



Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - New York City Mayor

Dear Candidate,

In the following pages, you will find questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office. The form includes four sections: the pandemic and city government, elections and voting, police accountability, and miscellaneous.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for city offices, and to issue our preference for the June primary. Read more about the method, principles, and criteria of the candidate evaluation process [here](#).

**

If you wish to be considered, please submit the questionnaire by April 17 and no later than 48 before your interview.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

**

If you cannot complete the questionnaire in one sitting, you can click Save and Continue Later at the bottom of every page.

Once you submit the questionnaire, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. Citizens Union will not be able to see your answers unless you submit the form. 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public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).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

Your Info

Name

Art Chang

Running in what primary

Democratic

Age

Education

Occupation/Employer

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

Avid activist of voting out the IDC in 2018, proponent of Constitutional Convention. Government work experience: City Law Department, Empire State Development (Project Manager on Queens West Development), Board of Brooklyn Public Library, first Asian appointed to the Campaign Finance Board, co-creator of NYC Votes, created Workforce Development program for tech at CUNY, built Casebook, the first web-based software platform for child welfare.

Website

www.chang.nyc

Twitter

@art4mayornyc

Facebook

www.facebook.com/art4mayor

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

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

No

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

Yes

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

Signature



THE PANDEMIC AND CITY GOVERNMENT

1. If elected, you will start your term as New York City (hopefully) begins to reopen its businesses, offices, and institutions. How will you utilize the mayor's office to help rebuild the economic base of NYC?

I will stabilize, nurture/innovate and grow NYC's businesses, offices and institutions with a focus on equity. I am confident that NYC is facing an enormous opportunity for growth and determined to do so with equity and inclusion to ensure resiliency and sustainability. The key to this will be small business, nonprofits and the arts. As Mayor, I will:

1- Stabilize.

-Provide financial relief to small landlords and tenants to keep small businesses in their stores and offices and small landlords in their buildings. I will use a combination of mortgage refinancing, property tax forbearance, and loans and grants to do so, working closely with the city's financial services industry.

-Establish an Urban Innovation Corps, leveraging the business talent in our business schools, organizations and established entrepreneurs to provide technical assistance to micro and small businesses.

-Work with the real estate industry for the adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial property, starting by facilitating "pop-up" uses of vacant offices and storefronts with potential rezoning in mind.

-Jump-start the arts and entertainment sector by supporting an expansive increase in rehearsal and performance spaces with direct grants and a substantial increase in arts education in the public schools. I will work with the industry to plan for major tourist-generating events for 2022.

-Establish Universal Childcare and increase afterschool and summer programs to enable parents, especially women, to return to work, pursue entrepreneurship or complete their education.

2 - Nurture/innovate.

- Establish a business incubator network for startup businesses generally and in specific sectors including food, marijuana, the arts, and green building technologies with the support of the Urban Innovation Corps and investors.
- Expand mentorship and other programs to support the growth of promising small businesses in partnership with the private sector.
- Streamline and unify city processes with the goal of one-stop regulation of businesses, aligned to the common interest of business stability/growth and consumer protection.
- Introduce workforce development and entrepreneurship starting in high school through CUNY, along with paid internships. Post-graduation, provide City internships in key industries, starting with technology, to give graduates the critical experience employers are looking for.
- Create a college debt refinancing program for City employees, potentially expanding to other sectors.

3 - Grow.

- Aggressively use the City's marketing capabilities around tourist-generating events for 2022, with a focus on the arts, such as a global music festival for Summer, 2022.
- Reform the City's procurement system to increase opportunities to acquire innovation and to enable small businesses, especially MWBEs, to compete.
- Use the Mayor's convening power and the city platform to bring together growth opportunities and the private sector.
- Potentially rezone commercial office districts to allow for mixed-use redevelopment.
- Create new arts districts across the city that can leverage agglomeration economics in high potential but underserved areas.
- Introduce and approve new building technologies to support Local Law 97 implementation; incentivize those to be Built in NY and create thousands of new jobs.
- Work to continuously streamline and strengthen the City's processes to speed approvals and reduce costs.

2. New York City is facing an economic and fiscal crisis. How would you ensure the fiscal health and integrity of city spending, while providing New Yorkers with valuable city services?

There is no question that the City's fiscal situation deserves serious scrutiny. As the Mayor, I will look at every opportunity to reduce costs while improving direct services.

There's a lot of talk of revenue shortfalls and the next Mayor having to deal with budget cuts. But looking at the facts: the most recent proposed City budget represents a \$23 billion (in 2020 dollars) increase in just eight years under the current administration. Where did that money go? Some went to worthwhile investments, like ~\$1.1 billion to Universal Pre-K. But most of that growth was the result of mismanaged overhead, with a siloed organization that resulted in duplicative services. I will identify these inefficiencies, eliminate them, and reallocate budget to frontline services.

Based on my analysis, I believe there is at least \$10 billion in administrative bloat worked into our current city budget from 8 years of mismanagement.

We must plan to do more with less. This means streamlining services. Here are some examples:

- Restaurants: coordinate inspections from the current eight per month to two
- Benefits determination and distribution: automate this entire process, starting with SNAP and WIC
- We must spend additional funding wisely. The NYS Legislature and Congress have provided funding streams that we can't take for granted. I will ensure that this funding is invested with minimal additional overhead costs, and that we think creatively about how to maximize its impact, including the replenishment of the City's rainy day funds.

It's not just how we spend the money; it's who we spend it on. Which organizations the City partners with, and how they treat those organizations during those partnerships, is instrumental to utilizing the City's money efficiently and effectively. Nonprofit providers must be treated like partners. This relates to deep coordination of services, as well as all the processes for procurement, billing and payment. Partnering with the private sector, from universities

to nonprofits to small businesses, will be essential to re-starting the economy.

Procurement is 22% or \$20 billion of the budget, larger than any Mayoral agency.

-I will bring this function into the 21st century with a shift to smaller contracts, increased spending on small- to mid-sized businesses, especially MWBEs, and an emphasis on agile, cloud and platform technologies.

-I will also move to consolidate procurement across agencies into a centralized function to drive cost efficiencies.

-One of the largest expense items is the City's health insurance, which has not been repriced in eight years; I will put this out to bid within the first 90 days.

- I will also modernize the Doing Business With Database to ensure more timely and complete reporting for potential conflicts of interest.

3. In March 2020, Mayor de Blasio issued a state of emergency in New York City (as did Governor Cuomo in NY State) to remove any legal and regulatory barriers to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Do you have any concerns regarding the use of emergency powers by the Mayor during this crisis? How do you think city government can maintain public accountability standards at this time?

I believe there should be common-sense checks and balances that do not delay decision-making in times of real crisis, as with the pandemic. There should be a consultation with the Council in advance and other key stakeholders, like the UFT with school closings/reopenings. There should also be communication with the public so people can make informed decisions.

4. The ability of citizens and advocates to make their voices heard in City Hall has been severely curtailed since city government shifted to work remotely. The next Mayor will need to decide how to adapt to the new reality. How would you propose to improve community engagement and public participation while using remote technology (in public hearings, meetings, etc.), particularly to ensure equity in participation?

With over 50% of New Yorkers being Millennials or younger, New York City's communications must be

brought into the 21st century. This must start with Universal Broadband and internet-connected devices in every household. But not everyone prefers the Internet, so there must also be more traditional communications channels. From my experience, I know that digital-first can be a foundation to deliver both digital and traditional communications for able people and for disabled audiences, and for non-English speakers.

With vaccines and a return to in-person events, digital won't go away. I envision blended events where everyone can decide to attend in-person, digitally via an interactive technology like Zoom, or passively through online streaming.

As the Mayor, I will create a 21st century communications system that meets every person where they live based on their preferences and their language:

- Every resident should be able to opt-in, subscribe and set other preferences such as language for how they receive communications from the City, including via social media
- Every communication must serve people who prefer not to receive electronic communications and the disabled
- Every communication should be accessible via the Internet
- All communications must allow for two-way communication; that is, every communication should allow recipients to respond. This will be integrated into a new customer service infrastructure integrated into the 311 service.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS REFORM

5. Do you consider yourself a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting? How will you work to maintain this system and educate voters on how it works?

Yes, I am an advocate for this program and believe firmly that it gives New Yorkers a better opportunity to have their voices heard and their votes to count. We must continue the valuable voter education efforts that BOE, CFB and other civic groups have undertaken. In addition, I have always believed that the best place for education is in the schools, both high school and college. It's an important part of

understanding civics and should be taught in every NYC school.

6. Now that New York City has implemented Ranked Choice Voting, do you support moving to an Open Primary system (eliminating party primaries and establishing a non-partisan election system)

Yes

Comments

I am a huge believer in Open Primaries as a method to reduce partisanship and to focus on the important issues at hand. If the State would implement Open Primaries, we may be able to push for a Constitutional amendment to revise the structure of the Board of Elections via the state Legislature.

7. How will you use your power as Mayor to improve the operations of the NYC Board of Elections and its accountability to the city?

I will work with the Governor and my allies in the NYS Legislature to pass legislation to force the BOE to improve its operations. The next steps include same-day voter registration, same-day party registration switch. The BOE has little accountability to anyone, due to its NYS Constitution-mandated strictly bi-partisan governance structure, impeding accountability and reform. As Mayor I will also ensure that compliance with Federal consent decrees stemming from past grievous errors is attained.

8. The next mayor will appoint seven members to the city's redistricting commission. In doing so, the next mayor will have share the responsibility for shaping a fair political map for the coming decade. If elected, what objectives will you have in appointing commission members?

I would emulate the successful practice of the CFB in its Board selection process, with the added requirement of gender representation. Although CFB Board members are bi-partisan, the mandate is to make decisions in a strictly non-partisan manner. I believe that redistricting is critical to a sound democracy and should be done with a blind eye to incumbency or partisanship.

9. Mayor de Blasio created a DemocracyNYC office, headed by a Chief Democracy Officer, tasked with increasing voter registration, improving voter access, promoting youth participation, and advancing democratic reforms. The Campaign Finance Board, the Board of Elections, and the Civic Engagement Commission share similar responsibilities. How would your administration organize its efforts to promote civic engagement and participation? How would that fit in your overall vision for the city?

I would seek to consolidate all functions in the Campaign Finance Board, where it originated (I was the first Chair of the CFB's Voter Assistance Advisory Committee), except for those in the BOE, which are outside the Mayor's control. I would also recommend that the BOE's functions also be consolidated in the CFB.

10. Do you support allowing the winner of a special election for a city office (except the mayor) to serve the remainder of the unexpired term, instead of only filling the position until the next general election?

Yes

Comments

Voters are implicitly disenfranchised when asked to vote too frequently, or to vote for someone who may only occupy a seat for a few months.

11. The de Blasio administration launched a citywide civic education program, Civics for All, which included a new curriculum, training for teachers, and increased student voter registration drives. Do you support maintaining Civics for All and student voter registration drives at the same capacity?

Yes

Comments

I would seek to expand this curriculum to include a) US and NYS Constitutions, City Charter and roles of key offices and functions; and b) rights and responsibilities of residents of the City.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Citizens Union has been studying police accountability and performance in New York City for more than a decade. In our reports and advocacy efforts we have urged city government to strengthen the accountability of the New York Police Department to the public and create a more cohesive system of police oversight. Previous reports include: [2016 issue brief](#), [2013 position brief on Stop and Frisk](#), [2012 report on the CCRB](#), [2008 policy statement on police misconduct](#). Citizens Union's 2021 agenda for police reform, [published as a report](#) in March, calls for establishing a Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, allowing the CCRB to appeal the Police Commissioner's decisions, making the appointment of Police Commissioner subject to advice and consent of the City Council, consolidating agencies with oversight authority, ending qualified immunity, and more.

12. Do you support appointing a Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, with the expertise and authority to monitor and supervise the Police Department on the Mayor's behalf?

Yes

13. Do you support making the appointment of the Police Commissioner subject to the advice and consent of the City Council?

Yes

Comments

No Mayor should have sole power to appoint the Cabinet. I believe that the City Council should serve as a confirmation body for key Mayoral cabinet appointments, similar to how the US Senate approves Presidential appointments, starting with the DOE Chancellor and NYPD Chief.

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

No single person should have sole power over disciplinary matters, as the Police Chief currently holds. I believe there should be a separation of powers:

- An Office of Police Accountability, a semi-autonomous civilian complaint intake and investigatory body, that would also handle agency audits
- An Office of Police Discipline, an autonomous adjudicatory body or an enhancement of OATH
- this would focus on NYPD and Corrections, but be applicable to all other Mayoral agencies
- insubordination and other HR issues would remain under Mayoral control

15. Do you support allowing the Civilian Complaint Review Board's (CCRB) to initiate an investigations without having to wait for an individual complaint?

Yes

Comments

16. Do you support granting the CCRB prompt and full access to footage from body-worn cameras, police officers' employment history and disciplinary records and all other document and materials in the possession of the NYPD relevant to its investigations?

Yes

Comments

No agency should be exempt from Open Data rules and all City data should be considered public except as determined by law or by exemption by the City's Corporation Counsel.

17. Do you support consolidating the three bodies that exercise oversight of the NYPD: the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), the Inspector General for the Police Department, the Mayor's Commission to Combat Police Corruption?

Yes

Comments

See my full policing plan at www.chang.nyc/policing

18. Do you support moving the disciplinary hearings for police officers, like those for all other City employees, to be conducted before the independent administrative law judges of OATH (Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings) rather than within the NYPD?

Yes

Comments

19. Feel free to add any other policy proposals you support in regards to police accountability, misconduct, and oversight, or to effective

policing including functions, training, and community relations.

See my full policing policy on my website, but here are highlights:

- Re-frame use of Compstat to focus integrated, intensive delivery of services to communities experiencing distress
- Utilize alternatives to armed crisis response through unarmed Rapid Response teams that operate 24/7/365
- Demilitarize the police by banning extensive use of military grade weapons and other tools
- Emphasize restorative justice and alternatives to jail
- Reduce trauma of imprisonment
- Make data about policing more transparent and actionable by prohibiting:
 - Facial recognition and other biometric surveillance technology
 - NYPD Criminal Group Database and use of fake social media accounts
 - Purchases of geolocation data
 - Warrants for geolocation and keyword searches
 - Drones and robots
 - Data-sharing with ICE, including through intermediaries
 - Predictive policing technologies like PredPol

MISCELLANEOUS

20. How would you utilize city-affiliated nonprofit organizations such as the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City in raising private revenue to supplement city agencies and programs? How would you ensure that there is sufficient transparency and accountability of funding received through such entities?

The entire "Doing Business With" database needs a fundamental overhaul. It doesn't represent a comprehensive set of inputs and what data it has isn't made public in a timely fashion. The DBW database also needs to include donors to city-affiliated nonprofits and nonprofits affiliated with elected officials.

21. 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 was the first and only Asian appointed to the CFB, serving for nine years, originally appointed by Mayor Bloomberg and subsequently reappointed by Mayor DeBlasio. I was the first Chair of the CFB's VAAC, serving to hold the NYCBOE accountable for the "lost" Brooklyn voter registration crisis of 2016. You know the "I Voted" sticker? In 2012, I co-created NYC Votes, the program behind the sticker. The sticker symbolizes NYC Votes, "a digital public square that links the formal democratic process directly to existing social networks." It stands for user-friendly government and hints at streamlined services to come. NYC Votes enhanced the already renowned reputation of the Campaign Finance Board, invigorated voter engagement and saved thousands upon thousands of hours and dollars for CFB staff and candidates.

In 2012, there was only a paper voter guide and no mobile tool to find your polling place or to learn about the candidates. Today, the NYC Votes program provides the online voter guide and other candidate information at voting.nyc.

While I was at the CFB, we faced another challenge: the reputation of the public matching funds program was in peril. Nearly every candidate who tried to use it suffered from onerous investigations and alleged violations from small-dollar credit card contributions. But in the 21st Century, credit card processing shouldn't be causing that many problems. I knew we had to fix this, so I led the effort to streamline and digitize this process. The NYC Votes program now has a campaign contribution platform that nearly eliminates audit "flags."

It's especially valuable for small campaigns and first-time candidates, saving them thousands of dollars and hours of time, and removes overhead and administrative costs for the government. Imagine if we were able to work this kind of efficiency into every government agency -- how much of our budget would be saved, and able to be re-allocated to direct services to residents?

In 2017, I partnered with Citizens Union and the NYC and NYS Bar Associations to advocate for passage of the voter referendum for a constitutional convention. This led to the identification of the IDC and change in control in the NYS Legislature.

My governance experience is deep. I have been an active Board member of NYC nonprofits and agencies since 1994. In addition to the CFB, I have served as an active Board member of Safe Horizon and the Brooklyn Public Library.

I am one of the only people in the United States to have led the creation of truly transformational government services through technology. In addition to NYC Votes, I also co-led the creation of Casebook in child welfare. Imagine how life would change if the City government functioned like a well-oiled 21st-Century machine, rather than like a rickety rail line? Imagine if you could report something to 311 and get an immediate response. Imagine if your grandma could sign up for healthcare or vaccine appointments on a user-friendly website. Imagine if you had accurate, real-time information about buses, subways, escalators and elevators in stations, and more.

Child Welfare is an unheralded government function that seeks to protect and uplift troubled families, but only gains attention when tragedy strikes. As the partner to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, I co-led the creation of Casebook, a social services platform that transformed child welfare in Indiana by empowering frontline workers with real-time collaboration and data analytics in an intuitive mobile application. Casebook is the child welfare system of record in the State of Indiana. I did this 10 years ago. Imagine if every emergency response agency in our government had access to a platform like this.

“Art is able to create a vision about how to improve our world; he’s able to marshal resources to adapt and build support for that vision; and then to build the enthusiasm to enable partners to adopt the vision. Some people can do one of those things, very few people can do all three, and Art is one of them.

“With Art’s help, we achieved the dream of creating cutting edge technology for public child welfare systems, so they could do better by our country’s neediest and most vulnerable children and families. Without Art’s expertise, and guidance Casebook would have been an unfulfilled vision, and for that, I

thank Art from the bottom of my heart.”
-Kathleen Feely, former VP for Innovation, Annie E.
Casey Foundation

Change is an art form. It requires creating consensus around a vision; fostering a courageous collaboration between front and back office and delivery teams; understanding tech, financial, and legal parameters; and then putting in place the key elements for sustainability, future enhancement and development.

22. In light of everything we have discussed above, why do you want to be mayor?

I am excited by the opportunity to solve the city's problems. I see clear pathways to address our most pressing needs in partnership with labor, nonprofits, our communities and other stakeholders. It won't be easy, but I see a combination of near-term solutions that begin to lay the foundation for a joyful, resilient, sustainable, prosperous and equitable city.

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.

Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below. You can submit the questionnaire at the bottom of the preview page by clicking SUBMIT.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. 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.