



**2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire -
New York City Council**
Citizens Union - Local Candidates Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

Name	Yanna M Henriquez
City Council District #	21
In which primary	Democratic
Education	Graphic Design degree from the Alto de Chavón School of Design
Current job, position, or occupation	Program Director of the Dominico-American Society of Queens
Other positions or offices	Female District leader and State Committee woman

Campaign contact information

Website	https://www.yannafornewyork.com/
Other social media platforms	https://www.instagram.com/yannafornewyork/

INTRODUCTION

1. What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected?

Promise 1: Expand public schools

Promise 2: Address public safety

Promise 3: Build more affordable housing

2. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce? Why is that your top priority? If you are an incumbent, please also state what legislation you have passed which you are most proud of.

When elected, my first piece of legislation is to address the issues between the stWhen elected, my first piece of legislation will focus on resolving the ongoing challenges between storefront businesses and street vendors in our district. Our community is home to many small businesses, food trucks, and street vendors, all of whom contribute to the local economy but often face issues related to limited permits, competition for space, and sanitation concerns.

To address this, I will create a task force in collaboration with city agencies, small business owners, and vendor organizations to develop fair, sustainable solutions. This initiative will focus on expanding permit availability, establishing clearer guidelines for spacing, and increasing sanitation services to ensure that all businesses—both brick-and-mortar and mobile vendors—can thrive while keeping our streets clean and accessible.

3. In your view, what are the major needs of your district’s constituents?

The residents of District 21 face pressing challenges that require bold, community-driven solutions. The top needs of our constituents include:

- 1. Affordable Housing & Tenant Protections – Rising rents, limited affordable housing options, and tenant displacement are major concerns. Residents need stronger tenant protections, rent stabilization, and building deeply affordable housing to prevent displacement and homelessness.
- 2. Good Jobs & Workers’ Rights – Many residents work in low-wage industries with limited job security and benefits. Expanding union protections, workforce development programs, and living-wage jobs is essential to supporting working families.
- 3. Education & Youth Programs – Our schools need equitable funding, smaller class sizes, and more after-school and enrichment programs to ensure every child has access to quality education. Investing in youth employment and mentorship programs is also critical to creating pathways to success.
- 4. Small Business Support – Small businesses and street vendors are key to our local economy, yet they struggle with rising costs, limited permits, and bureaucratic red tape. We need policies that reduce barriers, expand grant programs, and support fair regulations to help them thrive.
- 5. Public Safety & Community Investments – Safety is a major concern, but true public safety comes from investing in mental health services, violence prevention programs, and community-based solutions that address the root causes of crime.

4. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running, and do you have any achievements or involvement in your neighborhood you are particularly proud of?

I have lived in this district for over 30 years and have dedicated the past 20 years as a nonprofit director at the Dominico-American Society, working to uplift and empower our community. Through my organization, I have helped countless immigrant families navigate complex government systems, access legal assistance for residency and citizenship, and build a better future. I have also led efforts to create after-school programs, provide free English classes, and expand vital resources for working families.

For over two decades, I have been deeply committed to serving my community, and now, I am ready to bring that experience, passion, and leadership to City Hall. I will continue fighting for the issues that matter most—affordable housing, better schools, immigrant rights, and economic opportunity—so that every resident has the support they need to thrive.

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

As District Leader and State Committee Woman for AD 39-A, I have spent years empowering residents by educating them on voter registration, checking their voter status, understanding ranked-choice voting, and properly filling out absentee ballots. I am passionate about making sure every voice is heard at the ballot box and that our community is actively engaged in the democratic process.

I strongly encourage residents to vote in every election and participate in community meetings, because real change starts when people speak up, get involved, and hold their leaders accountable. My goal has always been to make civic engagement accessible and meaningful for everyone in our district.

6. What do you think the role of the City Council is in city government this upcoming term?

The City Council plays a crucial role in shaping policy, overseeing city agencies, and ensuring government accountability. Now more than ever, the Council members must prioritize transparency, upholding ethical standards, and policymaking that benefits all New Yorkers. The Council's main responsibilities should focus on addressing the city's affordability crisis, improving our public schools, protecting workers' rights, and ensuring responsible budgeting that safeguards essential city services.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

7. Do you support moving New York City's elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you co-sponsor a Council Resolution supporting that measure?

Yes

Voter turnout in New York City elections is exceptionally low, as they are held “off-cycle” in odd-numbered years. To boost local voter turnout and reduce participation gaps, the Legislature passed and Governor Hochul signed a law that moves county and town elections to even-numbered years, and lawmakers are supporting a constitutional amendment that would do the same for city elections, including New York City's. Citizens Union is [leading a coalition of groups advocating](#) to move New York City's elections to even-numbered years, and the City Council is considering a [Resolution in support](#) of that shift.

8. The New York City Board of Elections (NYC BOE) has been a source of frustration for voters and candidates for years. The City Council appoints NYC BOE members and has the power to appoint commissioners who are committed to reform, but the most recent commissioners have been appointed behind closed doors. Do you commit to request a public hearing for BOE nominees, and to only vote for individuals who are publicly committed to reducing party-based patronage and supporting open hiring practices?

Yes

9. Do you support maintaining the use of Ranked Choice Voting in New York City's elections?

Yes

10. New York City is one of the few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the primary election. Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of completely open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in one primary where the top two candidates, regardless of party, move on to the general election?

No

Comments (optional)

My district voted for AOC and Trump. Our residents struggle to see the difference between parties and an open primary would further confuse voters.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve elections and voting in New York City.**

Ensuring language accessible and transparent elections is essential to increasing voter participation. I support expanding voter education initiatives, increasing language access at polling sites, and improving outreach to historically underrepresented communities such as mine. Additionally, I support reforms to modernize election administration, such as expanding early voting locations, improving poll worker training, and making ranked-choice voting (RCV) more accessible through public education campaigns. I will also work to improve voter education on absentee ballots to ensure that all eligible voters understand the process, deadlines, and their rights when voting by mail.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

11. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by “bundling” donations from other people. Do you support limiting bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?

Yes

12. Are you a supporter of the City’s public campaign matching funds program, and do you commit to protecting the independence of the program and ensuring that the Campaign Finance Board has sufficient resources to run the program?

Yes

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve New York City’s campaign finance system.**

As a candidate, the majority of my donations have been first time in district donors and below \$50. My community is very distrustful of making a donation online and the system needs to reassure donors that their information is safe and secure.

ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

13. The recent pattern of indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall has exposed serious ethical problems in City Government. Please describe how you will maintain the highest

ethical standards in office.

I am committed to upholding the highest ethical standards by advocating for stronger oversight of city agencies, campaign finance reforms, and stricter anti-corruption measures. I will push for greater transparency in budgeting and contracting processes, ensuring that public funds serve the people and pay non profits on time. Additionally, I support strengthening independent investigations into government misconduct and enforcing strict conflict-of-interest policies. As a City Council Member, I will lead by example, maintaining an open-door policy with constituents, regularly disclosing financial interests, and refusing contributions from entities that seek to unduly influence city policy.

14. Incoming public servants must sever ties and divest from companies or other interests that have business dealings with the City, but they are not required to recuse themselves when working on matters involving their former business partners, clients, employer, etc. Do you support forbidding public servants to work on matters relating to their former business partners, clients, employers, and other interests for a set period of time?

Yes

15. Some campaign consultants also work as lobbyists. Do you support restricting campaign consultants from lobbying the candidates they served for two years after the candidate won elected office?

Yes

16. Do you support moving lobbying oversight and enforcement from the City Clerk's Office to another agency charged with ethics issues, like the Conflicts of Interest Board?

Yes

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve ethics standards in New York City government.**

I will advocate for increased transparency, stronger oversight of city contracts, and enhanced enforcement of conflict-of-interest laws. I support expanding the powers of independent watchdog agencies, such as the Department of Investigation and the Conflicts of Interest Board, to ensure they have the resources to hold public officials accountable. Additionally, I also believe in fostering a culture of accountability by instituting regular ethics training for all government staff and ensuring that community voices play a central role in policy discussions through participatory budgeting and open public hearings.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

17. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? (i.e., Place the final decision with the Police Commissioner; the Civilian Complaint Review Board; the Mayor; the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety; or another individual or entity).

The final decision on discipline in the NYPD should rest with an independent body, such as an empowered Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), rather than the Police Commissioner alone. An independent oversight entity with final disciplinary authority would help ensure accountability, transparency, and fairness in the disciplinary process. I support strengthening the CCRB’s role, expanding its investigative powers, and ensuring that disciplinary decisions are enforced rather than overridden by NYPD leadership.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve police accountability in New York.**

I will push for greater community oversight through elected or community-appointed police oversight boards and work to fully implement and enforce measures such as the Right to Know Act. I also support reallocating resources toward violence prevention programs, mental health crisis response teams, and community-based safety initiatives that reduce reliance on policing while keeping our neighborhoods safe.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

18. The Mayor currently has the power to block charter revision ballot questions (proposed by the City Council, other charter commissions, and citizen petitions) by establishing their own Charter Revision Commission. Do you support removing this Mayoral power?

Yes

19. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and be put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?

Yes

20. Please provide your views about the New York City Council's "advice and consent" powers. In what cases, if any, should a mayor need the Council’s approval for an appointment of a high ranking Mayoral official, such as an agency commissioner?

I support expanding the Council’s oversight to require approval for high-ranking mayoral appointments, including agency commissioners, the NYPD Commissioner, and the Corporation Counsel. These appointed officials wield significant influence over city policies and services, and their appointments should undergo a transparent and accountable confirmation process. By strengthening the Council’s role in appointments, we can promote more qualified, ethical, and community-centered leadership in city government.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve the system of checks and balances in New York.**

To strengthen the system of checks and balances, I will advocate for expanding the Council’s oversight powers, particularly in budgetary decisions, mayoral appointments, and agency accountability. The Council must have a stronger role in approving key agency heads, such as the NYPD Commissioner, to ensure leadership reflects public priorities. Additionally, I will push for increased transparency requirements, such as mandatory public reporting on executive orders and agency performance, and strengthen the Council’s ability to override mayoral vetoes when necessary.

ADDITIONAL INFO