

2023 Primary Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Council

Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

Dear candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for a seat on the New York City Council! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serving the public.

This form includes six sections with questions about your positions on various reform issues and your plans for the office:

- Serving constituents
- Elections and voting
- Campaign finance
- Oversight of City Hall
- Police accountability
- City Council rules
- There are also questions about the candidate's bio and the campaign

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for office and to issue our preference for the June primary.

Read more about the method, principles, and criteria of the candidate evaluation process [here](#).

You can learn more about Citizens Union's policy agenda in our [issues section](#).

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If you wish to be considered, please submit this questionnaire by Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

We will need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process. Given time constraints and the limited capacity of a member-based organization, we may not be able to evaluate all contests or candidates in this election cycle.

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If you cannot complete the questionnaire in one sitting, **you can click Save** at the bottom of every page. Once you submit the questionnaire, you will receive a confirmation email with your responses. Citizens Union cannot see your answers unless you submit the form.

You can also download a blank questionnaire [here](#) and email it to us.

We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).

For any questions, please email candidates@citizensunion.org

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Wai Yee Chan
Running for Council District number	43
In which primary	Democratic
Education	Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, BFA. Columbia University, MA.
Occupation	Executive Director at Homecrest Community Services Inc.

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Teacher at the New York Chinese School

Director at the Chinese-American Planning Council

Website wyc4nyc.com
Twitter @wyc4nyc
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/wyc4nyc

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Have you qualified to receive matching campaign finance funds from the CFB?

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

SERVING CONSTITUENTS

1. For most New Yorkers, the most important thing their Council Members do is provide constituent services. How have you run your office (or for non-incumbents, how would you run your office) to serve your community's needs? Please give specific examples. What are the major problems in your district that require constituent services?

Having worked in a multi social service agency and in Councilman Brannan's office, I'm familiar with the needs of this community and how to address them. Major problems include housing affordability and understanding how to apply for assistance, rat abatement, and understanding small business laws and guidelines.

2. For incumbents: Which bill did you introduce, and most want to see passed? Why is that your top priority? For non-incumbents: If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce in the new year? Why is that your top priority?

I would introduce legislation to expand translation services citywide. Language access is a major concern for residents in my district.

3. What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g., voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency and oversight). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I've worked with the Language Assistance Advisory Committee (LACC) to develop and implement poll site language assistance and advance language justice in our city's local elections.

4. What are your top three campaign promises or goals? Feel free to reference an answer to another question on this form rather than restate it.

First: Fully fund our public schools

Second: Ensure our community feels safe

Third: Expand resources for our seniors

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

5. How would you describe the relationship between the City Council and the New York City Board of Elections? How will you use (or have you used) your power as a Council Member to improve the operations of the NYC BOE?

I would work to ensure funding for the NYC BOE and help with outreach in my District over how ranked choice voting and voting in general works.

Citizens Union recently [published a report](#) about moving New York City's municipal elections to even-numbered years, so they would align with presidential or gubernatorial elections, showing this change could boost voter turnout, diversify the electorate, and save money.

6. What is your position on that proposal to move New York City's municipal elections to even-numbered years and on the overall concept?

I support this proposal. My District encompasses two of the lowest turnout assembly districts in the state. We have to do more to increase voter turnout and I think this is a good step.

7. Are you a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? If so, how will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works? If not, please elaborate on your position.

Yes. Ensuring we're educating voters in the appropriate languages and conducting outreach (i.e. door knocking/tabling) on this subject is incredibly important.

8. New York City is one of few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the election that typically decides who gets elected to office. Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in the primary?

Yes.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

9. If you ran for office before, to what extent have Independent Expenditure entities ("Super-PACs") spent money in your race? Was it done in your favor or opposition of your candidacy?

N/A

10. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by "bundling" donations from other people, a loophole that can give insiders greater access to officeholders. Do you support banning bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?

Yes.

OVERSIGHT OF CITY HALL

11. For incumbents: Oversight of the administration is one of the most important roles of the City Council. Please describe how you used your position to ensure City agencies and City government are accountable to the people of New York.

N/A

In the last year, media reports have exposed potential ethical issues within City Hall concerning [conflicts of interest](#) among [top officials](#), the use of [public resources for private matters](#), [appointments](#) of friends and relatives, and [loosening transparency measures](#).

12. How do you see your role as a Council Member in ensuring high ethical behavior standards and effective ethics oversight and enforcement?

These reports are unacceptable. We must hold oversight hearings and pass legislation to avoid these situations in the future.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REFORM

13. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? How would you ensure that penalties imposed on police officers are commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing?

The final say on discipline in the New York Police Department should be based on a fair and transparent process that involves input from various stakeholders, including the police department, the civilian oversight board, and the community. To ensure that penalties imposed on police officers are commensurate with the gravity of their wrongdoing, it is important to establish clear guidelines and standards for discipline and to ensure that those guidelines are consistently applied. Additionally, it may be helpful to involve independent arbitrators or mediators to review cases and make impartial recommendations for discipline.

14. What changes should be made to the independent oversight bodies to ensure they can effectively hold police officers who commit wrongdoing accountable (the Civilian Complaint Review Board, Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD, the Commission to Combat Police Corruption)?

Independent oversight bodies need adequate funding to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This includes hiring enough staff to handle complaints, conducting investigations, and making recommendations for discipline. Oversight bodies may need additional authority to investigate complaints and recommend discipline. This may involve changing state laws to give them more authority or providing them with subpoena power to compel witnesses and evidence.

15. Under the 2021 police reform plan, the City committed to expanding programs that effectively shift responsibilities from the NYPD to other agencies in areas like mental health, homelessness outreach, school, and youth, while investing in alternative models for community-driven public safety, such as Cure Violence programs. What do you think about the progress of these efforts? How would you improve policing in the City's various communities?

I support expanding programs that shift responsibilities from the NYPD to other agencies that are better equipped to handle the specialized situations. Our cops should be focused on preventing crime, investigating crimes, and keeping us safe.

CITY COUNCIL RULES

16. In December 2022, Speaker Adams proposed changes to the Rules of the City Council that would have potentially rolled back positive reforms related to bill drafting services and the power of members and committee chairpersons, among other issues. Although this proposal has been pulled, additional work is needed to make the Council a more democratic, effective, and open legislative body. What reforms would you like to see in the Rules of the City Council?

I support shortening the time and process for a bill to get introduced. We should have online digital bill aging with tablets on the desk to make it easier than printing all that paper.

PATH TO VICTORY

What is your win number (the number of votes needed to win this race)? 1600

What are your current fundraising numbers? What are your fundraising goals? Finished raising to 207k cap

How many individual donors do you have? 470

Please indicate any endorsements that your campaign has received, if applicable (you can also share a link to a list of endorsements)

Sen. Iwen Chu, Sen. Andrew Gounardes, Councilman Justin Brannan, Fmr. Assemblyman Peter Abbate, Fmr. Councilman Vincent Gentile, Fmr. Councilman Domenic Recchia, District Leaders Tori Kelly, Joe Bova, Chris McCreight, and Justin Yu.

PSC-CUNY, Resilience Pac, The New Majority, Brooklyn Young Dems, Bay Ridge Dems, 504 Democratic Club.

50 Community Leaders, link here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T_qitF7UqJgaJ9SYHUdksb_td3MqD1r6m1lcIE-zgZg/edit#gid=0

ADDITIONAL INFO

Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below.

At the bottom of the preview page, you can

- **get a copy of your answers by clicking PRINT, and**
- **submit the questionnaire by clicking SUBMIT.**

IF YOU DO NOT CLICK SUBMIT, WE WON'T RECEIVE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email. *If you don't see the email, please check your spam box.*

If you have any further questions, you may contact us at candidates@citizensunion.org