

2021 Nonprofit Policy Questionnaire Responses NYC Comptroller Primary Election

The following questionnaires were submitted by 2021 New York City comptroller candidates to the 2021 Nonprofit Agenda Project, a cohort of over 100 nonprofit organizations, brought together by The Advocacy Institute, Human Services Council, and Nonprofit New York.

Comptroller candidates Brian Benjamin, Michelle Caruso-Cabrera and David Weprin did not respond to the 2021 Nonprofit Policy Questionnaire.

Name: Zach Iscol

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Race: White

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Disability Status: None

Languages spoken: English

Neighborhoods in which the candidate has lived or worked in New York:

Manhattan

What are your priorities for your first year in office?

My two main priorities for my first year in office will be a quick and equitable recovery for NYC and returning the Comptroller role to someone who is a true fiscal watchdog for the City.

A quick and universally beneficial economic recovery which works for all New Yorkers-not just those at the top- will be my number one priority as Comptroller. Without a stable, long-lasting, and universally beneficent pandemic recovery, none of the other positive policies I plan to embark on will be feasible. To achieve this we will attack the fiscal deficit from a variety of angles. First, we will use the pensions' ETI as seed funds for small and minority run businesses across the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic to include: restaurants and bars, theaters, the arts, development, etc. Next, we will streamline the process for opening a business in New York City. Currently there are over 6,000 rules and 250 related regulations, which hinders the ability for small businesses to succeed in the post-pandemic recovery. Small businesses are the pistons of NYC's economy and it is essential that we make it easier for them to

open. Lastly, we will ensure that New Yorkers working with the City are receiving a prevailing wage. Strong wages keep New Yorkers out of poverty and help uplift the whole community as a result. Without attacking this issue first we will not be able to fund and provide all of the City's incredible services.

Last year, the Comptroller's office only identified \$31 million in savings for the City through audits and investigations. This is a failure to the City and taxpayers at a time when we need every single dollar to be used to the maximum effect. As Comptroller, I will bring vigorous fiscal oversight back to the forefront of the office in order to ensure that New Yorker's money is well spent. To achieve this I will both audit early and often and embark on a "Making the Grade" type of evaluation of each City department and agency and give a letter grade based on how wasteful they are.

How would you partner with nonprofits and philanthropy to achieve your priorities in your first year in office? How would you provide leadership opportunities with nonprofits in shaping policies, programs?

Nonprofits and philanthropies will be critical players in ensuring that the City's pandemic recovery is truly equitable. Throughout my career in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, I have always striven to build diverse coalitions and have them work together towards a common goal. In the Marine Corps this meant working with Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'a in order to bring stability to our City and when volunteering at the Javits Center during the early days of the pandemic, this meant working with constituencies as diverse as the federal government and community activists in order to create a functional hospital. I have found that valuing diversity yields the greatest successes as assorted groups bring new thinking to the table and do not allow leaders to fall prey to group think. Therefore, when working to make the pandemic recovery equitable, I not only want nonprofits and philanthropies in the room when decisions are being made but I will rely on them for a reality check of how our actions will affect New Yorkers on the ground. The government has limited resources and thus does not have the interactions necessary to completely understand the ramifications of its policies. Thus, nonprofits and philanthropies are key to understanding whether the economic recovery is supporting MWBEs, providing jobs for BIPOC New Yorkers, rejuvenating the arts sector, and providing adequate affordable housing, among others. Decision makers can too often get caught up in the so-called, "30,000 foot view" of problems and to avoid this, as Comptroller, I will bring nonprofits and philanthropies into the decision making process in order to better understand the consequences and execution of our policies.

If elected, would you work with nonprofits and what framework would you use to engage with nonprofits? Feel free to include any experience you have working with nonprofits (as a staff member, board member, or in other capacities).

As someone who has founded a nonprofit and worked extensively with nonprofits in a variety of sectors, I understand both the invaluable work that these organizations do as well as the difficulties (funding, outreach, volunteers, etc.) they have to overcome. Additionally, as the founder of "The Headstrong Project", a nonprofit, I also understand how valuable the government can be for nonprofits. Without extensive public sector help, we at Headstrong would not have been able to get the level of treatment we did for our veterans. Therefore, as Comptroller, I will take this extensive background and apply it to my outlook in office and I will make the Comptroller's office a valuable resource and place of support for nonprofits. Moreover, I understand first hand how difficult funding can be for nonprofits. Thus as Comptroller, I will revamp and streamline the payment process for nonprofits that work with the City. I have heard too many stories from my friends in this industry describing late payments from the City for

work already completed and I find this wholly unacceptable. Under my direction, the Comptroller's office will work to ensure that nonprofits are paid in a timely manner.

What role do you think the nonprofits play in creating an equitable New York and if elected, how would you use your role to ensure equity in the nonprofit contracting process?

As stated earlier, I believe that nonprofits play a pivotal role in creating an equitable New York. In order to ensure equity in the nonprofit contracting process, we have to be active players in seeking out and supporting nonprofits run by women and people of color. As I touched upon in supporting MWBEs overall in contracting, this support cannot be purely a rise in the number of contracts being awarded to women and BIPOC nonprofits but also in the substance of these contracts. As Comptroller, I will review and audit the contracting processes at the City's agencies and departments to ensure that nonprofits run by women and people of color are given consideration for not just a large share of the total contracts but the majority of the largest contracts as well.

The Comptroller plays an important role in contract oversight and approval, as well as in appointments to the Procurement Policy Board. How would you use these roles to improve timely contract registration and payment?

First, as Comptroller, I will ensure that people appointed to the Procurement Policy Board are both diverse as well as experienced and dedicated civil servants. Too often there have been instances of the Procurement Policy Board skirting rules in order to benefit allies or former City workers. Most recently, this came to light when the DOE paid former school's head Carranza millions of dollars over seven years, even though this contract ran afoul of procurement rules. As Comptroller, I will appoint professionals with a proven track record of impartial civil service in order to avoid these wasteful contracts. Next, I will implement a full and thorough review of the procurement process and implement changes necessary to make contract procurement more efficient and payments more timely. Next, as stated in other areas, I will work with the Procurement Policy Board to ensure that nonprofits are given special consideration for contract payment, such as an extended verification timeline. The City currently has a poor track record in paying nonprofits for contracted work with many organizations waiting weeks or months for work that has already been completed for the City. As Comptroller, I will select and work with a Procurement Policy Board that is dedicated to supporting nonprofits. Lastly, I will end the practice of broken promises by politicians. During the pandemic, Mayor de Blasio promised extra pay for emergency workers to include nonprofit employees at homeless shelters, group homes, and domestic violence shelters. This made great press for the Mayor but the facts show that he did not follow through on this commitment. Instead of supporting those who risked their lives during the pandemic, Mayor de Blasio actually cut funding for many nonprofits. As Comptroller, I will not accept empty promises from City employees and will work to guarantee that nonprofits will be paid when promises are made.

The nonprofit workforce is made up primarily of women and people of color. How will you use your role as Comptroller to advance this workforce?

One of the beautiful facets of New York City is that it has an on-hand supply of institutional knowledge in just about every conceivable profession. In order to advance the nonprofit workforce and women and people of color in general, we need to tap into that expertise in addition to using more traditional means of public policy. As Comptroller, I will work to create MWBE and nonprofit incubators funded by public-private partnerships. These incubators will not only provide physical space for these

organizations, they will also work to bring industry leaders to the incubators in order to both share their knowledge and help develop a professional network for MWBE and nonprofit owners and employees. For all of New York's history, women and people of color have been denied leading positions in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. To combat these historical injustices, we need those who have benefited from the system to give back in order to ensure that the next generation of leaders is more diverse than this one is.

Furthermore, as the overseer of the City's contracts, I recognize that the City still has a long way to go in prioritizing MWBE for City contracting. Although Mayor de Blasio has targeted 30% of contracts for MWBEs, I know that we can do better in both overall numbers of contracts awarded and the size of each contract. For pensions specifically, the City has relied far too heavily on Wall Street banks with varying results, at best. As Comptroller, I will work to ensure that both the number and quality of contracts improves for businesses and nonprofits run by women and people of color. Through use of ETIs and the creation of a public bank, we will give more people than ever access to a financial institution and financial services - in particular women and communities of color.

What steps would you take to strengthen the contracting process and enhance the quality of contracted services for nonprofits and the communities they serve? Please include how you would measure success.

Having worked in the public, private, and nonprofit sector, I have seen success defined in a variety of ways. The quickest way to failure though, is when people in the public and nonprofit sector try to quantify success in dollar terms as they do in the private sector. As the head of the Headstrong Project, we avoided this by defining our success on the fact that not a single veteran has taken their life under our care. Therefore, as Comptroller I will take into account the nonprofit's mission, stated goal, and desired outcomes in determining whether a partnership has been successful. Since nonprofits, as their name makes obvious, do not seek profit, we must take into account the organization's definition of success when defining and evaluating a contract. For me, defining the parameters for success and the objectives of the contract will be the most important part of the procurement process. As Comptroller, this will be a two way conversation between the City and the nonprofit. When awarding a contract, the City will have objectives that it wants to achieve for the community but it is equally important to understand the nonprofit's capabilities and the services they can provide. Through this, we can have realistic goals for nonprofits and as a result the communities will be better served.

The City contracts a vast network of services to the nonprofit sector through competitive procurement. How would you use your oversight role to ensure programs were designed in collaboration with nonprofits of all sizes and communities?

As stated above, input and collaboration with nonprofits will be an integral part of the procurement and contracting process between the City and nonprofits. As the City government, we need to understand the level of impact that each nonprofit has and how that can work in tandem with our goals for the local community. Moreover, I believe that diversity in size is critical to success in serving others. Smaller nonprofits can offer a more personal and local experience while larger organizations can tap into greater funding, resources, and institutional knowledge. Therefore, as Comptroller, I will direct the procurement board and the City's departments and agencies to work with nonprofits of varying sizes to serve a myriad of needs. Through a two-way conversation in the procurement process, realistic objectives, and

diversity in size, the City can have a more effective contracting process which will better serve the needs of communities of all sizes.

What do you think is the primary concern for nonprofits at this moment? As Comptroller how would you address this concern?

From the point of view of the City, the primary concern for nonprofits, in my opinion, is the fact that the City is consistently late in paying these organizations for the work that they have already done. Not only do nonprofits conduct incredibly important work, they also generate billions of dollars in revenue for NYC and the City is doing them and New Yorkers a disservice by being lethargic in dispensing with compensation. As Comptroller, I will take three distinct steps to ensure that nonprofits are paid in a timely manner. First, I will streamline the process of payment for services for nonprofits. Second, we will provide nonprofits with the support and know-how necessary to apply for payments from the City. One of the catalysts behind the City's late payments is late applications from the nonprofits themselves. Therefore, if the City can provide nonprofits with aid on completing their application and send reminders on due dates, applications will come in on time and payments will be received as work is completed, not far later. Lastly, as we make the transition to streamlining the contracting process, we will extend the deadlines to get paperwork into the City. This will only apply to nonprofits but it will ease the burden of the transition, especially as nonprofits grapple with the pandemic. During COVID and the recovery nonprofits have been critical to the survival of the City; they need, and deserve, to be compensated as quickly as possible. As Comptroller, I will ensure that this happens.

As Comptroller, what data would you collect and analyze to help ensure nonprofits are better prepared for the next emergency?

Whether the next emergency is another pandemic, superstorm, terrorist attack, economic depression or something novel, the City needs to be better prepared to help New Yorkers in general and nonprofits specifically. One of the first things I would do as Comptroller is devise ways to ensure that funding is not cut off for nonprofits, no matter the emergency. Nonprofits conduct vital services across the 5 boroughs and can be vital in helping in the aftermath of an emergency. However, if the emergency is financial or affects the economy (as we saw during COVID and the 2008 economic downturn), cuts have to be made and contracts are scrutinized. To combat the calls for downsizing funds for nonprofits, I will create a database which describes the benefits that these groups provide for the City. This will create a litany of empirical evidence displaying why cutting funding for nonprofits would be dangerous for New Yorkers and NYC as a whole.

Name: Corey Johnson

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Race: White

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: N/A

Disability Status: N/A

Languages spoken: English

Neighborhoods in which the candidate has lived or worked in New York:

Citywide

What are your priorities for your first year in office?

New York is a city emerging from an unprecedented crisis. I plan to hit the ground running as Comptroller, enacting important measures within the Comptroller's purview to improve the lives of New Yorkers.

In my first year, I will create a Recovery and Rebuilding Unit within the Comptroller's office which will create a COVID-19 Relief Dashboard to track how the City is spending federal aid. The COVID-19 Relief Dashboard will be publicly searchable and hold up-to-date information on how the City is spending federal aid as well as detailed information on any programs to help tenants, businesses, cultural not-for-profits, or community groups.

I will conduct intense oversight over city agencies through the power of the audit, and I will conduct equally intense oversight over the city's budget process by fighting for greater front end budget transparency so New Yorkers, including non profit organizations, can get a sense of where money is coming from and how much will be available.

Additionally, I will oversee responsible stewardship of the City's pension system, protecting the benefits City workers spent a lifetime earning. I will support the creation of actually affordable housing, good jobs, small business and green infrastructure through community-focused Economically Targeted Investments, with a particular focus on Minority and Women-Owned Businesses and organizations through city contracting.

I will also work to deliver greater accountability for New Yorkers by creating and improving publicly searchable databases for citizens and journalists to use, including my proposed ACES -- Audist, Claims, Efficacy, and Settlements dashboard.

We have so much work to do, and I can't wait to get started working to improve this office and the way this city works on behalf of New Yorkers in our greatest time of need.

How would you partner with nonprofits and philanthropy to achieve your priorities in your first year in office? How would you provide leadership opportunities with nonprofits in shaping policies, programs?

I have always worked very closely with the nonprofit sector, both as a Council Member and as Speaker. I will of course partner with nonprofits and philanthropy to achieve these priorities as they are laid out, and to continue to have purposeful relationships with organizations doing incredible work on behalf of so many vulnerable, in-need New Yorkers. Now more than ever, this city will need it's nonprofit organizations to do the incredible work they do, and as Comptroller, I will work diligently to support

these organizations by advocating for their needs through the budget and enacting important changes to the contracting process so that nonprofits are no longer left hanging.

I like to say that government doesn't have all the answers. We need to work with experts in various fields to understand how to best help them do the incredible work they do. For non-profit leaders, for example, I would work with them to understand what aspects of the city's dysfunctional contracting system needs attention and improvement. I would also seek their advice when it comes to targeted audits of city agencies. The nonprofits that work with these agencies every day have incredible insight on where mismanagement and inefficiencies can be found.

If elected, would you work with nonprofits and what framework would you use to engage with nonprofits? Feel free to include any experience you have working with nonprofits (as a staff member, board member, or in other capacities).

As Speaker, I have frequently hosted or attended roundtable discussions with nonprofit organizations and networks to discuss policies and shared goals. It has always been a priority to keep good relationships with the nonprofit sector, and to keep updated on their experiences working with municipal government. I'm also known for having an open door policy and being willing to meet with anyone, especially if we may not agree on an issue. I think it's important to hear various perspectives, especially from those who know their areas best. That's why I've always valued listening and reading testimony from nonprofit organizations during hearings, but particularly budget hearings. I will continue to prioritize listening to experts in their fields and appreciate their input.

What role do you think the nonprofits play in creating an equitable New York and if elected, how would you use your role to ensure equity in the nonprofit contracting process?

Nonprofits play a vital role in not just creating an equitable New York, but in helping New Yorkers and government officials imagine just what is possible in a more fair, just, and equitable society. I know very well the struggles that nonprofits have in the city contracting -- especially in cases in which they are forced to front cash because of a slow and arduous procurement process. Equity is a fundamental issue of my campaign. As Comptroller, I want to take a close look at how we can streamline and universalize aspects of our contracting process to be much more accessible to nonprofits and MWBEs.

The Comptroller plays an important role in contract oversight and approval, as well as in appointments to the Procurement Policy Board. How would you use these roles to improve timely contract registration and payment?

Timely contract registration and payment is an absolute priority for me, as I have heard all too often from partners and advocates in the nonprofit space of a delayed and bureaucratic procurement process that leaves them hanging and chronically underfunds them given the magnitude of tasks nonprofits are contracted to do. I will take my oversight and approval powers seriously, ensuring that appointments to the Procurement Policy Board share our understanding and urgency to get this right going forward.

The nonprofit workforce is made up primarily of women and people of color. How will you use your role as Comptroller to advance this workforce?

I have dedicated my career to trying to right the wrongs of systemic inequality and advancing women and people of color in all fields will be a top priority for me as Comptroller. I will use the expertise of the

Comptroller's Labor Division, which establishes prevailing wages for certain industries pursuant to state law, to study pay equity in New York City and will work with the City's Human Rights Commission and the Council to build stronger protections.

I will also use the Comptroller's auditing functions to audit large City contract compliance with federal pay equity laws as well as City, State, and Federal anti-discrimination laws. The findings will be used swiftly to create reforms to the ways the City ensures pay equity standards are met on all levels of procurement and development.

Finally, I commit to building equity and inclusion into everything the Comptroller's office does, from investment advisers to enhanced MWBE contracting to agency audits and staffing. I will name a Deputy Comptroller for Equity and Inclusion and create an Office for Equity and Inclusion in City Government to bring diverse perspectives on handling the City's finances and how to better involve MWBEs in contracting.

What steps would you take to strengthen the contracting process and enhance the quality of contracted services for nonprofits and the communities they serve? Please include how you would measure success.

I will conduct a top to bottom assessment of the City's contracting process and recommend ways to streamline and universalize the contracting process to make it easier for smaller, new businesses to make a fair case for City contracts. This will include soliciting feedback from nonprofit organizations to hear directly from those deeply involved in the contracting process how it can be improved.

Secondly, it's a critical aspect of auditing city agencies to not only identify inefficiencies and mismanagement but to also examine the efficacy of the programs and contracts that these agencies use. We need to identify the contracts getting the best results for the communities served and, understanding that each program and organization is different, measure other contracts against those performing best to understand how operations can be improved.

The City contracts a vast network of services to the nonprofit sector through competitive procurement. How would you use your oversight role to ensure programs were designed in collaboration with nonprofits of all sizes and communities?

I will name a Deputy Comptroller for Equity and Inclusion and create an Office for Equity and Inclusion in City Government to bring diverse perspectives on handling the City's finances and how to better involve MWBEs in contracting.

What do you think is the primary concern for nonprofits at this moment? As Comptroller how would you address this concern?

Within the incredibly diverse and varied community of New York City nonprofits, it's difficult to identify a single issue that faces all of them equally. That said, I know that generally speaking, the tedious and unwieldy labyrinth of contracting, funding, and timely procurement are always of great concern for nonprofits when it comes to dealing with the city.

As Comptroller, what data would you collect and analyze to help ensure nonprofits are better prepared for the next emergency?

One of my top priorities as Comptroller will be to audit the use of emergency procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent studies have shown that businesses and organizations owned by people of color were less likely to receive PPP loans in the federal stimulus, and that many organizations were underfunded in PPP loans received. The Recovery and Rebuilding Unit will take a close look at how nonprofits and other types of businesses and organizations fared during this pandemic, where the government was able to support them, and how we could have done better. This data will better inform us going forward as we prepare for the next emergency.

Name: Brad Lander

Pronouns: he/him/his

Race: white

Gender: male

Ethnicity: Jewish

Disability Status: n/a

Languages spoken: English

Neighborhoods in which the candidate has lived or worked in New York:

Park Slope (and represent Brooklyn's 39th District, which also includes Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Windsor Terrace, and Kensington)

What are your priorities for your first year in office?

Thank you for centering the critical work of nonprofits in helping NYC recover, supporting the most vulnerable, helping all New Yorkers thrive, confronting inequality, strengthening democracy, and preparing for the future. I have a long history working closely with, leading, and listening to nonprofits. I plan to build on that partnership as NYC Comptroller.

My first priority will be to help secure a just recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, that brings our city back to life, confronts racial, gender, economic inequality, and gets us more ready for future crises than we were for this one. Key steps include:

-Supporting those who have been hit the hardest: American Rescue Plan funding provides the opportunity to focus recovery efforts on those who need it most, disproportionately in BIPOC communities, to get vaccinated and stay healthy, find and recover jobs, avoid eviction and homelessness, save small businesses, and address mental health.

-Safe, supportive, and healing school re-opening and support for youth: Few things are more important to our recovery than getting our schools open for all our students, safely and supportively, five-days-a-week for all our kids. I've laid out a plan to reopen schools with a focus on rebuilding trust and social and emotional learning, with extensive partnerships with youth service and community-based organizations.

-Strategic investments in economic development to create good jobs and support economic growth, supportive and affordable housing, public health and care work, and climate resilience: Federal funds provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make investments that create good jobs now and build a strong platform for the future.

-Focus on racial equity: The pandemic exposed sharp inequities along lines of race and gender. The recovery must be deeply attentive to combating these inequities in bold, measurable ways.

-Guarantee transparency in all of these investments: NYC is receiving \$14 billion of ARP funds, which give us a chance to secure a just recovery. We must spend that funding efficiently, with transparency, inclusion, and clarity about goals and outcomes. As comptroller, I'll be a budget watchdog on recovery funds to fight for the goals and values above.

How would you partner with nonprofits and philanthropy to achieve your priorities in your first year in office? How would you provide leadership opportunities with nonprofits in shaping policies, programs?

Nonprofit organizations have been critical partners in responding to this pandemic, and they must be critical partners in a just recovery. Nonprofits have been providing essential services to all New Yorkers, and especially the most vulnerable, long before the pandemic, though we often have not sufficiently recognized it as essential. Nonprofits were absolutely essential during the pandemic. And they will be essential long into the future.

In each of the priorities described above for securing a just recovery -- supporting those most in need, helping young people to heal, creating jobs, affordable and supportive housing, arts, climate, and care work, and in demanding racial equity -- nonprofits are critical partners.

So it is unacceptable for the City to treat nonprofits as "grant seekers," as second-class organizations relative to City agencies or for-profit businesses. Nonprofits contracted by the City are performing the City's work, with deep knowledge and understanding of what's needed to do that work well.

It's great that the Mayor has finally agreed -- after years of your advocacy, which I'm proud to have supported -- to fully fund the Indirect Cost Rate, so nonprofit human service providers aren't in a financial hole from the start on City contracts, but there is still much more to do.

We must treat nonprofits as full partners in planning and implementing in our recovery, delivering services, and strengthening our communities for the years ahead. Here are a few steps I will take:

-Center nonprofits in decision-making: I will create a Nonprofit Advisory Council to work in partnership to help solve the biggest issues facing our city.

-Get contracts paid on time: I will focus aggressively on improving the City's contracting process to ensure that nonprofit contractors get paid on time by working with the next mayor to overhaul the contracting process, and getting involved as early as possible in the registration process.

-Help groups to secure affordable, long-term space: As we emerge from the pandemic, in a city full of vacant spaces and huge need, we have a unique opportunity to help nonprofits secure affordable spaces for their long-term, critical, community work.

If elected, would you work with nonprofits and what framework would you use to engage with nonprofits? Feel free to include any experience you have working with nonprofits (as a staff member, board member, or in other capacities).

Before I was elected to public office, I had a 15-year career running two great nonprofit organizations, the Fifth Avenue Committee and Pratt Center for Community Development. I helped to create a national nonprofit, Local Progress (a national network of progressive local elected officials), and have served on the boards of several others (ANHD, JFREJ). And I am proud to be part of a family that is deeply committed to NYC's nonprofit sector!

I believe in a model of "co-governance," partnership between elected officials and civic, community, labor, and nonprofit groups. That's why I led the effort to bring participatory budgeting to NYC. Over the past decade, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have been able to participate in shaping how our city invests in our neighborhoods.

During my time in City Council, I have worked to model partnership with CBOs, labor, civic groups and nonprofits in a wide range of campaigns -- school integration, Community Safety Act, paid sick leave, fair scheduling, certificate of no harassment, reckless driving, and gig-worker policy. It was this belief in co-governance that led me to help found the Council's Progressive Caucus, Local Progress, and Get Organized BK (a movement of thousands of Brooklyn residents to resist Trump and defend our democracy). I am committed to bringing the same spirit of co-governance to the Comptroller's office.

As Comptroller, I will establish a Nonprofit Leadership Council, to work closely with my team in all the work of the office, including budget priorities, improving contract processing, auditing, and responsible fiduciary investing. This would not be a token body. It will help shape our work in contracting, by providing essential insights on what should be in RFPs, how services should be provided and evaluated, and where money could be saved.

We will focus from day one on improving procurement and speeding up contracting. We will identify areas for agency audits. We will confront challenges of inequality, in how funding is provided, services are delivered, boards (nonprofit, for-profit, and government) are structured. In the spirit of co-governance, your insights into this work would be essential from the start.

What role do you think the nonprofits play in creating an equitable New York and if elected, how would you use your role to ensure equity in the nonprofit contracting process?

Longstanding racial inequalities in employment, housing, and health care resulted in more BIPOC New Yorkers suffering from the crisis. It is our obligation to confront those inequities in our recovery work. I have centered that work in my plans to secure a just recovery and bring a racial equity lens to NYC's budget, contracting, auditing, and investing.

Nonprofits have a critical role to play in the work of winning racial justice and prefiguring a more equitable city. NYC's nonprofits help all New Yorkers to thrive, but because many especially support people who are marginalized, they have a unique role to play in creating a more equitable city.

That nonprofit work includes advocacy to demand change, like the remarkable organizing led by hunger strikers to fund excluded workers, which won \$2.1 billion for immigrant workers excluded from federal aid. It includes the services that kept people alive, through health care, food, and shelter. It includes neighborhood-based arts and cultural organizations, so often underfunded relative to larger organizations. It includes civic outreach, as witnessed by the City's 2020 Census outreach operation, which relied heavily on the efforts of community-based nonprofits as trusted ambassadors.

To create a more equitable New York, nonprofits need more equity in the City's contracting process. As Comptroller, I will audit City procurement to make sure contracting opportunities are going equitably to communities that need them, and to organizations that are representative of their communities. Working with my Nonprofit Leadership Council, I will explore development of an M/WBE designation for nonprofits, if they are led at staff and/or board level by BIPOC. Seizing on the successful example of census outreach, I will work to identify best practices in equitable contracting.

With more equitable nonprofit contracting, we can make the most of the remarkable opportunity presented by American Rescue Plan funding for New Deal-style public investments in health care, education and youth, affordable housing, healthy food, arts and culture, and the neighborhood services that all New Yorkers need to thrive, and that help to build that more equal, flourishing city that we desire.

The Comptroller plays an important role in contract oversight and approval, as well as in appointments to the Procurement Policy Board. How would you use these roles to improve timely contract registration and payment?

The City's contracting and procurement process is notoriously opaque and plagued with delays. The Comptroller is the last stop in a months-long contract registration process, which can cause serious delays when the Comptroller identifies vendor or contract issues that should have been caught and fixed earlier. 81% of contracts were sent to the Comptroller's office after the contract's start date and that 43% of those were more than 6 months late.

Nonprofits in NYC provide essential human services, in many cases contracted directly by the City of New York to care for our kids, our seniors, and our most vulnerable. Yet when City agencies contract for this work, they are chronically underfunded -- not paid enough to provide their human service workers with good pay and benefits, or for organizational stability -- and often paid months or even years late. It is a wonderful victory that City Hall finally agreed, after years of your advocacy which I was proud to support, to increase the "indirect cost rate" to cover more of the full cost of their work. But we have still failed to reduce contracting delays.

I am a co-sponsor of Intro 1627-2019 which would require the City to provide transparency into the contracting process, from RFP to contract registration, a process that is now shrouded in secrecy. I will work in my current role as Councilmember to pass this legislation.

As Comptroller, working with my Nonprofit Leadership Council, I will focus aggressively on improving the City's contacting process to ensure that nonprofits get paid on time, by getting involved as early as possible in the contract registration process. I will push to integrate Comptroller's office onto the PASSPort database, to be able to dig in and find delays and fix them in real time, and to enable Comptroller reviews to happen simultaneously with contract processing. I will ensure that my

appointments to the Procurement Policy Board include nonprofit leaders who deeply understand the issues facing nonprofits and will use their positions to push for greater transparency, equity, and timeliness.

The nonprofit workforce is made up primarily of women and people of color. How will you use your role as Comptroller to advance this workforce?

The nonprofit workforce performs essential work across so many domains -- health, child care, education, youth, seniors, food, culture -- and yet these workers, mostly women and color, are too often underpaid, lack benefits and retirement security, and don't receive the respect they are due. The next Comptroller can play a strong role in helping to change this.

For City-funded human service organizations, the City has a unique role. The City's own employees have a strong package of benefits and retirement security, pay increases on a step scale, and are members of unions. But nonprofit workers, even at organizations contracted by that very same City of New York, have too few benefits and protections. We should expand NYC's Living Wage Law to cover human services work -- and then we must provide the funding to pay those wages and benefits (as well as a robust indirect cost rate).

In the broader nonprofit sector, the comptroller can also play a role in lifting up and supporting the nonprofit workforce. I will audit workforce development policies to make sure city investments are actually going where they could make the biggest impact and fill gaps in demand for key services. We can help workers, especially women and people of color, in the nonprofit sector to build careers. Mayor de Blasio allocated funding for a nonprofit workforce initiative, but much of it was poorly spent. Working with the Nonprofit Leadership Council, we can get it right.

I will support good practices among employers (nonprofit as well as for-profit), and call out bad ones. I released a plan to publish an annual Exploitative Employer Wall of Shame, modeled on the Public Advocate's worst landlord list, to highlight abusive employers and improve working conditions. Where nonprofit organizations abuse their workers, like the Bronx Parent Housing Network, I will call it out. It hurts all nonprofits when abusive ones are allowed to continue. But I will spotlight best practices as well, highlighting model nonprofits that hire, train, promote, support, and provide careers that provide a platform for women and BIPOC New Yorkers to thrive and lead.

What steps would you take to strengthen the contracting process and enhance the quality of contracted services for nonprofits and the communities they serve? Please include how you would measure success.

As Comptroller, I will work in partnership with the Nonprofit Leadership Council, including a wide array of nonprofit leaders and advocates, to improve New York City's contracting process, to enhance the quality and equity of contracted services for nonprofits and the communities they serve. That work will include:

-Involving nonprofits in decision-making early in the process, starting with the conception and drafting of RFPs. Too often, decisions about services are made solely by government employees, without talking to the people who need those services or have experience providing them (see #11).

-Integrating transparent outcomes measurement into the contracting process; starting by involving nonprofit providers in deciding what those outcomes should be, and what they'll need to achieve them. Then we can measure and report them transparently.

-Include equity measures, with disaggregated data so we are really seeing what the results are and what strategic shifts must be made to improve (see #12).

-Working tirelessly to guarantee timely processing of contracts, so nonprofits get paid on time (see #13).

-Pushing for adequate funding to pay and support staff a living wage and insure adequate overhead, to provide sufficient resources to provide high quality services and meet the goals of the contract (see #14).

-Providing greater transparency from the very beginning of the contracting process, and integrating the Comptroller's office into the PASSPort database so that we can find delays and fix them in real time.

The City contracts a vast network of services to the nonprofit sector through competitive procurement. How would you use your oversight role to ensure programs were designed in collaboration with nonprofits of all sizes and communities?

Too often, decisions about services are made solely by government employees, without talking to the people who need those services or have experience providing them. I am deeply committed to involving nonprofits early in the decision-making process, starting with the conception and drafting of RFPs. I am a strong believer in and practitioner of the practice of collaborative governance, or "co-governance," in which government officials work closely in partnership with community, civic, nonprofit and other organizations.

To advance these goals, I will start by convening a Nonprofit Advisory Council, as noted above, to ensure ongoing dialogue with those most directly connected to the work. Working together with the Council, my office will get involved early when the Administration begins service design or RFP-drafting efforts. We will reach out to the contracting agency to push for nonprofit involvement in the design process, to help shape service models, metrics for evaluation, resources needed, and provide an equity lens.

As contracts move through the procurement process, we will make sure that they follow the guidelines established in the RFP. And we will use the Auditing power of the office to analyze contracts post-award, to see if they are living up to the original goals of the RFPs and recommend changes to future procurements based on those results.

Where necessary and appropriate, I will use the office as an organizing vehicle for nonprofits, as I have done my entire career in public service, and produce audits, draft reports, and release data in partnership with organizations to inform advocacy, program design, implementation, and evaluation.

What do you think is the primary concern for nonprofits at this moment? As Comptroller how would you address this concern?

The pandemic has upended our city, especially low-income and working-class, Black and brown neighborhoods. The primary concern for many nonprofits is helping their communities recover -- in a way that centers and addresses long-standing inequities. They want to make sure people get vaccinated equitably, prevent a wave of evictions, help people find and return to jobs (with adequate pay and

protections), help kids get back to school in ways that address trauma and promote healing, help small businesses and community-based arts organizations to reopen.

To do this, nonprofits need adequate funding. The past year has been devastating, with a loss of public and private dollars, and the unanticipated costs of upgrading IT to enable remote work. Many nonprofits were stretched thin to the point of precarity, while continuing to provide essential support for vulnerable populations throughout the pandemic.

American Rescue Plan funds can rescue nonprofits and the communities they serve, but it will take an intense effort, with real oversight. Too often, stimulus funds are spent without adequate planning and partnership. As Comptroller, I will publicly track the use of American Recovery Plan stimulus funding to the City to ensure that there is accountability and equity in the use of these funds (as I laid out in the Daily News this week). We must spend rescue funds strategically and with accountability, focusing on safe re-opening, supporting those hit hardest, and investing in key infrastructure and job creation -- including in the nonprofit sector -- to support robust and more equitable economic growth.

Finally, the past year has also further exposed the devastating racial inequities that have long-plagued our cities. I know that many nonprofits -- like many in government and the for-profit sector -- are focused on addressing racial equity within their organizations, their communities, and our city. As noted above in response to Question #12, I will work aggressively in the Comptroller's office to center issues of equity in addressing contracts, audits, budgeting, and investments. With the nonprofit community as a key partner, we can make this a moment to make real progress toward a genuinely inclusive multiracial democracy.

As Comptroller, what data would you collect and analyze to help ensure nonprofits are better prepared for the next emergency?

A key role of the Comptroller is to take the long-term view, and that means working to insure we are more ready for future crises than we were for this one. We did not see the Covid-19 crisis coming, and tens of thousands of our neighbors paid the price, disproportionately in communities of color, with so much more suffering. But we can all see the climate crisis coming, which will be even more devastating, and also highly disproportionate along racial lines. And we can see and prepare for others if we make a real plan.

Nonprofits have a critical role in preparing for and responding to emergencies, since they are close to the ground and especially the most vulnerable, prepared to be flexible to meet needs, and oriented to help. So we need to make sure nonprofits have the resources and preparation.

In order to get ready for future crises, I will bring together a diverse mix of experts, including nonprofit leaders, to conduct a catastrophic risk analysis, to analyze the looming risks we face -- another pandemic, another Sandy, a heat wave like the one that hit Chicago in 1995, salt water intrusion into our drinking water, a financial crash -- and then figure out what we can do to reduce the likelihood and make NYC more resilient.

As part of that effort, we will identify, gather, and analyze a wide range of data, to make sure that our city -- including our nonprofits -- is better prepared for those risks. That data includes: likelihood of various risk scenarios, number of people who would be harmed (and measures of harm), geographic and demographic inequities of impact (race, gender, income, neighborhood, age, etc), nonprofit financial

impact and resilience strategies, categories of people who need particular focus (e.g. isolated seniors without A/C, language access issues, etc), financial measures of potential impact, and smart strategies for investing in mitigation and resilience now to reduce future harm.

I look forward to conducting that research, and preparing for the future, in partnership with the nonprofit community. Thank you for this opportunity.

Name: Kevin S. Parker

Pronouns: Mr.

Race: Black (Non- Hispanic)

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: African American

Disability Status: N/A

Languages spoken: English

Neighborhoods in which the candidate has lived or worked in New York:

Flatbush, East Flatbush, Flatlands, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope

What are your priorities for your first year in office?

For my first year in office as Comptroller, I plan to create an Economic Justice Council that consists of public, private and community sector leaders who will conduct neighborhood audits identifying the needs of the community so that in turn I can create policies specifically for them. Also as Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee I plan on continuing the fight of creating a more clean energy economy. My Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) that I continue to promote will not only increase this city's carbon footprint by 100% of clean energy but it will also create 150,000 more jobs. I also plan on investing pension funds into our small business and increase this city's Minority Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) utilization rate to 30% by making M/WBE certification easier and increase their biddings on contracts.

How would you partner with nonprofits and philanthropy to achieve your priorities in your first year in office? How would you provide leadership opportunities with nonprofits in shaping policies, programs?

As comptroller, I would ensure that nonprofits get a seat at the table when creating policies. Part of the Economic Justice Council I plan to create will consist of nonprofit organizations who are already in the streets helping our communities. They will be my right hand man when creating policies and programs that benefit the people of our communities.

If elected, would you work with nonprofits and what framework would you use to engage with nonprofits? Feel free to include any experience you have working with nonprofits (as a staff member, board member, or in other capacities).

Since the beginning of my time as legislator, I have partnered with numerous organizations for countless events that have benefited the overall quality of life for my constituents. I've organized and collaborated with multiple nonprofits in various events such as back to school giveaways, grocery distributions, careers fairs, workshops and so much more. As comptroller I will continue to work with the organizations I have built relationships with as well as create relationships with new ones.

What role do you think the nonprofits play in creating an equitable New York and if elected, how would you use your role to ensure equity in the nonprofit contracting process?

Nonprofits play a vital role in building a healthy community because not only do they provide jobs and a voice for the community but they provide a variety of goods and services that contribute to the stability of our economy. Nonprofit organizations employ nearly 12.3 million people and contributes to 5.6% of the country's gross domestic product and just how I plan to increase M/WBE's utilization rate, I will do the same for nonprofit organizations. I will increase their biddings on contracts and jobs to ensure that they are receiving an equitable share of contracts.

The Comptroller plays an important role in contract oversight and approval, as well as in appointments to the Procurement Policy Board. How would you use these roles to improve timely contract registration and payment?

By creating a mechanism in which thorough guidelines are enacted to ensure they are punctual disbursement of funds on a consistent basis. It is left to the comptroller to ensure a timely schedule of funds and the creation of an oversight committee will be most advantageous in reaching this commitment.

The nonprofit workforce is made up primarily of women and people of color. How will you use your role as Comptroller to advance this workforce?

To advance this workforce, the Economic Justice Council that I plan to create will also audit nonprofit organizations to identify the needs and wants of the employees. In order to ensure that everyone but especially women and people of color are successful at these organizations is to create leadership opportunities and setup workshops within the company so that they have the opportunity to advance in the organization and have the tools and qualifications they need to take on these opportunities. This will not only help nonprofits succeed but get us one step closer to achieving economic justice for all New Yorkers.

What steps would you take to strengthen the contracting process and enhance the quality of contracted services for nonprofits and the communities they serve? Please include how you would measure success.

Please include how you would measure success. To create a discretionary participant training program for personnel associated with all non profit entities in the community, there by ensuring that all individuals have an introduction to drafting contracts and will give them requisite skills to protect themselves in the bargaining process.

The City contracts a vast network of services to the nonprofit sector through competitive procurement. How would you use your oversight role to ensure programs were designed in collaboration with nonprofits of all sizes and communities?

How would you use your oversight role to ensure programs were designed in collaboration with nonprofits of all sizes and communities? I would create a participation driven procurement structure whereby i would create a scaling tier system(large-medium, small..etc.) so all non profits get a fair chance. This avoids dominance and exclusion of smaller entities.

What do you think is the primary concern for nonprofits at this moment? As Comptroller how would you address this concern?

The primary concerns nonprofits are facing are a lack of government funding and the ability to retain and engage new donors. Some the ways in which I will address these concerns are by investing our governmental dollars into these organizations. Just like my plan to invest pension funds into small businesses, I will do the same for nonprofits. Seeing how nonprofit organizations employ millions of jobs to many, it is important that the government direct more funding toward them. To address the concern of retaining donors and engaging new ones I will make it a requirement that all financial institutions have a percentage of nonprofits they donate to and create a donor recognition program acknowledging these institutions based on their financial contributions and commitments towards the nonprofit's mission and goals.

As Comptroller, what data would you collect and analyze to help ensure nonprofits are better prepared for the next emergency?

My plans to ensure that nonprofits are better prepared for the next emergency is not by waiting until a disaster occurs to see how these organizations can help but to do bi-monthly audits, trainings and inventory checks to make sure these organizations have what need in a crisis so that when this city is in an emergency they can be helpful. The trainings will include creating hypothetical scenarios that these organizations may face in which they must find the best solutions to overcome them. The goal is to always plan ahead and have a contingency plan.