throughout this report; in New York City, being a Republican candidate in most of the city without the money or name is a tough thing. Queens deserves special mention because, while Democratic incumbent Donovan Richards did win the race and also outspent Republican opponent Thomas Zmich by a laughably large ratio, his overall victory was close enough to be thought-provoking. Although he clearly won, Richards’ spending in relation to his victory margin compared to that of his colleagues in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx was much higher. Staten Island stands alone as the only major race (excluding some of the highly contested city council races, which will be discussed shortly) in which general election spending equaled or exceeded that of the primaries. Republican and victor Vito Fossella, who earlier in this report was noted to have spent roughly 20% of that by his primary opponents, utilized most of his war chest in the race against Democrat Mark Murphy, who likewise did the same, and only exceeded the latter by a little over \$100,000.<sup>88</sup> While Murphy’s overall fundraising and spending exceeded that of Fossella, Murphy spent far more than Fossella in the primaries. It goes to show that the race in Staten Island was contested enough that both candidates, who each have between \$40 to \$65 thousand dollars remaining in the campaign, spent much more in the general election than they did in their respective primaries.



With regards to City Council race spending, much of the aforementioned pattern holds true. By and large, Democratic candidates have both a political and financial advantage over Republican candidates in the city; with regards to the latter advantage, this generally entailed significantly less general election spending compared to the primaries. As such, the most interesting races to examine with regards to campaign finance and the general election are those which were either immediately flipped or which were too close to call prior to the NYC Board of Election's certification. In districts such as District 43, a contest between incumbent Democrat Justin Brannan and Republican challenger Brian Fox, the former was considered a safe bet for reelection<sup>89</sup> yet won by less than a thousand votes and a margin of 1%. The difference in spending was marginal as well – Brannan only spent about \$40,000 more than Fox, one of the closest cases of spending across the board. It appears that this spending actually made a significant difference, as Brannan spent the majority of that \$40,000 difference on materials for voter outreach – given that his narrow victory came as a result of less than a thousand votes, it seems logical to ascribe these extra votes to the extra outreach conducted by his campaign,

## Campaign Consultancy in the 2021 Election

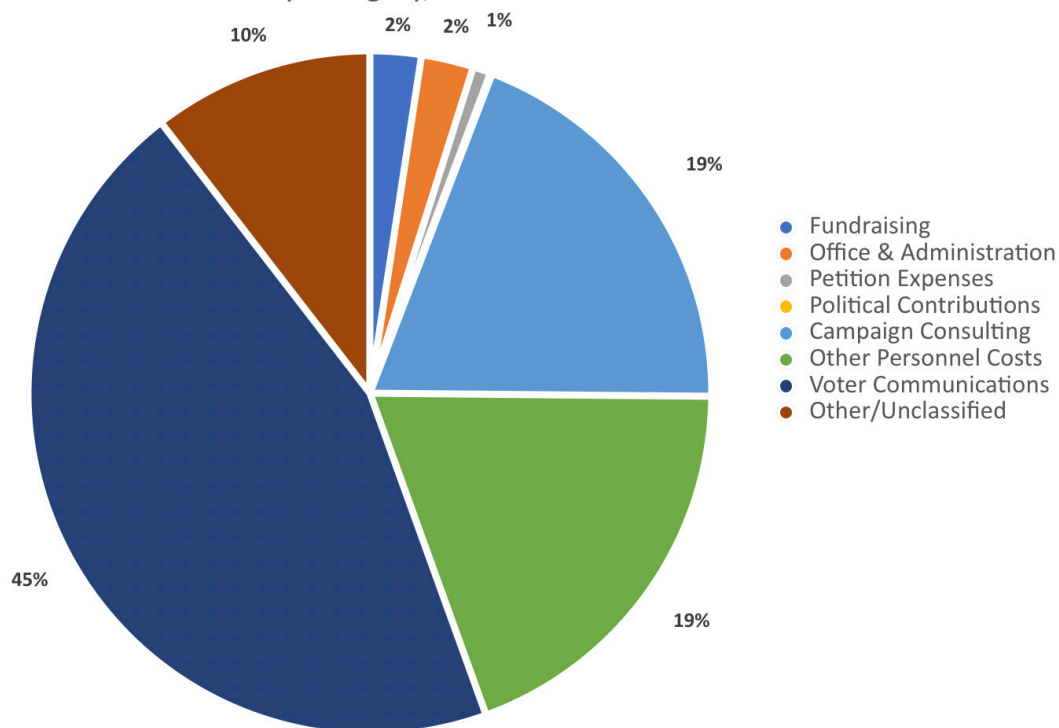
### Discussing the role of campaign consultants in the 2021 election cycle and its potential detriments

This report has examined at great length the impact of campaign finance in relation to the historic 2021 New York City election cycle. In particular, the sheer amount of money that was spent and raised by candidates is of special interest to BLAC, as following the money can often reveal important information or raise even more interesting questions. While a full analysis of campaign finance in New York City, let alone the 2021 election cycle, is not the purpose of this postmortem, it is BLAC's opinion that one aspect of campaign finance in particular is of special concern. Campaign consultancy is an ingrained facet of elections across the nation, with New York housing dozens of such firms large and small. Consultants serve a variety of functions ranging from campaign PR, strategy planning, arranging events and even sometimes directly staffing campaigns. For these services, fees are proportionately (and sometimes disproportionately) high, ranging from the low thousands to sometimes hundreds of thousands depending on the experience, connections, and individuals employed at a given firm.

This bears on the overall discussion of the New York City 2021 election cycle because of the sheer amount of money that was spent on consultants and professional services. As has been previously established, the amount of money spent in this cycle is already staggering in its own right, which as of Filing 14 stands at over \$189 million dollars. It is worth noting that within the NYC Campaign Finance Board's Follow the Money webapp, campaign consultation is not its own distinct category. Rather, it is combined with professional services and worker salaries under a general "Personnel Costs" heading. Figure 13, which breaks down campaign expenditure, shows campaign consultation as an independent category to highlight just how massive spending on consultants alone was. **Of all campaign spending in the 2021 election cycle, almost 20% went specifically to campaign consultants<sup>91</sup> - a total of \$36.71 million dollars and a nearly 400% increase from 2017.<sup>92</sup>** Indeed, if one were to break down campaign expenditure to each individual purpose, campaign consulting ranks first in total spending for this cycle.



Campaign Expenditure in the 2021 Election Cycle  
Overall by Category, in millions



These staggering numbers and percentages serve to reinforce a common theme of this postmortem – that the 2021 cycle was of unprecedented importance and scale. Let alone the sheer number of candidates, the number of campaign consultants employed by campaigns in this cycle was staggering – there were an astounding 1,782 unique individuals and firms who were paid, on average, a little over \$4,500 per *consultation/retainer* for their advice. Of course, this is slight misrepresentative of the range of these billings; a sizable number of non-fee<sup>94</sup> consultations were below \$500 in value, and the number of times a consultant’s name might appear anywhere from once to dozens of times. However, most consultation billings were in the thousands and many non-retainer billings were in the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars. Shaun Donovan has the distinction of paying the highest amount of the cycle to Win Creative LLC at \$425,000 for general consulting purposes, though thirty-five billings exceeded \$100,000.<sup>95</sup> In light of this, and as previously demonstrated the sheer number of consultants and the amounts they were paid, it is worthwhile to highlight some of the top earners this cycle, both in the amount they were paid and the number of invoices they had:

- Win Creative LLC
- Van Ness Creative Strategies L
- Connective Strategies
- AKPD Message and Media
- Red Horse Strategies
- Assemble
- Berger Hirschberg Strategies
- Blueprint Interactive
- The Strategy Division
- Yost Gold Consulting

It bears repeating that, even though the scale of the election was as vast as it was, there were only 59 seats to be won. At its peak the cycle had nearly ten times that number of candidates vying for contention in the primaries; even after one adjusts the number to remove candidates who dropped from contention following petitioning, this means that there were a lot of people who conceivably put out money for campaign consultation that did not get their money's worth. This sober realization adds additional context to the staggering figures so far referenced in this section on campaign consultation; a lot of the money spent on these services was ultimately wasted by the majority of contenders. **BLAC would go so far as to claim that the real victors of the 2021 election were not the candidates who were elected, but the consultants who were paid regardless of whether their clients won.**

This postmortem has repeatedly asserted and shown that, while money undeniably provides an advantage to candidates seeking public office, the actual effect is debatable and certainly not the sole factor. Money spent on campaign consulting and services is no different, and in some instances seems to have had virtually no impact whatsoever. Mayoral victor Eric Adams spent a grand total of \$1.77 million in the entirety of the cycle on campaign consultations, but was not the top spender in that category overall, nor even the second highest – those belong to rivals Raymond McGuire and Andrew Yang at \$5.91 million and \$2.03 million, respectively.<sup>96</sup> McGuire's performance in the primaries in particular is indicative of how successful this cycle was for consultants regardless of the client's success, losing very early despite his enormous spending on their services. Yang's cost to vote ratio in that regard is much better, though as established earlier it ultimately was much higher than that of Adams. The other citywide races and several of the Borough President races have some similar cases, though none to the extent of that seen in the Mayoral primary contest.

Spending Categories	Primary Spending (Filing #1 - #10)	General Spending (Filing #11 - #14)
<b>Fundraising</b>		
<i>Fundraising</i>	\$4,124,946	\$545,159
<b>Office and Admin. Costs</b>		
<i>Advance Repayments</i>	\$670,020	\$203,262
<i>Interest/Investment Expenses</i>	\$28,237	\$14,914
<i>Office Expenses</i>	\$2,073,341	\$358,612
<i>Office Rent</i>	\$1,314,905	\$276,153
<b>Petition Expenses</b>		
<i>Petition Expenses</i>	\$1,525,285	\$46,594

<b>Political Contributions</b>		
<i>Political Contributions</i>	\$141,182	\$25,188
<b>Personnel Costs</b>		
<i>Campaign Consultations</i>	\$32,453,226	\$4,802,212
<i>Professional Services</i>	\$14,851,074	\$2,097,478
<i>Campaign Workers Salaries</i>	\$17,401,982	\$2,863,317
<b>Voter Communications</b>		
<i>Campaign Mailings</i>	\$13,970,165	\$3,164,035
<i>Campaign Literature</i>	\$6,865,473	\$1,496,947
<i>Polling</i>	\$1,511,167	\$53,522
<i>Postage</i>	\$625,275	\$254,697
<i>Print Ads</i>	\$3,214,438	\$1,190,739
<i>Radio Ads</i>	\$3,365,217	\$700,606
<i>Television Ads</i>	\$43,524,220	\$5,829,538
<i>Voter Registration</i>	\$42,254	\$1,665
<b>Holding of Public Office</b>		
<i>Holding of Public Office</i>	\$131	\$1,638
<b>Other/Unclassified</b>		
<i>Childcare Services</i>	\$18,261	\$0
<i>Expenditure Allocation</i>	\$0	\$0
<i>Other</i>	\$16,571,022	\$3,507,664
<i>Unknown</i>	\$0	\$0

*Table showing the difference between primary and general spending. While almost all categories saw an expected decline, note that in both cycles consulting was double that of campaign workers' salaries.*

\ Elsewise and overall, however, there is a positive relationship between spending on campaign consultation and ballot performance. This same relationship is seen in the general election; it would be frankly shocking if it were not the case. Non-Democratic candidates in New York, as demonstrated in the previous section, are dramatically less well funded and are politically disadvantaged in a blue city – the latter factor could be considered to be a cancelling factor on all but the most well-funded non-Democratic candidates. The mayoral primary is actually something of an outlier in this regard; while one could reasonably expect underspending campaigns to perform worse, higher-spending candidates also performed worse. In this case, it again speaks to the overall assertion that money's influence may be waning in the face of other factors, such as candidate ideology or plans, in capturing voters.

As a final note on this topic, it should be noted that while the NYCCFB does require campaigns to provide an explanation for expenditures of this nature, it does not make it easy to sort them. As part of campaign finance reporting the NYCCFB requires campaigns to provide an explanation to justify all contributions and, of particular import to this postmortem, expenditures. This is to ensure that the transactions are legal within the overarching structure of federal, state, and city campaign finance law; after all, the authorities and the donating public have the right to know what their money is being spent on. These explanations can provide valuable context in otherwise broad categories like “campaign consultations” – after all, as established, campaign consultants consult and service a variety of areas. However, there is currently no easy way in which one can search records that specifically pertain to, for example, consultation on political strategy. Instead, and depending on the other search criteria one is employing, one must manually sort through all records and manually tabulate those of interest. It may seem like a minor issue, but in the 2021 cycle, there were nearly 8,000 expenditure records for campaign consultation alone. This makes identifying certain sub-categories of consultation incredibly difficult to accomplish without investing significant amounts of time, something that average voters are already short on, and while minor does serve to obfuscate what should be highly transparent and easily accessible information.

## X. IN THE WAKE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

### A retrospective on the general election and looking forward

In comparison to the primaries, there is little to be said about the general election, which by and large proceeded as one would expect the election to go. Indeed, the only thing worth commenting on, in BLAC's opinion, is a further piece of bewildering Board of Elections practice or, possibly, incompetence. However, it is of slightly less dramatic proportion relative to their failures in the primary and thus deserves only passing mention. The general election itself was handled without noticeable or significant issues, but the issue was with what came after, in the form of the Board missing their certification deadline,<sup>97</sup> which was supposed to be set for November 28th, 2021.

There is no fault in certification taking time to complete – in order to ensure a functioning and fair democracy, time needs to be taken to ensure that all votes are authentic and accounted for. As such, despite its demonstrated incompetence, it is understandable that the Board would ask for nearly a month to finalize the vote counts for the general election. What is more bewildering is that the Board officially would not begin canvassing absentee ballots, of which New York received over 700,000, until November 15th;<sup>98</sup> even though, according to some sources counting began on the 10th, it is baffling that this delay was allowed to occur. Although this delay is as attributable to the sheer number of absentee ballots and legal impediments to expedient counting as it is to the Board, one wonders how the Board could not have at least foreseen or prepared for the number of absentee ballots. Elections happen virtually every year but in light of expanded access to absentee voting and its general popularity it is vexing that the Board did not see fit to retain additional staff, or petition more strongly for canvassing to begin sooner.

This is especially true given that, since the beginning of the pandemic that led to the expansion in absentee voting in the first place, the Board had at least three major election events (two primaries and a general election in 2020) to point to and learn from. It is embarrassing for the Board, yes, but embarrassing for the city and state that they continue to allow these deficiencies to continue, especially given New York's general incompetence in this area in the aforementioned election events.<sup>99</sup>

Another vexing question BLAC had in the wake of the general election with regards to the Board was concerning the data, specifically its presentation, about votes on its website. Not raised in our previous section on the Board within this report, when examining the presentation for the 2021 primary results BLAC was pleased to see that voting breakdown during RCV rounds was accurate and easily understood – only to be disappointed by the fact that the breakdowns for the primary, specifically citywide elections, went no further than the overall votes received.<sup>100</sup> Without parsing the cast vote record (CVR), one simply cannot learn from the Board how many votes came from which borough for which candidate in the primary. The logical counter would be that the citizen would need to take the time to parse the CVR, but this is unreasonable due to the data being in a raw, unreadable state requiring the aid of software to properly understand. While the software to do so is open source and publicly available,<sup>101</sup> it is not once mentioned, even hinted at, on the Board's website. This may sound semantic or minor, but it is far from that – without the Board taking the time to do this, the average individual has to rely on third party sources which, while one would hope they would be accurate and truthful, is simply negligent.



With this in mind, imagine our confusion when the Board published the general election results for citywide contests broken down not only by borough, but by electoral district! Not only that, but they had actually broken down the primary results by electoral districts in 2017 as well! It is understandable that, with the newness of RCV, they may have decided against doing more detailed breakdowns of the primaries, but this returns one to the question of why the Board had not prepared better in the first place. Of course, there are issues with the presentation of these more detailed breakdowns as well. They are long, PDF lists of each and every candidate and their votes which include every single write-in, which are exhausting to read through but total the votes at the end. Yet, as visualized in the figure on the following page, one is led to wonder why the Board did not provide table formats for the general election results whatsoever, as they had the primaries. While the visualization used for the primaries was undoubtedly best suited for ranked choice voting, with some adaptation it would have been perfect for breaking down election results by borough in an accessible format for the average voter. Indeed, with regards to the below image, one should note that the Board had no issue with combining write-ins into a single category for the primaries yet apparently could not be troubled to do so even as a small table at the beginning of the general election report for the same office.

How the votes were counted - round by round					Total Ballots	1,149,172	
					Less - Inapplicable Federal/Special Presidential Ballots	0	
Eliminated in this round	Round 1	Round 2	Total Applicable Ballots			1,149,172	
			ERIC L. ADAMS (DEMOCRATIC)			753,801	
			CURTIS A. SLIWA (REPUBLICAN)			302,680	
			WILLIAM A. PEPITONE (CONSERVATIVE)			12,575	
Elected			CATHERINE ROJAS (SOCIALISM & LIB)			27,982	
Votes in this round	# votes	% of vote	votes transferred	# votes	% of vote	STACEY H. PRUSSMAN (LIBERTARIAN)	3,189
						FERNANDO MATEO (SAVE OUR CITY)	1,870
Eric L. Adams	289,403	30.7%	200	289,603	30.8%	CURTIS A. SLIWA (INDEPENDENT)	9,705
Maya D. Wiley	201,127	21.4%	66	201,193	21.4%	RAJA MICHAEL FLORES (HUMANITY UNITED)	2,387
Kathryn A. Garcia	184,463	19.6%	108	184,571	19.6%	SKIBOKY STORA (OUT LAWBREAKER)	264
Andrew Yang	115,130	12.2%	171	115,301	12.2%	QUANDA S. FRANCIS (EMPOWERMENT)	3,792
Scott M. Stringer	51,778	5.5%	72	51,850	5.5%	AARON ANDERSON (WRITE-IN)	1
Dianne Morales	26,495	2.8%	39	26,534	2.8%	AARON GHITELMAN (WRITE-IN)	1
Raymond J. McGuire	25,242	2.7%	30	25,272	2.7%	AARON HICKS (WRITE-IN)	1
Shaun Donovan	23,167	2.5%	22	23,189	2.5%	AARON JOHNSON (WRITE-IN)	1
Aaron S. Foldenauer	7,742	0.8%	16	7,758	0.8%	AARON JUDGE (WRITE-IN)	9
Art Chang	7,048	0.7%	16	7,064	0.8%	AARON NARRAPH FERNANDO (WRITE-IN)	1
Paperboy Love Prince	3,964	0.4%	43	4,007	0.4%	ABDUL MAJID (WRITE-IN)	
Joycelyn Taylor	2,662	0.3%	21	2,683	0.3%		
Isaac Wright Jr.	2,242	0.2%	12	2,254	0.2%		
Write-ins	1,568	0.2%	-XXX				
Inactive ballots			752	752			

Figure 16: Mayoral Voting Totals, 2021 Election Cycle. Left are Democratic Primary results from Rounds 1 and 2, Right are the General votes arranged by party candidate with write-ins alphabetized. Taken from their respective files on the NYC Board of Elections Election Results Summary webpage<sup>102</sup>

Again, one might question why this is an issue of any significance – voters are rarely motivated to examine the results of elections, let alone the candidates prior to voting. However, this is a moot point; it is not a question of whether it *would* be of use, but whether it *could* be of use. It is a firm belief of BLAC that voters should have transparent and easily accessible information that *can* allow them to make judgements and possibly even raise questions about the function and nature of our democracy. The Campaign Finance Board's Follow the Money site is, by and large, an excellent example of how to do this properly. It gives the professional community the raw data they would need to do more detailed analyses, but also provides the average voter a simple yet powerful tool to do almost the exact same thing *without needing the technical knowledge to do so*. By contrast, the Board of Election only caters to professional analysts by offering the raw data of the CVR and inconsistently formatted and detailed sheets for the latter. This renders the data daunting and inaccessible; an impediment to democracy.

## XI. CONCLUSIONS

- BLAC's overall impression of the outcomes of the 2021 election cycle are positive
- However, the results indicate that the Democrats need to adjust their strategies to remain in touch with New Yorkers
- Having the most representative council in history is great, but the loss of seats to the Republicans is a warning sign
- The business and process of campaigning has changed for the worst, while already existing imperfections were magnified
- BLAC is optimistic about the impact of this election for New Yorkers of color and looks forward to the positive changes the new administration will enact

The 2021 elections in New York City were undoubtedly the most turbulent of recent memory and certainly must rank among the most in the city's centuries-long history. The primaries saw a contestant field larger and more diverse than any in the city's history, with record-breaking amounts of money raised, distributed and spent. After months of hostile campaigning and ferocious battles for voters in a brand-new framework for voters and candidates alike, they concluded with embarrassment for the city's Board of Elections and epic implications for the future of New York. The general election was calmer in comparison but featured pitched battles in several districts, culminating in an Election Day that saw multiple races being too close to call. Even after the dust settled, Republicans managed to claim several cities and remind the Democrats that even in one of the most liberal cities, the ripples of 2016 and political infighting can lead to defeat. For BLAC, there is as much to celebrate as there is to reflect on for the future of New York for our communities of color.

The positives of this election definitely outweigh the negatives in this regard. In conjunction with TBI, BLAC has always been a proponent of ranked choice voting and its democratizing effects on the voting process. We were pleased to see that, despite the hiccups and newness of the system in the city, voters appear to have understood and embraced the system, leading to a primary that was competitive and allowed more people to participate effectively. The Campaign Finance Board's generous public matching program had a similar effect in our minds, allowing candidates to remain or become competitive even without private funding. And with the results now finalized, over two-thirds of the city council are to be persons of color and a majority of the council to be women – a far more representative council for one of America's most diverse and minority-majority cities. It is incredibly gratifying to see that New York City is moving towards a more representative state, matching the city's diverse populations, and BLAC's firm belief that the city can and will do more to address some of the endemic problems and inequities present in the city with this new council.

However, there were sore points as well that serve to diminish some of the more positive elements of this election. We have a more diverse council now, yes, but it came at the cost of the Democrats losing and/or performing badly in races in Brooklyn, as well as failing to retake Republican holdings in Queens and Staten Island, including borough president in the latter borough. It casts a worrying light on the results of the election and the general feelings of the city about Democrats and their approach to these elections; while the city is still undoubtedly a Democratic stronghold, the fact that Republicans were able to gain purchase at all is a sign that the blue paradigm needs to shift. November 2nd, 2021 saw similar implications in a similar vein in other places besides New York City, but NYC and Virginia are two very different places – the Democrats should not have lost or barely won as many races as they did. This is something that BLAC is significantly concerned about in relation to national voting trends and, while Democrats are secure for now, something that they should also be concerned about. Voters appreciate being made to matter, and the Democrats have sadly neglected them under the assumption their votes are

predestined for blue candidates.

Luckily, while the above concern is indeed pressing and massive, other concerns and complications associated with the election have more direct solutions. Chiefly among them is the handling of RCV by the Board of Elections, which was bungled in the primary due to inconsistent messaging and the fiasco during counting. The most direct is to consider legislation, portions of which have already been proposed, that would reorganize this archaic organization to better serve the city. Fiascos must be stopped, and can be stopped, with more effective procedures and flexibility to accommodate new systems like RCV, which BLAC believes will be better utilized in 2023 when the city council is next up for election. There must be significant improvements to the messaging around RCV and the accessibility of information, like voter demographics and more accessible breakdowns of election results. Campaigning also needs to significantly change – BLAC understands that the pandemic was an impediment to more traditional, personal outreach, but what was shown this cycle was an overreliance on methods which disadvantage groups without reliable internet access or without the battery of social media accounts needed to effectively track the election. It is BLAC's hope that, despite the recent surge in Covid-19 cases due to the Omicron variant, political aspirants will also realize that more direct interaction with voters of diverse race, gender, and more is the best course for victory.

With 2022 bringing the new government in, voters should have at least a brief respite from the hectic electoral activities of 2021. The midterms and statewide elections are closing in, to be sure, but BLAC believes that there will be little to rival this historic confluence of open positions in New York City, and hence in voter's immediate minds, for decades to come. This year has been turbulent, with far-reaching implications for the city, but it is BLAC's belief that the results of this election cycle will overall ensure further positive developments for minority communities in the coming years. There is much to be done to ensure that this victory is not debased and rendered impotent in its effects, certainly. Despite this, the cycle is overwhelmingly a victory for the city's Black and brown communities, and BLAC is optimistic for the future of New York City.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>. “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections - Mayor,” HyperLink (New York City Campaign Finance Board, August 30, 2021), [https://www.nycfb.info/VSAApps/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycfb.info/VSAApps/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021). Number includes both Democratic and Republican primary contestants
- <sup>2</sup>. “Primary Contest List,” Primary Contest List § (2021), pp. 1-62, <https://vote.nyc/page/list-candidates>. Number includes both Democratic and Republican primary contestants
- <sup>3</sup>. While this office is not strictly like the others in that it has a heavily favored Democratic incumbent (Jumaane Williams), it is still worth including since it is technically up for election in this cycle
- <sup>4</sup>. This is also not strictly true as the race for Queens Borough President featured a strong incumbent in the form of Donovan Richards, but it is technically up for election in this cycle
- <sup>5</sup>. Rachel Holliday Smith, “What You Need to Know Now About the 2021 Elections in New York City,” The City, January 18, 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233447/what-you-need-to-know-now-about-the-2021-elections-in-new-york-city>.
- <sup>6</sup>. “New York City Charter: Chapter 2 - Section 25,” Chapter 2 - COUNCIL - NYC Charter 0.0.1 documentation (Friends of Devin Balkind for Public Advocate), accessed August 31, 2021, <https://nyccharter.readthedocs.io/c02/#section-25>.
- <sup>7</sup>. The City Council elections of 2001 and 2003 are the first example of this change coming into effect
- <sup>8</sup>. “New York City Charter: Chapter 2 - Section 25,”
- <sup>9</sup>. This number is the total of participants, non-participants, and undetermined filers. The board distinguishes between those individuals who may have filed to run but ultimately decided against and those that continued to file.
- <sup>10</sup>. “Candidate List - 2021 Citywide Elections,” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board (New York City Campaign Finance Board, August 27, 2021), <https://www.nycfb.info/follow-the-money/candidates/>.
- <sup>11</sup>. “Candidate List - 2017,” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board (New York City Campaign Finance Board, February 18, 2021), <https://www.nycfb.info/follow-the-money/candidates/2017>.
- <sup>12</sup>. “Candidate List - 2013 Citywide Elections,” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board (New York City Campaign Finance Board, February 18, 2021), <https://www.nycfb.info/follow-the-money/candidates/2013>.
- <sup>13</sup>. “New York City Ballot Question 1, ELECTIONS Charter Amendment: Ranked-Choice Voting, Vacancies, and City Council Redistricting TIMELINE (November 2019),” Ballotpedia (Ballotpedia), accessed August 31, 2021, [https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_City\\_Ballot\\_Question\\_1,\\_Elections\\_Charter\\_Amendment:\\_Ranked-Choice\\_Voting,\\_Vacancies,\\_and\\_City\\_Council\\_Redistricting\\_Timeline\\_\(November\\_2019\)](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_City_Ballot_Question_1,_Elections_Charter_Amendment:_Ranked-Choice_Voting,_Vacancies,_and_City_Council_Redistricting_Timeline_(November_2019)).
- <sup>14</sup>. Howard Husock, “NYC’s New Voting System May Vault the Far Left into Power,” New York Post, March 4, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/03/04/nycs-new-voting-system-may-vault-the-far-left-into-power/>.
- <sup>15</sup>. Tim Balk, “Ranked-Choice Voting in NYC Primaries Prompts Concerns: ‘People Are Going to Be Confused,’” NY Daily News, March 9, 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-nyc-ranked-choice-voting-concerns-20210309-qlxtgthacjas7ijo4atqkmtrom-story.html>.
- <sup>16</sup>. “What’s New in the Campaign Finance Program,” What’s New in the Campaign Finance Program | New York City Campaign Finance Board, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://www.nycfb.info/program/what-s-new-in-the-campaign-finance-program-2/>.
- <sup>17</sup>. “How It Works,” How It Works | New York City Campaign Finance Board, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://www.nycfb.info/program/how-it-works/>.
- <sup>18</sup>. “What’s New in the Campaign Finance Program,” New York City Campaign Finance Board
- <sup>19</sup>. Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup>. FairVote.org, “RCV in New York City: Results and Analysis,” FairVote, accessed August 31, 2021, [https://www.fairvote.org/rcv\\_in\\_new\\_york\\_city#candidate\\_analysis](https://www.fairvote.org/rcv_in_new_york_city#candidate_analysis).



- <sup>21</sup> The first was David Dinkins, who served between 1990 and 1993
- <sup>22</sup> “Major Takeaways from New York City’s First Ranked Choice Election,” readMedia Newswire, July 14, 2021, <http://readme.readmedia.com/Major-Takeaways-from-New-York-Citys-First-Ranked-Choice-Election/18037730>.
- <sup>23</sup> FairVote.org, “RCV in New York City: Results and Analysis”
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> AAPI stands for “Asian American & Pacific Islanders”
- <sup>27</sup> “Major Takeaways from New York City’s First Ranked Choice Election”
- <sup>28</sup> “NYSVoter Enrollment by County, Party Affiliation and Status,” NYSVoter Enrollment by County, Party Affiliation and Status § (2021), [https://vote.nyc/sites/default/files/pdf/vote/2021/county\\_feb21.pdf](https://vote.nyc/sites/default/files/pdf/vote/2021/county_feb21.pdf).
- <sup>29</sup> FairVote.org, “RCV in New York City: Results and Analysis”
- <sup>30</sup> “Major Takeaways from New York City’s First Ranked Choice Election”
- <sup>31</sup> “RANK the VOTE NYC Releases EDISON Research Exit Poll on the Election,” readMedia Newswire, June 28, 2021, <http://readme.readmedia.com/RANK-THE-VOTE-NYC-RELEASES-EDISON-RESEARCH-EXIT-POLL-ON-THE-ELECTION/17989282>.
- <sup>32</sup> Wahid, Raedah. “Adams Won By Betting on a New York Divided By Race and Income.” Bloomberg. July 21, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2021-nyc-mayoral-analysis/>.
- <sup>33</sup> As of the latest American Community Survey (ACS)
- <sup>34</sup> Please note that this chart is a rough representation of the chart utilized in the article referenced in note 32. Percentages do not accurately reflect the true number of Assembly districts won but were utilized in order to clarify the image created by Bloomberg, which we believed to be confusing. Please reference the original image.
- <sup>35</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed October 26, 2021. [https://www.nycffb.info/VSApps/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycffb.info/VSApps/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).
- <sup>36</sup> Forrest, Julia. “Super PACS and Candidates Spend Big in Upcoming NYC Mayoral Primaries.” OpenSecrets. June 2, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2021/06/nyc-mayoral-primaries-spend-big/>.
- <sup>37</sup> “Candidate Contributions NYC: New York City Campaign Finance Board.” Candidate Contributions NYC | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed October 22, 2021. <http://www.urbanresearchmaps.org/cfbmap2017/>.
- <sup>38</sup> “Individual Contributions to NYC’s 2021 Candidates.” Candidate Contributions NYC | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed October 22, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/follow-the-money/cunymap-2021>.
- <sup>39</sup> “Media Buyers and Media Outlets.” Media Buyers and Media Outlets | New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed January 14, 2022. <https://www.nycffb.info/candidate-services/consultant-and-vendor-guide/media-buyers-and-media-outlets/>.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> “Candidate: Expenditures - Follow The Money.” New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/FTMSearch/Candidates/Expenditures?ec=2021&purpose=CONSL+>.
- <sup>42</sup> New York City Campaign Finance Board, “Candidate: Expenditures - Follow The Money.”
- <sup>43</sup> Data taken from the NYCCFB Campaign Finance Summary

- <sup>44</sup> Note that not all candidates listed in the table are current, as following the primaries most campaigns ended
- <sup>45</sup> Note that the spending figures utilized are totals from filings prior to the primary election, including Filing #10 which covers June 8th, 2021 to July 11th, 2021.
- <sup>46</sup> Includes campaign mailings, campaign literature, polling, postage, advertisements (print, radio, television) and voter registration
- <sup>47</sup> Data taken from the NYCCFB Campaign Finance Summary
- <sup>48</sup> Does not include totals from undeclared candidates, with private sums, spending, and estimated balance totaling \$1,016,584, \$416,547, and \$600,037, respectively. No public funds were given to undeclared candidates. This accounts for the discrepancies between the totals referenced earlier and the sums in this table.
- <sup>49</sup> Note that all totals also include funds raised by non-participant candidates.
- <sup>50</sup> Curiously, five of the top 10 campaigns in the realm of public funding were actually non-participants, including the top 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Data taken from the NYCCFB Campaign Finance Summary
- <sup>52</sup> Jones' campaign raised \$83,351 and spent \$789,082
- <sup>53</sup> Joe Anuta et al., "Yang, Garcia Form an Alliance in Late Innings of the New York Mayor's Race," Politico, June 18, 2021, <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2021/06/18/an-alliance-forms-in-late-innings-of-the-new-york-mayors-race-1386653>.
- <sup>54</sup> Ese Olumhense, "In First, Two Competitors For NYC Mayor to Endorse Each Other," City Limits, March 25, 2021, <https://citylimits.org/2021/05/25/in-first-two-competitors-for-nyc-mayor-to-endorse-each-other/>.
- <sup>55</sup> Giovanni Russonello, "After a Fiery N.Y.C. Mayoral Debate, Who's Ahead? Who Knows?," The New York Times, June 20, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/03/us/politics/nyc-mayor-debate.html>.
- <sup>56</sup> Joanna Zdanys and Hazel Millard, "How to Fix NYC's Board of Elections," Brennan Center for Justice (Brennan Center for Justice, July 29, 2021), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/how-fix-nycs-board-elections>.
- <sup>57</sup> Brian M Rosenthal and Michael Rothfeld, "Inside Decades of Nepotism and Bungling at the N.Y.C. Elections Board," The New York Times, July 1, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/nyregion/nyc-voting-election-board.html>.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> "New York City Charter: Chapter 50 - Section 1138b," Chapter 50 - TERM LIMITS - NYC Charter 0.0.1 documentation (Friends of Devin Balkind for Public Advocate), accessed August 31, 2021, <https://nyccharter.readthedocs.io/c50/#section-1138>.
- <sup>60</sup> If the official was elected prior to 2010, in which case they were allowed to run for a third consecutive term – however, as of this election, no one qualifies for this exemption any longer
- <sup>61</sup> Except for the City Council - recall that every 20 years, City Council members serve two two-year terms before returning to the four-year term cycles
- <sup>62</sup> Winners in respective geographical areas bolded
- <sup>63</sup> "Election Results Summary." Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections. New York City Board of Election. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://vote.nyc/page/election-results-summary#p3>.
- <sup>64</sup> Includes all other parties and candidates. Sliwa's votes as the Independent candidate are included in this figure. All figures for "Other" follow this rule unless otherwise noted for the remaining positions
- <sup>65</sup> "Election Results Summary." Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections.
- <sup>66</sup> "Election Results Summary." Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections.
- <sup>67</sup> "Election Results Summary." Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections.

<sup>68</sup> “Election Results Summary.” Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections.

<sup>69</sup> Yeger, uniquely, received the majority of their votes (6,868) as a Republican but was also the candidate of the Democrats and Conservative parties. He is a member of the Democratic party, however, hence the (D) designation

<sup>70</sup> Like Yeger, Holden also received the majority of his votes from Republican voters but is a Democrat

<sup>71</sup> Ethan Geringer-Sameth, “An Initial Look at Voter Turnout in the 2021 New York City General Election,” Gotham Gazette, November 5, 2021, <https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/10891-voter-turnout-2021-new-york-city-general-election>.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Xiaoqing, Rong, Clifford Michel, Suhail Bhat, and Will Welch. “Chinese Voters Came out in Force for the GOP in NYC, Shaking up Politics.” THE CITY. THE CITY, November 12, 2021. <https://www.thecity.nyc/politics/2021/11/11/22777346/chinese-new-yorkers-voted-for-sliwa-gop-republicans>.

<sup>74</sup> The vote distribution for the Mayoral primaries comes to mind, where Adam’s victory was fairly close, yet as was seen in the general election primary voters that had voted for Garcia at some point in the primary and were heavily localized in Manhattan came out very strongly for Adams in the general.

<sup>75</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed December 6, 2021. [https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

<sup>76</sup> Referencing funds received through the matching funds program

<sup>77</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections - Mayor.” HyperLink. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 6, 2021. [https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

<sup>78</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Rosoff, Henry. “NYC Mayoral Candidates Clash on Vaccine Mandate Ahead of First Debate and Early Voting.” PIX11. PIX11, October 18, 2021. <https://pix11.com/news/politics/new-york-elections/nyc-mayoral-candidates-clash-on-vaccine-mandate-ahead-of-first-debate-and-early-voting/>.

<sup>81</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections – Public Advocate.” HyperLink. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 6, 2021.

<sup>82</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money.

<sup>83</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections – Public Advocate.” New York City Campaign Finance Board

<sup>84</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections – Comptroller.” HyperLink. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 6, 2021.

<sup>85</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections – Borough President, Staten Island.” HyperLink. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 6, 2021.

<sup>89</sup> McDonough, Annie. “2021 New York City General Election Results.” City & State NY. City & State New York, December 2, 2021. <https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2021/12/2021-new-york-city-general-election-results/186573/>.

<sup>90</sup> “Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections.” New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 15, 2021. [https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycfb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

<sup>91</sup>. “Candidate: Expenditures - Follow The Money.” New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/FTMSearch/Candidates/Expenditures?ec=2021&purpose=CONSL+>.

<sup>92</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>. The value for the “Other/Unclassified” category includes the following sub-purposes: Holding of Public Office, Childcare Services, Expenditure Allocation, Other, and Unknown expenditures

<sup>94</sup>. Follow the Money does not currently allow for sorting based on purpose/explanation, meaning that there are multiple billings of amounts ranging from \$0.01 to over \$50 which are merchant fees unconnected with the actual consultation.

<sup>95</sup>. “Candidate: Expenditures - Follow The Money.” New York City Campaign Finance Board

<sup>96</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>. Bergin, Brigid. “NYC Blows Past Deadline to Certify General Election Results as Lawmakers Push Reforms.” Gothamist, November 28, 2021. <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-blows-past-deadline-certify-general-election-results-lawmakers-push-reforms>.

<sup>98</sup>. “Absentee Ballot and Canvass Information.” Absentee Ballot and Canvass Information | NYC Board of Elections. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://www.vote.nyc/page/absentee-ballot-and-canvass-information>.

<sup>99</sup>. Bergin, “NYC Blows Past Deadline to Certify General Election Results as Lawmakers Push Reforms.”

<sup>100</sup>. “Election Results Summary.” Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections. New York City Board of Election. Accessed December 6, 2021. <https://vote.nyc/page/election-results-summary#p3>.

<sup>101</sup>. “RCV Universal Tabulator.” RCV UNIVERSAL TABULATOR - Ranked Choice Voting. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://www.rcvresources.org/rcv-universal-tabulator>.

<sup>102</sup>. “Election Results Summary.” Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Absentee Ballot and Canvass Information.” Absentee Ballot and Canvass Information | NYC Board of Elections. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://www.vote.nyc/page/absentee-ballot-and-canvass-information>.

Anuta, Joe, Danielle Muoio, Tea Kvetenadze, and Tina Nguyen. “Yang, Garcia Form an Alliance in Late Innings of the New York Mayor’s Race.” Politico. June 18, 2021. <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2021/06/18/an-alliance-forms-in-late-innings-of-the-new-york-mayors-race-1386653>.

Balk, Tim. “Ranked-Choice Voting in NYC Primaries Prompts Concerns: ‘People Are Going to Be Confused.’” NY Daily News. March 9, 2021. <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-nyc-ranked-choice-voting-concerns-20210309-qlxtghtagas7ijo4atqkmtrom-story.html>.

Bergin, Brigid. “NYC Blows Past Deadline to Certify General Election Results as Lawmakers Push Reforms.” Gothamist, November 28, 2021. <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-blows-past-deadline-certify-general-election-results-lawmakers-push-reforms>.

“Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections - Mayor.” HyperLink. New York City Campaign Finance Board, August 30, 2021. [https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

“Campaign Finance Summary 2021 Citywide Elections.” New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board, December 15, 2021. [https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

“Campaign Finance Summary.” Follow The Money. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed October 26, 2021. [https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm\\_Finance\\_Summary.aspx?as\\_election\\_cycle=2021](https://www.nycffb.info/VSAppls/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021).

“Candidate Contributions NYC: New York City Campaign Finance Board.” Candidate Contributions NYC | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed October 26, 2021. <http://www.urbanresearchmaps.org/cfbmap2017>.

“Candidate List - 2013 Citywide Elections.” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board, February 18, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/follow-the-money/candidates/2013>.

“Candidate List - 2017.” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board, February 18, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/follow-the-money/candidates/2017>.

“Candidate List - 2021 Citywide Elections.” Candidates List | New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board, August 27, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/follow-the-money/candidates>.

“Candidate: Expenditures - Follow The Money.” New York City Campaign Finance Board. New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/FTMSearch/Candidates/Expenditures?ec=2021&purpose=CONSL+>.



“Candidate: Expenditures - Follow the Money.” NYC. Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/FTMSearch/Candidates/Expenditures?ec=2021>.

“Central Revenue Definition.” Law Insider. Law Insider. Accessed September 9, 2021. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/central-revenue>.

“Disclosure Deadlines.” 2021 | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed November 6, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/candidate-services/disclosure-deadlines/2021/>.

“Election Results Summary.” Election Results Summary | NYC Board of Elections. New York City Board of Election. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://vote.nyc/page/election-results-summary#p3>.

FairVote.org. “RCV in New York City: Results and Analysis.” FairVote. Accessed August 31, 2021. [https://www.fairvote.org/rcv\\_in\\_new\\_york\\_city#candidate\\_analysis](https://www.fairvote.org/rcv_in_new_york_city#candidate_analysis).

Forrest, Julia. “Super PACS and Candidates Spend Big in Upcoming NYC Mayoral Primaries.” OpenSecrets. June 2, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2021/06/nyc-mayoral-primaries-spend-big/>.

Geringer-Sameth, Ethan. “An Initial Look at Voter Turnout in the 2021 New York City General Election.” Gotham Gazette, November 5, 2021. <https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/10891-voter-turnout-2021-new-york-city-general-election>.

“How It Works.” How It Works | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed August 31, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/program/how-it-works/>.

Husock, Howard. “NYC’s New Voting System May Vault the Far Left into Power.” New York Post. March 4, 2021. <https://nypost.com/2021/03/04/nycs-new-voting-system-may-vault-the-far-left-into-power/>.

“Individual Contributions to NYC’s 2021 Candidates.” Welcome. Accessed October 22, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/follow-the-money/cunymap-2021>.

Kott, Julia. “New York City ELECTIONS 2021: A Guide to Ranked Choice Voting.” Greenpointers. Greenpointers, June 9, 2021. <https://greenpointers.com/2021/01/29/new-york-city-elections-2021-a-guide-to-ranked-choice-voting/>.

“Major Takeaways from New York City’s First Ranked Choice Election.” readMedia Newswire, July 14, 2021. <http://readme.readmedia.com/Major-Takeaways-from-New-York-Citys-First-Ranked-Choice-Election/18037730>.

McDonough, Annie. “2021 New York City General Election Results.” City & State NY. City & State New York, December 2, 2021. <https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2021/12/2021-new-york-city-general-election-results/186573/>.

“New York City Ballot Question 1, ELECTIONS Charter Amendment: Ranked-Choice Voting, Vacancies, and City Council Redistricting TIMELINE (November 2019).” Ballotpedia. Ballotpedia. Accessed August 31, 2021. [https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_City\\_Ballot\\_Question\\_1,\\_Elections\\_Charter\\_Amendment:\\_Ranked-Choice\\_Voting,\\_Vacancies,\\_and\\_City\\_Council\\_Redistricting\\_Timeline\\_\(November\\_2019\)](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_City_Ballot_Question_1,_Elections_Charter_Amendment:_Ranked-Choice_Voting,_Vacancies,_and_City_Council_Redistricting_Timeline_(November_2019)).

“New York City Charter: Chapter 2 - Section 25.” Chapter 2 - COUNCIL - NYC Charter 0.0.1 documentation. Friends of Devin Balkind for Public Advocate. Accessed August 31, 2021. <https://nyccharter.readthedocs.io/c02/#section-25>.

NYSVoter Enrollment by County, Party Affiliation and Status § (2021). [https://vote.nyc/sites/default/files/pdf/vote/2021/county\\_feb21.pdf](https://vote.nyc/sites/default/files/pdf/vote/2021/county_feb21.pdf).

Olumhense, Ese. “In First, Two Competitors For NYC Mayor to Endorse Each Other.” City Limits. March 25, 2021. <https://citylimits.org/2021/05/25/in-first-two-competitors-for-nyc-mayor-to-endorse-each-other/>.

Primary Contest List § (2021). <https://vote.nyc/page/list-candidates>.

“RANK the VOTE NYC Releases EDISON Research Exit Poll on the Election.” readMedia Newswire, June 28, 2021. <http://readme.readmedia.com/RANK-THE-VOTE-NYC-RELEASES-EDISON-RESEARCH-EXIT-POLL-ON-THE-ELECTION/17989282>.

“RCV Universal Tabulator.” RCV UNIVERSAL TABULATOR - Ranked Choice Voting. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://www.rcvresources.org/rcv-universal-tabulator>.

Rosenthal, Brian M, and Michael Rothfeld. “Inside Decades of Nepotism and Bungling at the N.Y.C. Elections Board.” The New York Times. July 1, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/nyregion/nyc-voting-election-board.html>.

Rosoff, Henry. “NYC Mayoral Candidates Clash on Vaccine Mandate Ahead of First Debate and Early Voting.” PIX11. PIX11, October 18, 2021. <https://pix11.com/news/politics/new-york-elections/nyc-mayoral-candidates-clash-on-vaccine-mandate-ahead-of-first-debate-and-early-voting/>.

Russonello, Giovanni. “After a Fiery N.Y.C. Mayoral Debate, Who’s Ahead? Who Knows?” The New York Times. June 20, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/03/us/politics/nyc-mayor-debate.html>.

Smith, Rachel Holliday. “What You Need to Know Now About the 2021 Elections in New York City.” The City, January 18, 2021. <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233447/what-you-need-to-know-now-about-the-2021-elections-in-new-york-city>.

Wahid, Raeedah. “Adams Won By Betting on a New York Divided By Race and Income.” Bloomberg. July 21, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2021-nyc-mayoral-analysis/>.

“What’s New in the Campaign Finance Program.” What’s New in the Campaign Finance Program | New York City Campaign Finance Board. Accessed August 31, 2021. <https://www.nycffb.info/program/what-s-new-in-the-campaign-finance-program-2/>.

Xiaoqing, Rong, Clifford Michel, Suhail Bhat, and Will Welch. “Chinese Voters Came out in Force for the GOP in NYC, Shaking up Politics.” THE CITY. THE CITY, November 12, 2021. <https://www.thecity.nyc/politics/2021/11/11/22777346/chinese-new-yorkers-voted-for-sliwa-gop-republicans>.

Zdanys, Joanna, and Hazel Millard. “How to Fix NYC’s Board of Elections.” Brennan Center for Justice. Brennan Center for Justice, July 29, 2021. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/how-fix-nycs-board-elections>.



**For more information about BLAC**

470 Vanderbilt Ave., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
212.871.6899

[info@blackleadershipactioncoalition.org](mailto:info@blackleadershipactioncoalition.org)  
[www.blackleadershipactioncoalition.org](http://www.blackleadershipactioncoalition.org)

 @BLAC\_NYC