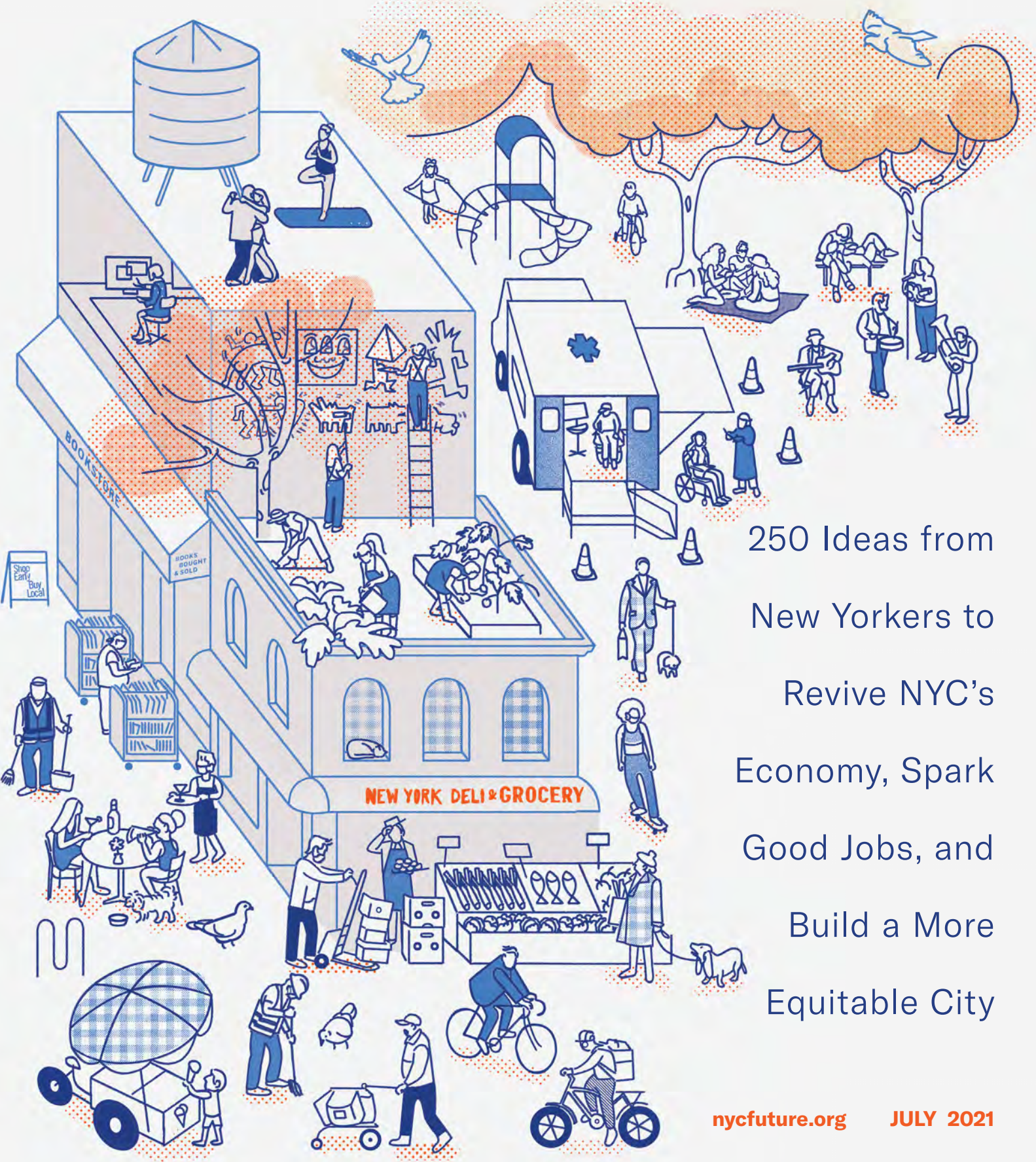


# RE:NEW YORK CITY

Center for an  
**Urban**  
Future



250 Ideas from  
New Yorkers to  
Revive NYC's  
Economy, Spark  
Good Jobs, and  
Build a More  
Equitable City

**RE:NEW YORK CITY** is a publication of the Center for an Urban Future. Researched and written by Sarah Amandolare, Sara Bellan, Jonathan Bowles, Grace Bristol, David Dominguez, Eli Dvorkin, Ben Kubany, and Anacaona Rodriguez Martinez. Edited by Laird Gallagher. Designed by Rob Chabebe.



**Center for an Urban Future** (CUF) is a leading New York City-based think tank that generates smart and sustainable public policies to reduce inequality, increase economic mobility, and grow the economy.



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# ABOUT THIS PROJECT

## This report is a blueprint to renew New York.

New York's next mayor—and the many other new leaders across city government entering office in January 2022—will need to take bold action to ensure that the promising recovery underway across the city will take hold and accelerate. They should be prepared to implement policies that will not only help the city's economy bounce back and address the many structural economic challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, but also enable New York to build a stronger and more equitable economy over the long run.

This report points the way. It includes actionable ideas from over 175 New Yorkers—including small business owners, company CEOs, labor leaders, community advocates, nonprofit practitioners, artists, college presidents, and former government officials. Organized into 10 core principles, the nearly 250 ideas that follow include concrete policy suggestions for bringing back the roughly 500,000 jobs lost over the past year, strengthening small businesses, and boosting the hard-hit arts sector. But they also include ideas for helping New Yorkers of color boost incomes and build wealth, making skills-building a key part of an equitable recovery, bolstering the hardest-hit workers and communities, and reimagining streets and public spaces.

As this report makes clear, New Yorkers are full of bold ideas. Now is the time to turn these ideas into action.

# RE:NEW YORK CITY

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250 Ideas from New Yorkers to Revive NYC's Economy, Spark Good Jobs, and Build a More Equitable City

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Spark NYC's Economic Comeback</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>II. Strengthen NYC's Small Businesses</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>III. Help New Yorkers of Color Boost Incomes and Build Wealth</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>IV. Embrace Public Health to Make New Yorkers Healthier and Grow the Economy</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>V. Make Skills Building the Centerpiece of an Equitable Recovery</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>VI. Reimagine Streets and Public Spaces and Re-Invest in Vital Urban Infrastructure</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>VII. Boost the Hard-Hit Arts Sector to Bring Back the City's Magnetism and Vitality</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>VIII. Build a Stronger and More Inclusive Economy for the Long Run</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>IX. Prioritize Hard-Hit Workers and Communities</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>X. Shore Up the Building Blocks of NYC's Economic Success</b>	<b>120</b>

# INTRODUCTION

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New York City's rebound from the depths of the COVID-19 crisis is already underway, with life returning to once-silent streets and a resilient energy pulsing from Wakefield to Far Rockaway. But to ensure a strong, equitable, and lasting economic recovery, city leaders will have much more work to do.

New York's 10 percent unemployment rate remains among the highest of any major city in the United States, with nearly 400,000 residents out of work. Tens of thousands of small businesses have closed, and thousands more are hanging on by a thread. No other city is coping with as many structural economic challenges brought on by the pandemic, from the rise of remote work and the slow recovery of tourism to the ongoing disruption in retail and the severe blow dealt to the arts. At the same time, the city is reckoning with enormous disparities in the physical, social, and economic impact of the pandemic on communities of color—as well as structural inequities that long predate the arrival of the virus.

Faced with a long road to a full and equitable economic recovery, New York City needs bold and actionable ideas that can be implemented now and into 2022 to bring back nearly half a million jobs, strengthen small businesses, revitalized hard-hit corridors and communities, restore the city's vitality and magnetism, and reassert New York's cherished role as a beacon of economic opportunity to the world.

No one individual or organization has all the answers. But together, New Yorkers have the ingenuity and experience needed to rebuild a stronger and more inclusive economy for the long run. That's why the Center for an Urban Future turned to more than 175 exceptional New Yorkers from every corner of the city's economic and cultural life for their ideas on sparking a lasting economic recovery to the benefit of all.

This report gathers together concrete ideas from a diverse mix of New Yorkers who reflect the city's many strengths, including community advocates and small business owners; CEOs in media, healthcare, technology, and nonprofits; artists and cultural leaders; heads of social services organizations; experts in finance, law, and public health; labor leaders; award-winning designers and architects; leaders in education and workforce development; creative economy innovators; and former government officials that have steered the city through previous crises—from the 1970s to post-9/11 and the aftermath of the Great Recession.

The nearly 250 ideas contained in this report provide an ambitious yet achievable blueprint for cultivating a robust and inclusive economic recovery. These ideas run the gamut from tapping the city's high school and college students to help small businesses innovate, to reimagining public streets and parks for art and commerce, to launching hubs for freelance workers and cooperative businesses in every borough, to investing in the public health infrastructure needed to prepare for the next crisis. Taken together,

these ideas offer a sweeping vision for an economic recovery that is urgent, practical, and hopeful.

More than any other crisis in recent memory, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought on and exacerbated challenges that will require both immediate action and long-term transformation to address. This report provides city leaders with specific ideas organized into 10 core principles: spark NYC's economic comeback; strengthen NYC's small businesses; help New Yorkers of color boost incomes and build wealth; embrace public health to make New Yorkers healthier and grow the economy; make skills building the centerpiece of an equitable recovery; reimagine streets and public spaces and re-invest in vital urban infrastructure; boost the hard-hit arts sector to bring back the city's magnetism and vitality; build a stronger and more inclusive economy for the long run; prioritize hard-hit workers and communities; and shore up the building blocks of NYC's economic success.

The nearly 250 ideas in this report offer bold and practical suggestions to do all this and more. One clear theme is an unwavering belief in the power of New Yorkers to tackle big challenges together, including ideas to unlock the potential of emerging technologies and new growth industries; invest in low-income entrepreneurs across every community; transform the urban landscape with "people streets"; put teaching artists back to work supporting community-led revitalization; and make New York the best-prepared city in the world to manage the next public health crisis.

The following 30 ideas provide a small sample of the creativity, vision, and optimism that runs through this blueprint for the city's long-term economic recovery:

**Pair tech-savvy CUNY students with small businesses that need help adopting technology**

[S. David Wu, President, Baruch College](#)

**Spur the return to offices by supporting public programming that reinvigorates business districts**

[Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense](#)

**Help prepare NYC for the next pandemic by making New Yorkers healthier, through investments in public health, preventative care and health literacy**

[Wafaa El-Sadr, University Professor and Dr. Mathilde Krim-amfAR Chair of Global Health, Columbia University](#)

**Transform every tenth street across NYC into "people streets"**

[Bjarke Ingels, Founder, Bjarke Ingels Group](#)

**Launch a major advertising campaign to make people feel like they're missing out if they don't come back**

[Andrew Robertson, President and CEO, BBDO](#)

**Plan now to deal with the next infectious disease, borrowing from what worked in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam**

[Jeffrey Shaman, Epidemiologist and Director, Climate and Health Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University](#)

**Enact a tax on financial transactions or unoccupied condos to fund job-creating climate resiliency projects**

[Richard Kahan, Founder, Urban Assembly](#)

**Create NYC Coin: a local currency for the five boroughs**

[Fred Wilson, Founder, Union Square Ventures](#)

**Replicate the Brooklyn Navy Yard model elsewhere in NYC to make real estate more affordable for small businesses**

[Tim Tompkins, former President, Times Square Alliance](#)

**Help NYC become a global leader in the sex tech industry**

[Cindy Gallop, Founder, MakeLoveNotPorn](#)

**Create a Teaching Artist Jobs Corps**

Kemi Ilesanmi, Executive Director,  
The Laundromat Project

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**Break the logjam around housing development in NYC with a grand bargain around housing and jobs**

Rafael Cestero, President, Community Preservation Corp.; former Commissioner, NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development

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**Create thousands of jobs by putting an additional teacher in every classroom**

Richard Buery Jr., CEO, Robin Hood;  
former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

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**Expand affordable housing options by allowing trailer parks in NYC**

Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance,  
College of Staten Island

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**Spur economic development in underserved communities by making long overdue public realm improvements**

Purnima Kapur, Chief of University Planning and Design, Harvard University

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**Launch major workforce training initiative focused on women and the care economy**

Reshma Saujani, Founder, Girls Who Code

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**Support the CUNY Internship-to-Employment Model**

Felix Matos-Rodriguez, Chancellor, City University of New York

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**Turn vacant storefronts into cooperative spaces for small businesses**

Jessica Johnson, President, Johnson Security Bureau

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**Emulate the AgLanta initiative to scale up urban agriculture in NYC's hard-hit communities of color**

Mark Gardner, Principal, Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects

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**Build infrastructure to support entrepreneurship in New York City's lower-income communities**

Jo-Ann Rolle, Dean, School of Business,  
Medgar Evers College

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**Let small businesses temporarily set up shop in city parks**

Anthony Ramirez II, Founder, The Bronx Beer Hall

---

**Attract film and TV production from Georgia and other states with new incentives**

Jeff Zucker, President, CNN

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**Create good jobs by making it far easier for hospitals to expand and modernize**

Steven Corwin, President, New York Presbyterian

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**Upgrade NYCHA infrastructure and train NYCHA residents to do the work**

Kenneth Lipper, former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development

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**Make NYC a global capital of public health**

Seth Pinsky, CEO, 92nd Street Y; former President, NYC Economic Development Corporation

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**Prepare New Yorkers from underserved communities to replace municipal workers that will retire in the coming years**

Arthur Cheliotis, Chairman Emeritus, CWA Local 1180

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**Embrace branch libraries as a key driver of an equitable recovery**

Katy Knight, President and Executive Director, Siegel Family Endowment

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**Develop a master plan that charts a path for creating a stronger and more inclusive NYC economy through 2050**

Winston Fisher, Partner, Fisher Brothers; Co-Chair, NYC Regional Economic Development Council

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**Create a Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations to help make NYC's case in Albany and Washington**

Carol O'Cleireacain, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia SIPA; former Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and Commissioner, NYC Department of Finance

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**Provide Baby Bonds to every NYC child born in poverty**

Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College; former Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

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**About this Project**

The nearly 250 ideas contained in this report were shared in interviews, email correspondence, and roundtable meetings from March to May 2021. CUF reached out to over 350 New Yorkers across all five boroughs and received ideas from over 170 people. CUF asked each person for their ideas on 1) how to spark an immediate economic recovery; 2) how to address structural challenges that have arisen or been exacerbated due to the pandemic; and 3) how to rebuild a more equitable economy for the long term.

The ideas contained in this publication come from each individual contributor to whom they are attributed and not from the organizations with which they are affiliated. The inclusion of any and all ideas in this publication does not indicate endorsement by CUF nor by any individual contributor. Ideas have been revised, edited, and condensed by CUF. Contributors were not asked to endorse the full slate of ideas collected in this report nor are they responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the final publication.

# IDEAS INDEX

## I. SPARK NYC'S ECONOMIC COMEBACK

PAGE 14

With 500,000 fewer jobs than before the pandemic and many businesses hanging on by a thread, NYC needs immediate solutions to get New Yorkers working again and revive the hardest-hit industries and businesses

- 1. Launch a major advertising campaign to make people feel like they're missing out if they don't come back**  
Andrew Robertson, President and CEO, BBDO
- 2. Spur the return to offices by supporting public programming that reinvigorates business districts**  
Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense
- 3. Save retail with city-backed master leases**  
Alicia Glen, Founder and Managing Principal, MSquared; former Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development
- 4. Create thousands of jobs by putting an additional teacher in every classroom**  
Richard Buery Jr., CEO, Robin Hood; former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives
- 5. Leverage libraries to create a neighborhood-centric approach to economic recovery**  
Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO, Queens Public Library
- 6. Push back against cities trying to poach NYC's tech companies**  
Oliver Libby, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Hatzimemos
- 7. Attract film and TV production from Georgia and other states with new incentives**  
Jeff Zucker, President, CNN
- 8. Enact a tax on financial transactions or unoccupied condos to fund job-creating climate resiliency projects**  
Richard Kahan, Founder, Urban Assembly
- 9. Activate unused office spaces with artists-in-residence**  
Sally Tallant, President and Executive Director, Queens Museum
- 10. Spur public works jobs with a campaign to ensure passage of the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, on the ballot next November**  
Amy Chester, Managing Director, Rebuild by Design
- 11. Address the COVID-linked youth unemployment crisis by subsidizing youth employment**  
Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, JobsFirstNYC
- 12. Fully embrace and promote the use of Excelsior Pass**  
Jerry Hultin, Chairman and Co-Founder, Global Futures Group
- 13. Counter the narrative that NYC is dead with a powerful Relaunch New York campaign**  
Deirdre Latour, President, Edelman New York
- 14. Launch a major tourism marketing campaign when Broadway returns**  
Barbara Byrne Denham, Senior Economist, Oxford Economics
- 15. Incentivize property owners to activate vacant storefronts**  
Susan Fine, Principal, Turnstyle Market
- 16. Use NYC's purchasing power—and people power—to support local job creation**  
Christine Quinn, President and CEO, Win; former Speaker of the New York City Council
- 17. Give NYC & Company the funding needed to invest in an aggressive tourism campaign**  
Ellen V. Futter, President, American Museum of Natural History
- 18. Help employers bring back workers by giving them a payroll supplement**  
Tod Greenfield, Vice President, Martin Greenfield Clothiers
- 19. Revitalize Chinatown and its hard-hit commercial district by allowing more new technology to display its own unique, vibrant ethnic culture and identity**  
Wellington Chen, Executive Director, Chinatown Partnership
- 20. Enact a one-year waiver on city permitting processes that inhibit business creation and growth, building on what worked with Open Restaurants**  
Tim Tompkins, former President, Times Square Alliance
- 21. Convert empty hotels and offices into affordable housing**  
Rachel Fee, Executive Director, NYC Housing Conference
- 22. Turn vacant storefronts into cooperative spaces for small businesses**  
Jessica Johnson, President, Johnson Security Bureau
- 23. Create an NYC Climate Corps**  
Tonya Gayle, Executive Director, Green City Force
- 24. Encourage satellite offices throughout all five boroughs**  
Rosemary Scanlon, Economist, former Divisional Dean, NYU Schack Institute

- 25. Support transportation alternatives for New Yorkers wary of returning to trains and buses**  
Cesar Claro, President, Staten Island Economic Development Corporation
- 26. Transform vacant commercial spaces into small business incubators**  
David Bolotsky, Founder and CEO, Uncommon Goods
- 27. Create local business vouchers to stimulate local economic activity**  
Emil Skandul, Principal and Owner, Capitol Foundry
- 28. Spend capital dollars to help create good construction jobs and rebuild communities**  
Gary LaBarbera, President, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York
- 29. Upgrade NYCHA infrastructure and train NYCHA residents to do the work**  
Kenneth Lipper, former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development
- 30. Launch a media campaign to encourage public gatherings**  
Michael Dorf, Founder and CEO, City Winery
- 31. Develop a hybrid model where tenants and landlords can apply jointly for financial assistance**  
Valerie White, Executive Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- 32. Invest in marketing to bring back tourists and reinvigorate NYC's cultural life**  
Jack Lusk, President and CEO, Harris Rand Lusk
- 33. Create jobs for youth by investing in community-centered environmental and arts projects**  
Karen Fairbanks, Founding Partner, Marble Fairbanks
- 34. Make the subway free for a temporary period to get New Yorkers back on trains and into their offices**  
Gordon Davis, Partner, Venable; former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department
- 35. Address persistent retail vacancies by penalizing property owners that keep spaces empty**  
Cliff Chenfeld, Co-Founder, Razor and Tie
- 36. Forge public-private partnerships with New York-centered production entities**  
Rebecca Damon, Executive Vice President, SAG-AFTRA

## II. STRENGTHEN NYC'S SMALL BUSINESSES

PAGE 29

New policies are needed that not only help small businesses survive the long recovery ahead but also strengthen the many businesses that were fragile even before the pandemic—and create a far more supportive business environment in the future.

- 37. Pair tech-savvy CUNY students with small businesses that need help adopting technology**  
S. David Wu, President, Baruch College
- 38. Replicate the Brooklyn Navy Yard model elsewhere in NYC to make real estate more affordable for small businesses**  
Tim Tompkins, former President, Times Square Alliance
- 39. Tap teen photography students to help small businesses ramp up social media marketing**  
Seth Bornstein, Executive Director, Queens Economic Development Corporation
- 40. Let small businesses temporarily set up shop in city parks**  
Anthony Ramirez II, Founder, The Bronx Beer Hall
- 41. Help NYC restaurants compete for massive DOE and senior center food procurement dollars**  
Matthew Jozwiak, Founder and CEO, Rethink Food
- 42. Reduce the burden on small businesses by greatly expanding the number of violations that are curable**  
Gregg Bishop, former Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services
- 43. Empower underemployed New Yorkers to help small businesses get online**  
Torrence Boone, Vice President of Global Client Partnerships and Site Leader for New York, Google
- 44. Create a Super CDFI to solve the financing gap for thousands of small businesses**  
Michael Schlein, President and CEO, Accion
- 45. Boost NYC's restaurants and restaurant workers by supporting lease incentives and tip pooling**  
Danny Meyer, Founder and CEO, Union Square Hospitality Group
- 46. Leverage community assets to bolster neighborhood businesses and build local prosperity**  
Lloyd Cambridge, Founder and CEO, Progress Playbook
- 47. Step up investment in credit enhancement to get affordable capital to small businesses—and pair those investments with outcomes-based funding for technical assistance**  
Steven Cohen, President, and Rachel Van Tosh, Chief Operating Officer, Pursuit Community Finance



- 48. **Make it easier for NYC's many cash-based small businesses to access government grants and loans**  
John Wang, Founder and President, Asian American Business Development Center
- 49. **Create relief grants program for street vendors**  
Mohammed Attia, Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center
- 50. **Subsidize housing for students studying design and technology in exchange for a work/study requirement to help local businesses**  
Justin Hendrix, CEO and Editor, Tech Policy Press
- 51. **Enlist tech-savvy teens and young adults to help small businesses adopt technology**  
Seth Bornstein, Executive Director, Queens Economic Development Corporation
- 52. **Reduce liability insurance premiums for restaurants and venues during lockdown periods**  
Michael Dorf, Founder and CEO, City Winery
- 53. **Use technology to improve the permitting and regulatory process for small businesses**  
Gregg Bishop, former Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services
- 54. **Encourage corporate employees to interact with their local communities and support small businesses**  
John Wang, Founder and President, Asian American Business Development Center
- 55. **Enlist local university students to help small businesses innovate, grow, and scale**  
Micah Kotch, Managing Director, URBAN-X
- 56. **Provide direct financial support to cooperative businesses**  
Saduf Syal, Coordinating Director, NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives
- 57. **Reduce the burden on small businesses by requiring impact statements for relevant legislative proposals**  
Jessica Walker, President and CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
- 58. **Emulate the AgLanta initiative to scale up urban agriculture in NYC's hard-hit communities of color**  
Mark Gardner, Principal, Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects
- 59. **Create economic opportunity zones to spur inclusive innovation in key growth industries**  
Alexa von Tobel, Founder and Managing Partner, Inspired Capital
- 60. **Work with community-based organizations and business assistance nonprofits to direct federally-funded relief grants to New York's hardest-hit businesses and communities**  
Linda Baran, President, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
- 61. **Preserve industrial jobs by helping small manufacturers tap into the 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy**  
Barbara Blair, President, Garment District Alliance
- 62. **Lift the caps on opportunities for street vending for licenses and permits**  
Mohammed Attia, Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center
- 63. **Incentivize corporate executives to mentor small businesses**  
Jessica Johnson, President, Johnson Security Bureau
- 64. **Collaborate with local tech businesses to expand internet access and jobs**  
Clayton Banks, CEO, Silicon Harlem
- 65. **Help businesses compete in the metaverse**  
Jason Musante, Global Chief Creative Officer, Huga

### III. HELP NEW YORKERS OF COLOR BOOST INCOMES AND BUILD WEALTH

PAGE 43

A strong and equitable economic recovery will require a new level of investment in communities of color, focused on connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, building community wealth, and supporting immigrant and minority entrepreneurs.

- 66. **Provide Baby Bonds to every NYC child born in poverty**  
Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College; former Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
- 67. **Establish a "Curb Recidivism Fellowship" to provide new supports for youth who've been involved in the criminal justice system**  
Clayton Banks, CEO, Silicon Harlem
- 68. **Increase wages for the nonprofit human services workforce**  
Nathaniel Fields, CEO, Urban Resource Institute
- 69. **Increase wages and income supports to build economic stability for low-income communities of color**  
Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director, FPWA
- 70. **Help far more women and minority-owned construction firms succeed through capital funding and set-aside projects**  
Cheryl McKissack Daniel, President and CEO, McKissack
- 71. **Build infrastructure to support entrepreneurship in New York City's lower-income communities**  
Jo-Ann Rolle, Dean, School of Business, Medgar Evers College

- 72. Develop geographically targeted financial recovery supports for small businesses in the hardest-hit communities**  
Lourdes Zapata, President and CEO, SoBro
- 73. Expand Freelancers Hubs across all five boroughs**  
Rafael Espinal, Executive Director, Freelancers Union
- 74. Launch a community-owned cooperative hub in every borough**  
Saduf Syal, Coordinating Director, NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives
- 75. Help New Yorkers of color start and grow businesses in the marijuana industry**  
Marlene Cintron, President, Bronx Overall Development Corporation
- 76. Target investments to support businesses in hard-hit communities**  
Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, JobsFirstNYC
- 77. Create more inroads for BIPOC-led construction firms**  
Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate, The Shubert Organization
- 78. Enhance supports for local businesses hit hardest by the pandemic**  
Nathalie Molina Niño, Investor and Author
- 79. Develop a neighborhood-based strategy for promoting and accessing local services**  
Margaret Honey, President and CEO, NY Hall of Science
- 80. Develop a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to revitalize communities of color**  
Sister Paulette LoMonaco, formerly with Good Shepherd Services
- 81. Increase investment in facilities and resources within high-need communities**  
Anthony Munroe, President, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- 82. Expand benefits and extend local voting rights to the immigrant communities that will power New York's economic recovery**  
Van Tran, Associate Professor of Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center
- 83. Support the East Harlem 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan**  
Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
- 84. Publicize the facts about companies' hiring of New Yorkers of color**  
Gail Mellow, Executive Director, New York Jobs CEO Council; former President, LaGuardia Community College

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## IV. EMBRACE PUBLIC HEALTH TO MAKE NEW YORKERS HEALTHIER AND GROW THE ECONOMY PAGE 52

New investments to improve New Yorkers' physical and mental health will benefit those hardest hit by the pandemic, make New York better prepared for the next health crisis, and lay a foundation for job growth.

- 85. Make NYC a global capital of public health**  
Seth Pinsky, CEO, 92nd Street Y; former President, NYC Economic Development Corporation
- 86. Plan now to deal with the next infectious disease, borrowing from what worked in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam**  
Jeffrey Shaman, Epidemiologist and Director, Climate and Health Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
- 87. Help prepare NYC for the next pandemic by making New Yorkers healthier through investments in public health, preventative care and health literacy**  
Wafaa El-Sadr, University Professor, Dr. Mathilde Krim-amfAR Chair of Global Health, Columbia University
- 88. Create new jobs and career pipelines in mental health to respond to the growing demand for mental health services following the pandemic**  
Pamela Brier, former President and CEO, Maimonides Medical Center
- 89. Learn from the pandemic to make deeper progress reducing incidence of respiratory illness**  
Jeffrey Shaman, Epidemiologist and Director, Climate and Health Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
- 90. Invest federal funding in integrated, community-based health**  
Jeanette Moy, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Public Health Solutions
- 91. Make New York the global city best prepared for the next pandemic**  
Gifford Miller, Principal, Signature Urban Properties; former New York City Council Speaker
- 92. Transform the city's test-and-trace corps into a new public health workforce**  
Christine Kovich, Co-Founder, Harlem Biospace
- 93. Create the government infrastructure to prepare for the next pandemic by expanding the Mayor's Office of Resiliency mandate to include public health threats**  
Sam Chandan, Silverstein Chair and Academic Dean, NYU Schack Institute
- 94. Continue to provide free and widespread rapid testing so that unvaccinated New Yorkers can participate safely in the local economy**  
Melva Miller, CEO, Association for a Better New York

To help reconnect the unemployed to a changing economy and ensure more New Yorkers of color can access the good jobs of tomorrow, New York should make new investments to strengthen CUNY, tech training, ESOL programs, and other workforce development initiatives.

95. **Launch major workforce training initiative focused on women and the care economy**  
Reshma Saujani, Founder, Girls Who Code
96. **Revitalize the city through a green workforce pipeline for NYC youth**  
Sue Donoghue, President and Park Administrator, Prospect Park Alliance
97. **Expand ESOL programs and other workforce training that help immigrants succeed in a changing economy**  
Steven Choi, Senior Advisor, New York Immigration Coalition
98. **Prepare New Yorkers from underserved communities to replace municipal workers that will retire in the coming years**  
Arthur Cheliotas, Chairman Emeritus, CWA Local 1180
99. **Support the CUNY Internship-to-Employment Model**  
Felix Matos-Rodriguez, Chancellor, City University of New York
100. **Close the digital divide and create onramps to tech careers through Community Help Desks**  
Bertina Ceccarelli, CEO, NPower
101. **Create more inclusive career pathways by rethinking job requirements and scaling up apprenticeships**  
Jack Azagury, Market Unit Lead for US Northeast, Accenture
102. **Invest in training and upskilling for direct care workers**  
Deborah Estrin, Professor of Computer Science and Associate Dean for Impact, Cornell Tech
103. **Invest in specialized workforce training programs for entry-level roles in the life sciences that do not require a college degree**  
Joe Landolina, CEO and Co-Founder, Cresilon
104. **Implement free community college and provide stipends to workers pursuing education**  
Rosemary Scanlon, Economist, former Divisional Dean, NYU Schack Institute
105. **Invest in the facilities and faculty of NYC's greatest engine of social mobility: CUNY**  
Michelle Anderson, President, Brooklyn College
106. **Invest in the community college to senior college pipeline**  
S. David Wu, President, Baruch College
107. **Help CUNY expand certificate programs, enabling more students to boost workplace skills and advance in their careers**  
Frank H. Wu, President, Queens College
108. **Break down silos that have kept immigrants from benefiting from most workforce training programs**  
Wayne Ho, President and CEO, Chinese-American Planning Council
109. **Expand opportunities for minority workers in construction by requiring apprentices on every government-funded contract**  
Bishop Calvin Rice, New Jerusalem Baptist Church
110. **Train New Yorkers to maintain electric vehicle infrastructure**  
Celeste Frye, CEO, Public Works Partners
111. **Invest in bridge programs that help New Yorkers with only a high school diploma access quality tech training**  
Plinio Ayala, President and CEO, Per Scholas
112. **Improve job prospects for the many New Yorkers with low literacy levels by boosting funding for adult education**  
Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks
113. **Use carrots and sticks to get more large companies to fund job training programs**  
Wayne Ho, President and CEO, Chinese-American Planning Council
114. **Remove barriers for dislocated or incumbent workers and expand financial aid for short-term programs**  
Anthony Munroe, President, Borough of Manhattan Community College
115. **Create a talent-matching program for biotech**  
Orin Herskowitz, Executive Director, Columbia Technology Ventures
116. **Invest in community-based organizations that provide workforce development programs for immigrant populations**  
Aakriti Khanal, Development and Research Manager, Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice
117. **Create Joint Technical Campuses in every borough to expand technical career pathways for high school students**  
Richard Kahan, Founder, Urban Assembly
118. **Create an upskilling fund to expand access to tech careers**  
David Yang, Founder, Fullstack Academy
119. **Revamp NYC's vocational education programs for today's economy**  
Kenneth Lipper, former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development

- 120. Build a youth-focused life sciences talent pipeline**  
Christine Kovich, Co-Founder, Harlem Biospace
- 121. Help New Yorkers acquire digital skills and establish a badge for those who meet baseline tech fluency**  
Celeste Frye, CEO, Public Works Partners
- 122. Invest in quality childcare for New Yorkers in workforce training programs**  
Plinio Ayala, President and CEO, Per Scholas
- 123. Boost funding for summer youth employment and NYCHA youth programs**  
Liz Neumark, Founder and Chair, Great Performances
- 124. Adopt a year-round public school schedule**  
Norma Kamali, Fashion Designer
- 125. Create and support workforce programs for women**  
Christine Quinn, President and CEO, Win; former Speaker of the New York City Council
- 126. Integrate clean energy workforce training and installation projects to get people to work and green the city**  
Chris Collins, Executive Director, Solar One
- 127. Foster alignment between philanthropy and non-profit organizations**  
Jerelyn Rodriguez, Co-Founder and CEO, The Knowledge House
- 128. Link workforce development, small business recovery, and job creation**  
Jukay Hsu, Co-Founder and CEO, Pursuit
- 129. Strengthen New York City's competitive advantage in a global economy—and spur economic recovery—by focusing on talent development**  
Abby Jo Sigal, Founding CEO, HERE to HERE
- 130. Revamp NYC's youth workforce development system to support more programs that prepare young adults for good jobs**  
Edward Summers, Founder, The Thinkubator
- 131. Target workforce development programs for domestic violence survivors and homeless individuals**  
Nathaniel Fields, CEO, Urban Resource Institute

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## VI. REIMAGINE STREETS AND PUBLIC SPACES AND RE-INVEST IN VITAL URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE PAGE 75

Expanding and improving open spaces and upgrading public infrastructure will help create accessible jobs while making the city more sustainable, resilient, and attractive to residents, workers, tourists, and entrepreneurs.

- 132. Transform every tenth street across NYC into “people streets”**  
Bjarke Ingels, Founder, Bjarke Ingels Group
- 133. Spur economic development in underserved communities by making long-overdue public realm improvements**  
Purnima Kapur, Chief of University Planning and Design, Harvard University
- 134. Transform regional commutes and city streets by banning private cars in Manhattan**  
Vishaan Chakrabarti, Founder, PAU
- 135. Launch a master plan to redesign NYC's streets**  
Steve Hindy, founder, Brooklyn Brewery
- 136. Launch a WPA-style program to create jobs and upgrade aging infrastructure in city parks**  
Adrian Benepe, President, Brooklyn Botanic Garden; former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department
- 137. Improve bus infrastructure to support off-peak travel for essential workers**  
Betsy Plum, Executive Director, Riders Alliance
- 138. Spur private sector investment in open space and transit by replicating what worked in the East Midtown rezoning**  
Dan Garodnik, President and CEO, Riverside Park Conservancy; former Member of the New York City Council
- 139. Phase in paid commercial street parking to generate revenue for the city and take back space for outdoor dining and micromobility networks**  
Margaret Newman, Practice Leader for Urban Places and Smart Mobility, Stantec
- 140. Activate public spaces and spur arts performances in communities in every corner of NYC by developing tool kits for community groups**  
Eldon Scott, President, UrbanSpace NYC
- 141. Create a Department of Care to strengthen local capacity to reimagine, maintain, and care for public spaces.**  
Justin Garrett Moore, Program Officer, Humanities in Place, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- 142. Establish a commission to make NYC green—literally**  
Susan T. Rodriguez, Architect
- 143. Turn Eastern Parkway into a global cultural destination**  
Anne Pasternak, Director, Brooklyn Museum
- 144. Improve parks in underserved communities by investing in operations and maintenance**  
Robert Hammond, Co-Founder, The High Line
- 145. Improve the commutes of essential workers by subsidizing micromobility e-vehicle purchases**  
Paul Lipson, Principal, Barretto Bay Strategies

**146. Launch a Saving Time initiative to reduce commute times for essential workers**

Jerry Hultin, Chairman and Co-Founder, Global Futures Group

**147. Extend the Hudson Bergen Light Rail to Staten Island**

Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance, College of Staten Island

**148. Embrace the “Bigger Apple” through regional transportation and zoning reform**

Jim Venturi, Founder and Principal, ReThink Studio

**149. Support the use of city waterways for last-mile package delivery to decongest streets**

Paul Lipson, Principal, Barretto Bay Strategies

**150. Expand affordable housing options by allowing trailer parks in NYC**

Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance, College of Staten Island

**151. Implement a feminist housing plan to support women and single parents**

Jessica Katz, Executive Director, Citizens Housing and Planning Council

**152. Create jobs and stabilize housing owners to make building renovations**

Douglas Eisenberg, Founding Principal, A&E Real Estate Holdings

**153. Repurpose unused commercial space as Big Tech-backed cooperative housing**

Anil Dash, CEO, Glitch

**154. Upzone industrial zones and transit-rich neighborhoods to build more housing**

Alon Levy, Fellow, NYU Marron Institute

**155. Prioritize affordable home ownership, not just rental housing**

Sheena Wright, President and CEO, United Way of NYC

**156. Reinstate city subsidies for community centers in affordable housing developments, redirecting funds from law enforcement**

Karim Hutson, Founder and Managing Member, Genesis Companies

**157. Double city funding for affordable housing development and preservation**

Rachel Fee, Executive Director, NYC Housing Conference

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## VII. BOOST THE HARD-HIT ARTS SECTOR TO BRING BACK THE CITY'S MAGNETISM AND VITALITY PAGE 86

Policies that reinvigorate the city's now-fragile cultural sector—from working artists and museums to music venues and Broadway theaters—will be key to a tourism revival and a lasting economic recovery.

**158. Create a Teaching Artist Jobs Corps**

Kemi Ilesanmi, Executive Director, The Laundromat Project

**159. Help struggling performing arts groups by providing free rehearsal spaces in schools**

Randi Berry, Executive Director, IndieSpace

**160. Provide a Basic Income for artists to work at cultural organizations**

Sally Tallant, President and Executive Director, Queens Museum

**161. Change city laws that effectively prevent NYC from building artist housing**

Barbara S. Davis, COO, The Actors Fund

**162. Clarify safety guidance for public-facing cultural organizations**

Dan Gallant, Executive Director, Nuyorican Poets Cafe

**163. Help artists rebuild New York City by investing now in long-term affordability**

Esther Robinson and Guy Buckles, Co-Executive Directors, ArtBuilt

**164. Replicate successful Depression-era arts programs**

Louise Mirrer, President and CEO, New-York Historical Society

**165. Create workforce development programs for people in the arts**

Barbara S. Davis, COO, The Actors Fund

**166. Expand and improve recovery support for NYC's small arts organizations**

Dan Gallant, Executive Director, Nuyorican Poets Cafe

**167. Streamline the funding and permitting process for live outdoor performances**

Melva Miller, CEO, Association for a Better New York

**168. Ensure “Community Facility” zoned space goes to community-based arts and culture organizations**

Randi Berry, Executive Director, IndieSpace

**169. Create grant-matched Individual Development Accounts for artists and entrepreneurs**

Esther Robinson and Guy Buckles, Co-Executive Directors, ArtBuilt

**170. Expand the Cultural Institutions Group**

Louise Mirrer, President and CEO, New-York Historical Society

**171. Ensure that city arts funding goes to organizations that pay a living wage**

Mary McColl, Executive Director, Actors' Equity Association

**172. Rezone commercial space to lower occupancy costs for independent creatives and artist cooperatives**

Jonathan Marvel, Founding Principal, Marvel Designs

**173. Rethink commercial and retail space to empower artists and encourage creative industries**

Lexy Funk, Founder and CEO, Brooklyn Industries

**174. Provide grants and guidance that help arts organizations across the 5 boroughs take advantage of the Open Culture program**

Katie Shima, Design Director, Situ Studio

**175. Help cultural institutions bounce back with subsidized admission**

Gordon Davis, Partner, Venable; former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department

## VIII. BUILD A STRONGER AND MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR THE LONG RUN

PAGE 94

More than just a short-term recovery, NYC needs policies that build on the city's competitive advantages, spark the creation of middle class jobs, and address structural economic challenges further exacerbated by the pandemic.

**176. Create NYC Coin: a local currency for the five boroughs**

Fred Wilson, Founder, Union Square Ventures

**177. Help NYC become a global leader in the sex tech industry**

Cindy Gallop, Founder, MakeLoveNotPorn

**178. Attract early-stage entrepreneurs by making NYC a test bed for new technologies**

Shaun Stewart, CEO, Newlab

**179. Break the logjam around housing development in NYC with a grand bargain around housing and jobs**

Rafael Cestero, President, Community Preservation Corp.; former Commissioner, NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development

**180. Boost the city's economy by making it easier for NYC startups to win city technology contracts**

Anil Dash, CEO, Glitch

**181. Develop a master plan that charts a path for creating a stronger and more inclusive NYC economy through 2050**

Winston Fisher, Partner, Fisher Brothers; Co-Chair, NYC Regional Economic Development Council

**182. Create good jobs by making it far easier for hospitals to expand and modernize**

Steven Corwin, President, New York Presbyterian

**183. Help women entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses by supporting family care**

Jo Ann Corkran, Managing Partner, Golden Seeds

**184. Create a Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations to help make NYC's case in Albany and Washington**

Carol O'Cleireacain, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia SIPA; former Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and Commissioner, NYC Department of Finance

**185. Support infrastructure projects by streamlining the public procurement process**

Louis Coletti, President and CEO, Building Trades Employers' Association

**186. Deliver city services better and more efficiently by vastly upgrading NYC government's technology systems**

Andrew Rasiej, CEO, Civic Hall

**187. Accelerate electric vehicle adoption with far more charging stations**

Cheryl Cohen Effron, Founder, Conjunction Fund

**188. Build a Green Jobs Task Force to power NYC's clean energy transition**

Tim Cawley, CEO, Con Edison

**189. Incentivize companies to hire employees based in NYC**

Andrew Rasiej, CEO, Civic Hall

**190. Launch a Startup Culture Card to retain and grow start-ups and tech talent**

Steven Rosenbaum, Executive Director, NYC Media Lab

**191. Refrain from excessive tax increases that could undermine NYC's economic recovery**

Stanley Grayson, Chief Operating Officer, M.R. Beal; former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development

**192. Support the growth of a key NYC industry by extending the film/tv tax credit program**

Rebecca Damon, Executive Vice President, SAG-AFTRA

**193. Harness NYC's competitive advantages in the creative economy**

Kai Falkenberg, General Counsel, G/O; former First Deputy Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment

**194. Create a Newlab-type facility for life sciences**

Shaun Stewart, CEO, Newlab

**195. Grow NYC's presence in the adult entertainment industry**

Cindy Gallop, Founder, MakeLoveNotPorn

- 196. Revise the real estate tax methodology for commercial entertainment venues that do not receive any public subsidies, tax benefits, or other financial assistance from the city**  
Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate, The Shubert Organization
- 197. Create a Construction Czar to oversee and coordinate major projects**  
Louis Coletti, President and CEO, Building Trades Employers' Association
- 198. Invest in Sunnyside Yard Intermodal Station and other large infrastructure projects that enhance NYC's competitiveness**  
Elizabeth Lusskin, President, Long Island City Partnership
- 199. Support manufacturing of PPE and sterilization products and services**  
Marlene Cintron, President, Bronx Overall Development Corporation
- 200. Invest in broadband for modernizing manufacturing in the industrial sector**  
Elizabeth Lusskin, President, Long Island City Partnership
- 201. Build a Tourism Dashboard**  
Vijay Dandapani, CEO, Hotel Association of New York City
- 202. Invest in manufacturing companies that sustain and generate employment in marginalized communities**  
Tod Greenfield, Vice President, Martin Greenfield Clothiers
- 203. Keep the tech industry in NYC**  
Dawn Barber, Co-Founder, NYC Creative Tech Week
- 204. Make Willets Point a tech and finance hub**  
Dian Yu, Executive Director, Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District
- 205. Keep workers with families in NYC**  
Sara Holoubek, CEO, Luminary Labs
- 206. Ramp up local media coverage and civic engagement**  
Dick Ravitch, former Lieutenant Governor, New York State; former Chairman and CEO, Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- 207. Make New York City the destination for cutting-edge construction technology and expertise by incentivizing innovation and attracting new and diverse talent**  
Claire Weisz, Founding Principal, WXY Studio
- 208. Facilitate conversations with Fortune 500 executives and early-stage founders to help NYC tech startups succeed and grow**  
Karin Klein, Founding Partner, Bloomberg Beta

## IX. PRIORITIZE HARD-HIT WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

PAGE 108

To counter the unequal economic toll of the pandemic, New York needs new policies that give a boost to domestic workers, restaurant employees, undocumented immigrants, communities of color, and others disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

- 209. Offer a re-orientation program for 3K-12 students**  
Jeanette Moy, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Public Health Solutions
- 210. Boost the impact of local nonprofits to help hard-hit communities by paying nonprofits on time**  
Gail Mellow, Executive Director, New York Jobs CEO Council; former President, LaGuardia Community College
- 211. Prioritize essential workers in affordable housing lotteries**  
Jessica Katz, Executive Director, Citizens Housing and Planning Council
- 212. Embrace branch libraries as a key driver of an equitable recovery**  
Katy Knight, President and Executive Director, Siegel Family Endowment
- 213. Provide financial relief to low-income New Yorkers by extending energy savings programs to summer months**  
Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
- 214. Continue funding for civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers**  
Sheila S. Boston, President, New York City Bar Association
- 215. Support efforts to train restaurant workers for current industry needs**  
Rev. Prabhu Sigamani, Director, ROC-NY; and Director, CHOW, ROCUnited
- 216. Support the informal childcare ecosystem**  
Sheena Wright, President and CEO, United Way of NYC
- 217. Provide new income supports for NYC's fast-growing (but low-wage) direct care workforce**  
Jodi M. Sturgeon, President, PHI
- 218. Create new office targeting K-12 students who disconnected from school during pandemic**  
Reshma Saujani, Founder, Girls Who Code
- 219. Support initiatives to boost financial literacy among marginalized communities**  
Neil Blumenthal, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Warby Parker
- 220. Create a city-funded Section 8-like housing benefit**  
Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College; former Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

- 221. Improve inclusivity through a path to citizenship for undocumented New Yorkers**  
Jennifer Sun, Co-Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality
- 222. Persuade NYC's leading law firms to commit their pro bono time to help New York-based clients**  
Deborah Farone, Strategic Marketing and Management Advisor, Farone Advisors
- 223. Integrate and expand ethnic studies educational programming**  
Vivian Louie, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning and Director of the Asian American Studies Center and Program, Hunter College
- 224. Leverage the city's rich nonprofit sector to spur interracial/ethnic dialogue**  
Vivian Louie, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning and Director of the Asian American Studies Center and Program, Hunter College
- 225. Build a new, foundational safety net centered on the needs of immigrant communities**  
Steven Choi, Senior Advisor, New York Immigration Coalition
- 226. Launch a Care Corps to create quality caregiving jobs while helping parents and other family caregivers pursue education and training**  
Katy Knight, President and Executive Director, Siegel Family Endowment.
- 227. Create a new "flexicurity" program to cushion the blow for New Yorkers who lose work due to automation**  
Emil Skandul, Founder, Capitol Foundry
- 228. Ensure a stable, well-trained security workforce in all homeless shelters**  
Kyle Bragg, President, 32BJ
- 229. Use city-owned real estate and unused lots to create indoor spaces for teens and young adults**  
Alain Sylvain, Founder, Sylvain Labs
- 230. Implement real estate tax abatement for nonprofits**  
Paul Wolf, Co-Founder, Denham Wolf Real Estate
- 231. Provide remote work opportunities for New Yorkers who must shoulder at-home caregiving**  
Nathalie Molina Niño, Investor and Author
- 232. Offer free, extended-day childcare for eligible families**  
Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks
- 233. Create and fund a prevailing wage for the human services sector**  
Frederick Shack, CEO, Urban Pathways
- 234. Continue to exercise the city's local power to establish standards for gig workers**  
Kyle Bragg, President, 32BJ
- 235. Require free or highly subsidized Internet in every new affordable housing unit**  
Cheryl Cohen Efron, Founder, Conjunction Fund
- 236. Tackle the digital divide through broadband infrastructure and digital literacy support**  
Jennifer Sun, Co-Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality
- 237. Scale up funding and speed up rollout to close the digital divide**  
Barbara Byrne Denham, Senior Economist, Oxford Economics

## X. SHORE UP THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF NYC'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS

PAGE 120

A fast and full economic recovery will be difficult without policies that ensure New York remains a safe, clean, and highly livable city.

- 238. Prioritize quality of life investments that help NYC attract and retain its talented and diverse workforce**  
Seth Pinsky, CEO, 92nd Street Y; former President, NYC Economic Development Corporation
- 239. Focus on the fundamentals**  
Mary Ann Tighe, CEO, New York Tri-State Region, CBRE
- 240. Maintaining safety and cleanliness must be a priority**  
Stanley Grayson, Chief Operation Officer, M.R. Beal; former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development
- 241. Invest more resources in street cleaning**  
Vijay Dandapani, CEO, Hotel Association of New York City
- 242. Restore safety for residents and businesses by bringing together community leaders and NYPD**  
Dian Yu, Executive Director, Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District
- 243. Prioritize efforts to keep NYC safe**  
Kenneth T. Jackson, Barzun Professor Emeritus of History, Columbia University; President Emeritus, New-York Historical Society; Editor in Chief, The Encyclopedia of New York City
- 244. Enlist neighborhood alliances to boost public perception of safety**  
Neil Blumenthal, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Warby Parker



# I. SPARK NYC'S ECONOMIC COMEBACK



With 500,000 fewer jobs than before the pandemic and many businesses hanging on by a thread, NYC needs immediate solutions to get New Yorkers working again and revive the hardest-hit industries and businesses.

## 1. **Launch a major advertising campaign to make people feel like they're missing out if they don't come back** **Andrew Robertson, President and CEO, BBDO**

With steady drops in coronavirus cases, increased vaccinations, and the city poised to fully reopen in July, the most important thing the city can do right now to accelerate the economic recovery and bring back jobs is simple: get people to come back to New York City. The city should launch a massive, concerted advertising campaign timed to the late summer and early fall to show that if you're not in NYC, you're missing out. There's already palpable energy, especially among younger New Yorkers who have stayed through the pandemic, are now vaccinated, and are eager to restart their social lives. The city should do what it can to seize on the excitement, blow on the embers, and make the fire as big as possible. A herd mentality got people to leave the city en masse, and the same mentality will get them to come back—but the city can jumpstart the fear of missing out. A public advertising campaign should include a broad media agenda, but it might also include something like the National Debt Clock in Times Square, except instead of counting the gross national debt, it's showing how many people are coming back to New York each day. With a nudge from the city, there'll be a positive feedback loop as more and more people return. Nothing—no incentives—will boost the economy more than getting people back into the city because they don't want to be left out.

**2. Spur the return to offices by supporting public programming that reinvigorates business districts**

**Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense**

Following a year in which so many office workers found there was something to like about remote work, there is considerable uncertainty as to whether these workers will ever come back to the office full time. This could wreak havoc on local restaurants and retailers in central business districts that have long relied on them. To get workers to come back to the city, they need to be reminded of the amenities and activities that used to greet them as soon as they stepped out onto the street. The city should help draw workers back to the office by supporting Business Improvement District public programming, and by taking inspiration from models found in other cities: Vancouver has turned alleys into brightly painted spaces with basketball courts and foosball tables, and Montreal has created interactive, musical swing sets in the Quartier des spectacles, Montreal's version of Times Square. This will also mean funding and supporting faltering cultural and arts organizations, music, and nightlife that have suffered mightily during the pandemic.

**3. Save retail with city-backed master leases**

**Alicia Glen, Founder and Managing Principal, MSquared;  
former Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development**

At a moment when retail vacancies are climbing, and our favorite restaurants continue to shutter, the city should take aggressive action to ensure that New York City's storefronts remain vibrant, funky, and as diverse as our amazing city. To do so, city government—likely through the Economic Development Corporation—could rollout a program to negotiate master leases with landlords that have vacant property at some scale and then sub-lease them to local purveyors, ideally at slightly below-market rent. This would more-or-less apply the city's structure for public markets to private property, creating an opportunity for landlords to rent out their retail spaces to a credit tenant and guarantee revenue for a set period of time, while also opening up shuttered storefronts to local entrepreneurs and restaurateurs looking to get back to work.

**4. Create thousands of jobs by putting an additional teacher in every classroom**

**Richard Buery Jr., CEO, Robin Hood;  
former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**

The pandemic derailed the educational trajectories of thousands of school-age children. It also caused hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to lose their jobs. With an increase in state foundational aid, the city has the opportunity to address both of these crises head-on by creating thousands of new jobs for teachers. A massive hiring effort, with a particular focus on recruiting teachers of color, is a tremendous opportunity to diversify the teaching ranks in New York City. It will have a positive effect on student outcomes. And it can help put thousands of New Yorkers to work, leveraging the reach and effectiveness of CUNY in

particular to train these educators. One of the key challenges for the school system is the need for differentiation in how educators approach the needs of their students: supporting children at different levels of content knowledge who are experiencing different levels of social and familial challenges. Those challenges will be magnified a thousand times next year, given the vastly different experiences that students and families have had with the pandemic and remote schooling. Having more teachers in the classroom is a helpful ingredient in meeting students where they are and encouraging their social, emotional, and academic well-being.

**5. Leverage libraries to create a neighborhood-centric approach to economic recovery**  
**Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO, Queens Public Library**

New York has long benefited from strong commercial corridors in the boroughs. Now with shifts in offices toward remote work and some reluctance around mass transit and long daily commutes, there's an opportunity to take a neighborhood-centric approach to economic recovery. To do this, New York needs to make sure that the Linden Boulevards and Springfield Boulevards all over the city have the same access to small business and entrepreneurial support that places like Bell Boulevard do. The city should stimulate new business formation in a number of ways: cut back on the regulatory hurdles to starting a business, launch grants to stimulate new businesses in areas where specific amenities or services are lacking, and provide a new level of support for the training, coaching, and hand-holding needed for any first-time operation to succeed. One of the best ways to scale up that support infrastructure is through the city's more than 210 branch libraries, including new partnerships between public libraries and other strong community-based organizations providing small business and entrepreneurship assistance. The city can use the reach and trust of libraries as the core infrastructure needed to bring people together around a whole range of neighborhood-based economic development services.

**6. Push back against cities trying to poach NYC's tech companies**  
**Oliver Libby, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Hatzimemos**

During the pandemic, New York City's tech startup sector went fully remote. Founders and employees discovered that they could work from anywhere, and many left the city at least temporarily. Realizing that some in NYC's tech sector might no longer be wedded to the five boroughs, cities like Miami began actively courting tech businesses to relocate. But there's a myriad of reasons why New York City remains the place to be in tech—and why Google and Facebook and Amazon are all doubling down and expanding their footprint in the city. New York should take control of the narrative and mount a marketing campaign that specifically responds to tech founders, investors, and employees who are the targets of cities—like Austin and Miami—that have stepped up competition with NYC over the past year. The marketing campaign would trumpet the many assets that made New York the clear number two tech hub—behind only Silicon Valley—in the years before the pandemic and which are still present today, including the city's highly developed tech ecosystem, the

rich network of investors, the now large group of experienced founders, the deep pool of diverse talent, and the unmatched connections to traditional industries from media and finance to advertising and healthcare. None of this has changed, and the city should launch targeted digital marketing to remind the startup scene of what they'd be missing.

**7. Attract film and TV production from Georgia and other states with new incentives**  
**Jeff Zucker, President, CNN**

In recent years, television, film, and commercial production has emerged as one of NYC's important sources of steady economic growth and accessible, high-paying jobs that often do not require a college degree. Over the past two decades, the filmed production industry has added tens of thousands of jobs and prior to the pandemic it employed over 100,000 people full time in diverse occupations ranging from set and costume design to editing, acting, and cinematography. It's also an industry that has continued to thrive throughout the pandemic, as production on major films and TV shows barely slowed. But the industry has also seen production increasingly move to Georgia, Texas, and other states or countries, enticed by incentives and lower costs—leaving this valuable source of middle-class jobs vulnerable. NYC should capitalize on the backlash surrounding restrictive voting laws and bring back studios and production companies that moved south. Renewed incentives would ensure that film, TV, and commercial production bounces back even stronger than before and continues to provide economic opportunity to New Yorkers of all backgrounds.

**8. Enact a tax on financial transactions or unoccupied condos to fund job-creating climate resiliency projects**  
**Richard Kahan, Founder, Urban Assembly**

While President Biden's American Jobs Plan could bring billions of dollars in new and much-needed federal infrastructure investment to New York City, the city and state simply cannot rely on federal dollars alone to fund the massive public works plan needed to confront the threat of climate change while getting hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers back to work. New York City and State should get ahead of Washington and act now to generate new funding streams of their own for resiliency projects that will protect the city and create much-needed jobs for out-of-work New Yorkers. And city and state government can do it with small taxes on financial transactions and unoccupied condos or by reinstating the commuter tax, which could easily generate several billion dollars that could then be used to underwrite municipal infrastructure bonds. New York cannot wait for the federal government to act—we need to do this on our own to get people back to work while building up the city's defenses against major storms and sea-level rise. There's no time to wait.

**9. Activate unused office spaces with artists-in-residence**  
**Sally Tallant, President and Executive Director, Queens Museum**

The city should get creative about leveraging empty office spaces by implementing an artist in residence program in some spaces and hosting musicians in empty commercial spaces and vacant hotel rooms. The city could offer a ticket lottery to give guests access to private concerts to avoid the crowds of a large venue during COVID.

**10. Spur public works jobs with a campaign to ensure passage of the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, on the ballot next November**  
**Amy Chester, Managing Director, Rebuild by Design**

The \$3 billion dollar Restore Mother Nature Bond Act is vital to New York City's recovery. This investment has the potential to create 65,000 jobs, which would help to spur an economic rebound in communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change—including many neighborhoods hit especially hard by COVID. While the Bond Act passed in the latest New York State budget, it will need to be approved by voters in November 2022 in order to take effect. City and state leaders, community groups, and civic organizations should come together to champion the ballot initiative and launch a campaign to ensure it succeeds at the polls. The Bond Act is an important economic recovery tool that will free up money to support new climate projects that will create tens of thousands of jobs while making New York City and State more resilient to climate change, including improving sewer systems, installing green infrastructure, and restoring key ecosystems statewide.

**11. Address the COVID-linked youth unemployment crisis by subsidizing youth employment**  
**Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, JobsFirstNYC**

Unemployment due to COVID-19-related reasons was greater among youth age 18–24 than any other age group, and youth unemployment continues to be significantly higher than it was before the pandemic. Programs like the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) subsidize public and private sector youth employment by paying participants minimum wage through the Department of Youth and Community Development at no extra payroll cost to employers. But SYEP in its current form is dwarfed by the unemployment crisis facing New York City's youth. To address this crisis, the city should scale up and create new subsidized youth employment programs with a focus on community development, infrastructure, and the green economy. These programs should include skills-building and be connected to sectoral training programs that have adequate funding to ensure job development, allowing a seamless transition from subsidized to regular employment and access to long-term economic mobility.

**12. Fully embrace and promote the use of Excelsior Pass**  
**Jerry Hultin, Chairman and Co-Founder, Global Futures Group**

New York is leading the way as the first state to develop a secure vaccine passport that can be used to present COVID-19 vaccination or negative test results and gain entry to events like Knicks games at Madison Square Garden or performances at The Shed. But the Excelsior Pass has seen limited uptake outside of large performance venues and sporting events. To accelerate the return of tourists and the recovery of restaurants and other small businesses, the city needs to encourage far more businesses to get on board with vaccine passports. Working with IBM, the state developed an Excelsior scanner app for small businesses to use, but there's been little promotion from the city to expand uptake. There's also no accessible registry of which businesses and venues are using the passport. To make more New Yorkers and visitors comfortable dining inside and going to a show, the city should work with private sector leaders to promote the use of Excelsior far beyond Citi Field and the Barclays Center and develop a database of participating businesses where New Yorkers can use their pass.

**13. Counter the narrative that NYC is dead with a powerful Relaunch New York campaign**  
**Deirdre Latour, President, Edelman New York**

New York remained vital and vibrant throughout the pandemic, and there are countless indications now that the city is bouncing back even stronger. But the narrative of New York being dead has gotten some traction in the media, and that is very damaging for the city's future. It's bad for tourism and bad for business. This definition is going to stick if we don't quickly change the narrative and redefine who we are. City policymakers should do this by undertaking a marketing campaign, perhaps called Relaunch New York, that powerfully sets forth the New York of tomorrow. The campaign should articulate New York's key competitive advantages—for example, its unmatched assets in culture and finance and its status as the world's most livable big city—and lay out action steps to strengthen each one. It should be led by the city's top creative agencies and launched in a big, ballsy New York way.

**14. Launch a major tourism marketing campaign when Broadway returns**  
**Barbara Byrne Denham, Senior Economist, Oxford Economics**

The safe reopening of Broadway beginning in September should be a monumental turning point in New York City's recovery. But the city cannot trust that the return to the stage of Hamilton, The Lion King, and Dear Evan Hansen will be enough on its own. To supercharge the Broadway-led rebound of the city's performing arts and hospitality sectors, the city should launch a major ad campaign combined with discounts and incentives. Reminiscent of the city's efforts following 9/11, NYC and Company should work with tourist companies, theatres, restaurants, and hotels to offer deals including dinner-and-a-show offers,

discounted overnight stays to draw in regional tourists, show and museum packages, and more. After the splash of the initial reopening in the fall, it will be crucial for the city to fuel the resurgence of tourism when things could slow down in the winter. A Broadway-led campaign can do that.

### **15. Incentivize property owners to activate vacant storefronts**

**Susan Fine, Principal, Turnstyle Market**

Too many empty storefronts damage the vibrancy—and even the safety—of our neighborhoods, discouraging tourists from visiting and New Yorkers from shopping. Citywide, retailers already struggling because of online shopping have given up as a result of the pandemic. Activating these empty storefronts is crucial to reviving the city's street life and bringing back the economy. But the city will have to help landlords, who may have received little rent in the last year, to undertake the necessary capital improvements to modernize their stores. New York should incentivize landlords to activate empty storefronts rather than letting them sit dormant. An incentive would help because many storefronts are not suitable for the tenants who might desire the space, but achievable rents will not always allow the amortization of the needed improvements such as converting a retail use to a “wet” use such as a restaurant or subdividing a big store into a series of rentable storefronts.

The city could induce capital improvements in these storefronts with a tax abatement similar to the old Industrial and Commercial Incentive Program (ICIP) where the benefit of the abatement exceeds by 20 percent the cost of the improvement (and abatement is spread over time to level the impact on city revenues). An economically challenged landlord could even “borrow” the value of the abatement, much like tax credits are traded. Similarly, a tax incentive could be given to convert ground floor retail to uses that have social benefits and provide life but can afford to pay only a small rent, similar in concept to the community facility bonuses for new construction. Whether these uses are preschools or art installations, a short-term incentive can jumpstart street life until the landlord finds an income-producing use or longer-term tenant. To be effective, the incentive should be as-of-right to avoid a long regulatory process. It would also be wise to enact legislation that sunsets the benefit to induce landlords to invest now.

### **16. Use NYC's purchasing power—and people power—to support local job creation**

**Christine Quinn, President and CEO, Win; former City Council speaker**

New York City should combine its purchasing and people power to stimulate growth and job creation while propelling a more inclusive and lasting recovery. For example, the city has numerous family shelters that house New Yorkers who have lost work and income during this crisis. It should hold job fairs for city government jobs at several of these facilities. Additionally, New York City government is second only to the U.S. military in food procurement spending. City officials should do much more to take advantage of this massive government purchasing power to support local businesses and employers that hire a diverse mix of New Yorkers. Economies need assistance to resuscitate after jarring

events, but for this resuscitation to be more inclusive and lift more people out of poverty, the city needs to use itself to its own best advantage.

**17. Give NYC and Company the funding needed to invest in an aggressive tourism campaign**

**Ellen V. Futter, President, American Museum of Natural History**

Few things will have a greater impact on the city's economic recovery than the return of tourism, which fell to almost nothing last year after the city attracted over 65 million visitors in 2019. To revive this critical part of the economy, which will also provide a much-needed boost to cultural institutions, Broadway, and restaurants, the city should increase funding for NYC and Company so that it can mount an extensive campaign to attract domestic and international tourists. In addition, the city should support new cultural offerings, especially ones that become destinations in and of themselves, including new museum facilities, new artistic spaces, and expansions to existing organizations. New or updated facilities such as the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, the Studio Museum of Harlem's new home on 125th Street, and David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center will be catalysts for a recovering economy, the strong return of tourism, and improved education. The city must boldly pursue projects like these to spur a strong recovery and bring back not just the young, creative community but also the corporations who wish to employ them, all while enhancing our extraordinary city.

**18. Help employers bring back workers by giving them a payroll supplement**

**Tod Greenfield, VP, Martin Greenfield Clothiers**

To help more unemployed New Yorkers get back to work, the state should provide businesses with a payroll supplement for the first months of a new hire's employment. Giving \$300 per week towards the salary of new hires coming off unemployment for the first three or six months of employment can take financial pressure off employers that may struggle to take on new full-time workers during the ongoing downturn, spurring job creation and reducing city unemployment.

**19. Revitalize Chinatown and its hard-hit commercial district by allowing more new technology to display its own unique, vibrant ethnic culture and identity**

**Wellington Chen, Executive Director, Chinatown Partnership**

New York's iconic Chinatown neighborhood has been among those hardest hit by the decline in tourists and commercial activity due to the pandemic and rhetoric of Anti-Asian hate. To revive neighborhoods such as Chinatown, the city should look to understand and incorporate standard Asian characteristic features from Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and other Asian cities that are usually bustling with kinetic energy, vibrancy, and light. The energy, motion, and sense of place conveyed by Asian



night displays show what is possible if the city creates relief zone regulation to allow business districts like Chinatown to revitalize their own economies. Manhattan Chinatown and its hard-hit commercial areas should be designated special relief zones, allowing for new, energizing self-help displays, inviting and mesmerizing lights, and LCD displays that can highlight the fascinating Asian culture, music, and art that makes these neighborhoods unique global attractions. The relief zone designation would allow the local community to put up the hardware, and sponsorship revenues can be split between local landlords and merchants so that they have additional income to supplement and sustain themselves during these difficult times while also generating new government tax revenue to share and help other neighborhoods in a true public-private partnership. This will create a sense of energy, vibrancy, and self-identity. It also gives hope and inspiration to the community and will foster new foot traffic in what has otherwise become a dead zone.

**20. Enact a one-year waiver on city permitting processes that inhibit business creation and growth, building on what worked with Open Restaurants**

**Tim Tompkins, former President, Times Square Alliance**

When the city launched Open Restaurants last year, it unleashed the unbelievable entrepreneurial energy and creativity of New York's business owners—and all it took was waiving the normally restrictive rules and bureaucratic permitting processes for restaurants to set outdoor tables. With the freedom from those restrictions, restaurants all over the city responded quickly, with creativity and in ways that not only helped save their businesses but also made the city livelier and more vital. City officials should learn from that experience and enact a one- or two-year waiver on other restrictions that have stifled business formation and growth in New York. For example, for the next year, the city should ease the restrictions on people setting up businesses out of their NYCHA apartment or in their brownstone. But don't stop there. Economic development officials should identify a handful of similar restrictions that hold people back from starting and growing a business here.

**21. Convert empty hotels and offices into affordable housing**

**Rachel Fee, Executive Director, NYC Housing Conference**

Providing affordable housing to New Yorkers is necessary to support the economic recovery of the city, especially for Black and Latinx communities, who currently make up 90 percent of the population currently experiencing homelessness and have been disproportionately affected by financial loss. The city should convert unused properties such as hotels, offices, and government buildings into affordable housing units. Converting unused buildings would help rehouse the large population of New Yorkers that have become homeless during the pandemic, lower housing costs to help keep residents in their homes, and provide necessary job creation in development and construction.

## **22. Turn vacant storefronts into cooperative spaces for small businesses**

**Jessica Johnson, President, Johnson Security Bureau**

To take advantage of the New York's many vacant storefronts, the city should implement a cooperative business property ownership model, incentivizing co-locating businesses within one space. Supporting cooperative uses of space would allow small businesses to assist one another and achieve greater autonomy. New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and other city agencies could provide availability listings directly to small businesses with plans to co-locate, reformulating the current opportunity zone model to support community members doing business within their own communities. This would create community reinvestment, support localized, sustainable economic development from within, and provide long-term incentivization for community-based support.

## **23. Create an NYC Climate Corps**

**Tonya Gayle, Executive Director, Green City Force**

To address two of the greatest challenges facing New York City today—the climate crisis and the unemployment crisis brought on by the pandemic—the next administration should create an NYC Climate Corps. The Climate Corps would leverage federal investment through the proposed American Jobs act to get tens of thousands of unemployed and underemployed young adult New Yorkers back to work in priority environmental projects like greening NYCHA campuses through energy retrofits and solar installation and transforming Rikers Island into a hub for renewable energy. Through these projects, Climate Corps participants who might otherwise face barriers to employment would acquire long-term skills they can use to build careers in the emerging green economy and find opportunities in the public and private sector.

## **24. Encourage satellite offices throughout all five boroughs**

**Rosemary Scanlon, economist, Economist, former Divisional Dean**

Remote work during the pandemic has reset the expectations of hundreds of thousands of office workers who used to commute into Manhattan and reshaped the office needs of countless city employers. Many employers and employees still see the value in coming to an office—but perhaps not just one central office in Midtown. The city should help businesses adapt to the new, post-pandemic normal and keep people in New York City by encouraging and incentivizing businesses to implement satellite offices throughout the five boroughs. The city could support existing private coworking spaces, as well as streamline rentals for empty storefronts to be used as neighborhood office space. Supporting accessible, neighborhood coworking and office spaces would help anchor neighborhood restaurants, cafes, and retail shops surrounding the satellite office spaces, providing necessary support for outer-borough small businesses and limiting the strain caused by lengthy daily commutes.

## **25. Support transportation alternatives for New Yorkers wary of returning to trains and buses**

**Cesar Claro, President, Staten Island Economic Development Corporation**

Many New Yorkers are afraid to return to their previous public transportation commuting methods. The city can address this by embracing—and expanding—alternative transportation options that are perceived to be cleaner and safer. City leaders should begin with things that have worked, such as expanding bike lanes and developing new open space projects like the High Line. From there, the city should increase investment in electric vehicles and charging stations and explore large-scale initiatives including light rail and gondolas.

## **26. Transform vacant commercial spaces into small business incubators**

**David Bolotsky, Founder and CEO, Uncommon Goods**

Office vacancies in Manhattan have reached record highs just as entrepreneurs across the city have launched new businesses dreamed up during the pandemic. Many of these firms are looking to grow and add jobs as the city's economy emerges from the shadow of COVID-19. But these fledgling businesses still cannot afford much of the space available, and building owners likewise don't have the bandwidth or incentive to subdivide spaces and negotiate affordable individual leases with twenty different start-ups across a floor or two. This is where the city can step in. EDC or another government agency should enter into affordable, short term leases for currently vacant commercial spaces—multiple floors or even an entire building—and then use those spaces as incubators for small businesses with growth potential. These start-ups would have access to free or low-cost space with room to grow as they add employees, while the building owner would benefit by getting vacant spaces leased with a reliable tenant—city government—even if the city negotiates for below-market rents.

## **27. Create local business vouchers to stimulate local economic activity**

**Emil Skandul, Principal and Owner, Capitol Foundry**

Since the start of the pandemic, the restaurant industry and small brick-and-mortar businesses have been unequally impacted by the pandemic as consumers stay home or spend more online. As a result, restaurants and small businesses have closed at an unprecedented rate. The state can help these critical but badly hurt businesses by creating Local Business Spending Vouchers (LBSVs) administered by Empire State Development. Vouchers could be given to all New Yorkers over 18 in the form of unique QR codes you'd receive on your phone or printed and mailed out in paper format. The vouchers would catalyze local spending and reestablish relationships between consumers and local businesses that have been disrupted by months of social distancing shifts to more app-based and online shopping. By providing local business spending vouchers with expiry dates and other specific limitations, brick and mortar small businesses can see customers return and can begin to re-employ the one in six New York workers who work in the local retail or food sectors.

**28. Spend capital dollars to help create good construction jobs and rebuild communities**

**Gary LaBarbera, President, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York**

If history is any guide, the construction industry will play a significant role in driving the city's economic recovery because of the quality jobs it creates. Think of the highways, hospitals, and schools built during the Great Depression and the 8.5 million Americans those projects employed. In order to recover from the pandemic and chip away at the city's stubbornly high unemployment rate, it will be critical for New York City to take a page from history and continue moving forward with its capital plan. All across the city, numerous projects are poised to begin, including the Empire State Complex and projects with the School Construction Authority, NYC Health + Hospitals, and NYCHA. There will also be an enormous opportunity to create good union jobs as a result of the state's Climate Act and the development of offshore and onshore wind and solar. On top of improving the city's infrastructure, capital expenditures will help create good, middle-class, family-sustaining careers in the construction industry. Through project labor agreements, unions and the city have put greater focus on bringing residents from underserved communities into pre-apprentice and apprentice programs so that they can build careers. Construction projects also benefit small ancillary businesses, like delis and bodegas, in the communities where projects are taking place. Ultimately, recovery starts with economic development and job creation. New York City should continue to spend capital dollars to help create good construction jobs and rebuild communities.

**29. Upgrade NYCHA infrastructure and train NYCHA residents to do the work**  
**Kenneth Lipper, former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development**

New York City's public housing is facing twin crises: over \$40 billion in repair needs and massive unemployment that far exceeds the city average. The city can tackle both of these challenges at the same time by working with the federal government to develop a program to address NYCHA's state-of-good-repair needs with a workforce of NYCHA residents. Residents would go through a training program with a guaranteed job working at local NYCHA developments on infrastructure needs including replacing aging pipes, fixing boilers, repairing roofs, parapets, and doors. And the skills residents develop on NYCHA campuses would provide on-ramps into good-paying careers in the trades—improving the lives of New Yorkers who for too long have been left out of the city's economic growth.

**30. Launch a media campaign to encourage public gatherings****Michael Dorf, Founder and CEO, City Winery**

It's likely that office work in New York has changed for good. Many if not most white-collar workers will continue to work remotely or adopt a hybrid of on-site and virtual work. But when they do come into the office, those same workers will need to do more to support the city's gathering places—the restaurants, bars, pubs, and performance venues that have been devastated by the pandemic and are hanging on by a thread. That could mean holding a meeting in a restaurant or hosting a conference at a small events venue. The city should create a media campaign with the phrase “Get Out!” to encourage workers to make use of New York's array of unique venues. Dozens of restaurants and bars have permanently closed, but the small businesses where people do begin to gather again will have a chance at recovery. Moreover, this can help revive the special energy that makes New York such a magnet for tourists.

**31. Develop a hybrid model where tenants and landlords can apply jointly for financial assistance****Valerie White, Executive Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation**

The city should not only support tenants with financial assistance and extended moratoriums but also give financial support to small landlords—because when landlords are unable to pay their mortgage, tenants end up losing their housing as well. This is particularly concerning because Black and brown homeownership is declining year by year. While extending the eviction moratorium is necessary, the city should deploy its housing assistance funds through a hybrid model where tenants and landlords come together to request assistance. The city can ensure that homeowners are not losing their homes and tenants remain in their homes while preventing speculator activity at the expense of lower-income New Yorkers.

**32. Invest in marketing to bring back tourists and reinvigorate NYC's cultural life****Jack Lusk, President and CEO, Harris Rand Lusk**

New York will almost certainly continue to be a magnet for young people, even with all the challenges brought on by the pandemic. But for a full economic recovery, New York will also need to bring back tourists and many of the middle-aged residents and older New Yorkers who moved out during the past year. The key to all this is recapturing the vibrancy of the city's cultural offerings, including museums, Broadway stages, music venues, and comedy clubs. New York's cultural opportunities are unmatched, and they are a huge part of what makes the city so attractive. But many of these attractions have been decimated by the pandemic. New York needs them to bounce back strong, and city leaders can help by investing in marketing and promotion efforts that help get people back into the cultural life of the city. The revival of New York's cultural sector will put

people back to work, but more importantly, it will serve as a highly visible symbol of New York's recovery.

**33. Create jobs for youth by investing in community-centered environmental and arts projects**

**Karen Fairbanks, Founding Partner, Marble Fairbanks**

The past year has put a spotlight on the importance of public open spaces to the health and wellness of all New Yorkers. But it's also forced the city to reckon with environmental justice issues that precede the pandemic, particularly related to unequal access to green space. As New York City rebuilds, it should take this opportunity to empower community-based organizations to bring their work into the streets and involve youth in shaping how the city develops its public green space, urban agriculture, outdoor recreation and performance, and more. New York City youth have dynamic and creative visions for the future of the city. They are eager to spark change, but they also need jobs. The city should provide support to community-based organizations to hire youth and center youth voices in the city's response to environmental justice issues. This could include work expanding urban agriculture, but it could also involve arts and wellness programming that activates public spaces and parks through outdoor performances, classes, and more.

**34. Make the subway free for a temporary period to get New Yorkers back on trains and into their offices**

**Gordon Davis, Partner, Venable; Former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department**

New York City's economy won't fully bounce back until the vast majority of New Yorkers return to riding the subway on a regular basis. When that happens, New Yorkers will flock back to offices in much larger numbers than is happening so far, the many small businesses operating in and around Midtown will finally see their sales return to pre-pandemic levels, and the city's museums and cultural venues will benefit from more visitors and greater income. More people on the trains will also make the transit system safer, which in turn will make even more New Yorkers—and tourists—comfortable riding the subway. Although subway ridership has increased in recent months, it is still far below pre-pandemic levels. To significantly boost ridership and help unleash a long-lasting economic recovery, city and state leaders should make subways free for four days a week until the end of 2021. If ridership hasn't fully recovered by then, policymakers should consider half-priced fares for the first half of 2022.

**35. Address persistent retail vacancies by penalizing property owners that keep spaces empty****Cliff Chenfeld, Co-Founder, Razor and Tie**

Retail vacancies plagued New York City long before the coronavirus crisis. Even when the economy was at its strongest, the commercial thoroughfares of once-vibrant neighborhoods were pockmarked with empty storefronts. Now there are vacant storefronts all across the city as small businesses have closed and national chains have cut their losses and left. Empty ground floor retail doesn't just look bad—it's actively harming the city's recovery by lowering foot traffic and thus decreasing revenue for adjacent and nearby restaurants and businesses. New York's policymakers should remove any incentive property owners have to keep storefronts empty until national retail chains come calling and affirmatively impose monetary penalties on any owner whose storefronts remain empty for a year or longer. Hardship exceptions could be established, but New York should follow the lead of other global cities that have done this and, as a result, have far healthier retail districts than New York.

**36. Forge public-private partnerships with New York-centered production entities**  
**Rebecca Damon, Executive Vice President, SAG-AFTRA**

The arts and entertainment sector is far more than just the talent in front of the camera—it's all of the unions and small businesses that surround the creative community, from hair stylists to writers to Teamsters to caterers to florists. Without rebuilding the entire creative sector, New York City cannot make a full recovery. The city should jumpstart the rebound by forging public-private partnerships with New York-centered production entities, including production companies, studios, unions, and academic and cultural institutions. These partnerships could help promote and grow the city's production industry by creating new programs, such as virtual backstage press tours of film and live theater productions; an informational campaign showcasing the city's production industry; and virtual symposia to introduce independent producers to key governmental production officials and introduce high school students to internship opportunities in production. Without rebuilding New York's creative systems, from the smallest works to the biggest productions, we are not going to make a full recovery. Public-private partnerships can help spur on that recovery.

## II. STRENGTHEN NYC'S SMALL BUSINESSES



New policies are needed that not only help small businesses survive the long recovery ahead but also strengthen the many businesses that were fragile even before the pandemic—and create a far more supportive business environment in the future.

### **37. Pair tech-savvy CUNY students with small businesses that need help adopting technology** **S. David Wu, President, Baruch College**

Despite being hit hardest by COVID-19, many small businesses in New York—especially in low-income communities of color—were left out of direct government assistance, such as the Paycheck Protection Program. Often, those businesses lacked resources and standardized financial records that were necessary to apply for federal relief funds. Many of those small, often immigrant-owned businesses also need help with financial planning and modernizing their businesses with e-commerce and digital marketing. The city has an opportunity to help those businesses right now by creating a matching service that pairs businesses with CUNY students. The initiative could be part of a reimagined CUNY curriculum where students spend service learning time in communities working with small businesses. Students could be paired with businesses in their own communities, allowing them to draw on their personal experiences and cultural knowledge while building expertise in real-world settings to create tangible results to help their city recover.



**38. Replicate the Brooklyn Navy Yard model elsewhere in NYC to make real estate more affordable for small businesses****Tim Tompkins, former President, Times Square Alliance**

Even before the pandemic, the city's high cost of commercial space dissuaded many entrepreneurs from starting in New York and made it difficult for countless others to grow their businesses here. City economic development officials can create more of the affordable commercial spaces that new firms and growing businesses need—and spur job creation—by replicating the Brooklyn Navy Yard model elsewhere in the five boroughs. Now is the perfect time to do this. The city should buy or lease commercial properties or blocks of space in office buildings and manage the space like the public/private Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation does, providing below-market space to companies with growth potential. While it may make sense to replicate the current Navy Yard model, with a focus on advanced manufacturing companies, other Navy Yard-style properties should be created that provide affordable space to startups and companies with growth potential in tech, life sciences, design and other sectors. For example, the city might lease 10 floors of an empty Midtown office building and then rent it out at below-market rents. Why not have 50 different Navy Yard-type varieties around the city, in different kinds of buildings and with different types of tenants.

**39. Tap teen photography students to help small businesses ramp up social media marketing****Seth Bornstein, Executive Director,  
Queens Economic Development Corporation**

Post-pandemic, small businesses will need to adapt to attract consumers in competitive markets that are increasingly relying on an online consumer base. High-quality photography and video are important for web and social media marketing—particularly in the food sector because of the increased use of online delivery platforms—but many small businesses lack the resources to procure this media. To address this gap, the city should fund partnerships between local school photography programs and CBOs to work with local businesses that need this service.

**40. Let small businesses temporarily set up shop in city parks****Anthony Ramirez II, Founder, The Bronx Beer Hall**

The success of outdoor dining and Open Streets last summer shows how the city can let small businesses innovate to enliven neighborhoods and boost revenues after the devastating first wave of the pandemic. It's time to double down and further develop how business is conducted outdoors. New Yorkers once again are flocking to parks, so why not harness that enthusiasm to boost small businesses that have been devastated by

the pandemic while providing new amenities in open spaces across the five boroughs? New York City should repurpose sections of select city parks for commercial activity, including food vendors, outdoor dining, and events. Then, the Parks Department could issue permits to interested businesses with pricing tiers based on the size and type of business or event, rolling in cleaning and maintenance fees, so garbage doesn't pile up and the city stays clean and inviting. New York City has a great opportunity to channel the excitement around reopening to help lift up the city's hardest-hit small businesses by providing temporary, seasonal spaces in parks.

**41. Help NYC restaurants compete for massive DOE and senior center food procurement dollars**

**Matthew Jozwiak, Founder and CEO, Rethink Food**

Throughout the pandemic, thousands of local restaurants and other food-related small businesses have been hanging on by a thread, if not closing entirely. Yet at the same time, the city spends hundreds of millions on food provisions, with nearly all of that money going to large purveyors. The city should retool its contracting to enlist far more local small businesses in providing food and other services to their own communities. This would provide a vital source of stable revenue to local businesses that faced paper-thin profit margins even before the pandemic. And it would strengthen a business sector that is so important to the stability of the very neighborhoods that have needed services and support during this crisis. But to make this happen, city agencies must make it easier for small businesses to navigate the contracting process. By partnering with local community groups, chambers of commerce, and BIDs, agencies can contract with distressed small businesses within the city's hardest-hit communities. This strategy need not be limited to pandemic response—even after the city has recovered from the public health crisis, reformed contracting procedures and improved outreach can help stabilize restaurants and other small businesses while serving the communities they anchor.

**42. Reduce the burden on small businesses by greatly expanding the number of violations that are curable**

**Gregg Bishop, former Commissioner,  
NYC Department of Small Business Services**

While most small businesses across New York City accept that doing business in the five boroughs will come with steep costs for labor, real estate, and even taxes, small firms almost universally loathe the excessive and often irrational fines that are imposed by a host of government regulatory agencies. These fines often add up to thousands of dollars a year and sometimes cause a business to delay expansion plans or even shut down. The city can help reduce this financial toll on small businesses—and help small firms recover from this painful period—by greatly expanding the number of violations that are automatically “curable,” an approach that allows business owners to correct certain vio-

lations within 30 days without incurring any fines. Mayor de Blasio has made real progress on this approach, but the city ought to expand the list of curable violations to cover all violations curable except those that impact life or safety issues. Doing this wouldn't just help small businesses save money; it would send a strong message that city government wants businesses to succeed. For too long, the opposite has been true, with agencies seeing small businesses as a needed source of revenue and most inspectors expecting to issue fines no matter what they observe.

**43. Empower underemployed New Yorkers to help small businesses get online**  
**Torrence Boone, Vice President of Global Client Partnerships and**  
**Site Leader for New York, Google**

COVID has changed the landscape across industries and neighborhoods, impacting all New Yorkers in myriad ways. As we emerge from this pandemic period, we have an opportunity to maximize our in-person reintegration and emerge with more resilient and sustainable New York institutions, businesses, and communities. Since arriving in New York two decades ago, Google has invested in increasing access to computer science education. Today, because of partnerships between the city, state, nonprofits, and private sector, New York has developed a variety of pathways to access digital skills and develop credentials for careers in tech: increased curricula at public schools, CUNY, and SUNY; bootcamps and training programs like Pursuit and Per Scholas; and professional certifications developed by Grow with Google. The projected underemployment that may persist because of the pandemic may also present an unprecedented opportunity to reskill significant segments of the population. The city and state—using federal stimulus funds—could then deploy these newly skilled New Yorkers to help restaurants, bookstores, retail, and other small businesses increase their online presence and acquire a critical new customer base. Now can be a time for the city to make a transformational investment focused on a massive workforce development program, leveraging tech employment that has remained strong throughout the pandemic, continues to offer high-paying roles for a wide diversity of educational attainment, and provides strong ladders for advancement and skills that are transferable to almost every industry. These skills can help New Yorkers find sustainable careers in the future, but more immediately, the city can deploy this trained workforce in tandem with private sector partners like Google to help small businesses increase their online presence—from updating a website to optimizing their search results to moving to a full e-commerce business.

**44. Create a Super CDFI to solve the financing gap for thousands of small businesses**  
**Michael Schlein, President and CEO, Accion**

To rebuild NYC's neighborhoods, we need to build an army of lenders who can reach the tens of thousands of small businesses that aren't well-positioned to access traditional bank loans. Nonprofit Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are specifically designed to serve these small businesses, but they need more funding, training, and support to fully meet the needs of New York's communities. To do so, the city should create a Super CDFI dedicated to strengthening the network of NYC small business lenders. With an initial \$50 million investment, the Super CDFI would create a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to buy the loans from existing CDFIs. This would infuse CDFIs with new capital for lending and would be set up so that all the communication and interaction with the borrower would remain with the original CDFI lender. The SPV can then package and sell these loans. This can be done repeatedly to provide a consistent source of fresh capital to lend to small businesses across the city. In addition to paying a market rate of return, the repackaged loans would be attractive to impact investors who want to help rebuild NYC. The Super CDFI would also help to standardize loans and strengthen the whole sector, similar to what Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have done in the mortgage market to great results.

**45. Boost NYC's restaurants and restaurant workers by supporting lease incentives and tip pooling**  
**Danny Meyer, Founder and CEO, Union Square Hospitality Group**

New York City's dynamic restaurant scene is a huge part of what makes the city a great place to live and a global destination for tourists. It's also a massive economic engine and one of the city's fastest-growing industries prior to the pandemic. Revitalizing the restaurant scene is going to be critical to getting the city back on its feet, and doing so requires the city to address some of the long-term challenges the industry has faced, one on the side of restaurateurs and the other on the side of restaurant workers. First, the city needs to act against the upward creep in real estate costs that have priced out many restaurants and give landlords incentives to sustain independent businesses. The market alone encourages renting to banks, drug stores, and chains—we need new controls and incentives to encourage leases for small, independent businesses over national chains. Second, the city and state should address equity issues within the restaurant industry by changing laws to allow wait staff and cooks to share tips. Tip pooling would help address wage disparities between majority-white front-of-house staff and majority-minority back-of-house staff, especially at fine dining establishments. California and other states have already done this, and it's time for New York to level the playing field for restaurant workers, too.

**46. Leverage community assets to bolster neighborhood businesses and build local prosperity****Lloyd Cambridge, Founder and CEO, Progress Playbook**

In black and brown neighborhoods across New York City, local assets—including the talented people living and working in these communities—aren't being channeled in a meaningful way to strengthen small businesses and build local prosperity. The city should work to change this by setting up a new framework for leveraging the expertise of local residents, such as architects, contractors, finance professionals, and unemployed residents, to support their own neighborhood in partnership with government and other local stakeholders. The city could start by enlisting local nonprofit organizations to map the assets in each neighborhood, and share this mapping with small business owners, leaders of community-based organizations, and other stakeholders so they can make better use of these assets and build neighborhoods collectively. Additionally, the city's Department of Small Businesses services should incorporate these local assets into their efforts to deliver services to entrepreneurs and business owners.

**47. Step up investment in credit enhancement to get affordable capital to small businesses—and pair those investments with outcomes-based funding for technical assistance****Steven Cohen, President, and Rachel Van Tosh, Chief Operating Officer, Pursuit Community Finance**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, a variety of emergency grant and loan programs have rolled out to help support small and mid-sized businesses—from the Paycheck Protection Program and the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan to the New York Forward Loan Fund and several city-focused grant programs. There's no question that these programs have kept many businesses afloat. But these emergency programs won't be around forever. At the same time, the financial sector may not come roaring back to serve small business needs, given the losses that businesses are taking in 2020 and beyond. To ensure a lasting economic recovery, the city should look for opportunities to get more affordable capital flowing to small businesses in lower-income neighborhoods and lay the groundwork for long-term recovery. One good option is to strengthen and expand the city's Neighborhood Credit Fund, which helps lower risk for lenders by providing a 2-to-1 match on loan loss reserves. The city has funded it modestly so far, but it has a lot of room to grow. To make this investment really effective, it should be coupled with additional support for technical assistance—including help seeking new contracts, launching new business lines, setting up e-commerce, managing SEO and analytics, and more.

**48. Make it easier for NYC's many cash-based small businesses to access government grants and loans**

**John Wang, Founder and President,  
Asian American Business Development Center**

Many small businesses operate entirely on a cash basis or otherwise have difficulties managing finances and keeping records. These small businesses are precisely the ones that would most benefit from the new recovery grants and funds being made available, yet they often lack the records or paperwork necessary to apply for financial support. The city and state should look at how the regulatory framework for small business financial supports can be adapted to better reach the thousands of city small businesses operating in cash and with only partial records and financial documents. This will help businesses within minority communities, including food service, grocery stores, restaurants, nail salons, dry cleaners, and many other small service-oriented firms, specifically sole proprietorships and businesses supporting local communities.

**49. Create relief grants program for street vendors**

**Mohammed Attia, Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center**

NYC cannot recover from the pandemic unless the most vulnerable within our communities are protected, served, and provided with the relief they need. Despite the billions of dollars in relief programs that were created to support small businesses, street vendors did not qualify for any of them because of the nature of their business, their immigration status, the lack of required documentation, and the language barrier. Since the pandemic hit the city, most vendors stopped working as their daily sales declined by 90 percent. As part of a recovery plan that supports workers and businesses which were excluded from previous relief programs, the city should create a fund that provides relief grants for street vendors to get back on their feet and restart their businesses that were closed last year.

**50. Subsidize housing for students studying design and technology in exchange for a work/study requirement to help local businesses**

**Justin Hendrix, CEO and Editor, Tech Policy Press**

New York City should invest in building “Design Houses” in each of the five boroughs that would house thousands of students from New York and across the United States and abroad each year. Selected students would be able to utilize the housing at a low rate in exchange for meeting a work/study requirement targeted at helping local businesses and providing entrepreneurship opportunities. The Design Houses would be financed in part by fees paid by the students, in part by a cut of retail revenues from the street level shop, and in part by city sources. Staffed by a program manager, these facilities would essentially serve as dorms and meeting spaces where local retailers and businesses would come for design and technology services intended to help them improve their products and communications and reach new markets. At street level, the

houses may include retail space where students can experiment with selling prototype objects, art, fashion, technologies, and other artifacts of their work. The spaces could also offer student-led classes to upskill local business owners in design and technology skills. The opportunity to be part of the Design Houses would be an honor conferred on applicants through a competitive process designed to produce a diverse population.

**51. Enlist tech-savvy teens and young adults to help small businesses adopt technology**

**Seth Bornstein, Executive Director,  
Queens Economic Development Corporation**

From the first days of the pandemic, small businesses in marginalized communities struggled to access public sector aid programs that were promoted and applied for online. The city should enlist STEM major college students to work with CBOs to assist small businesses in using technology and accessing recovery funds and other resources. Meanwhile, youth in the city's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) could apply their Instagram and Tik Tok skills to help small businesses learn how to use these platforms for advertising and e-commerce.

**52. Reduce liability insurance premiums for restaurants and venues during lockdown periods**

**Michael Dorf, Founder and CEO, City Winery**

New York restaurants and entertainment venues are required to have liability insurance, and premiums are usually based on total capacity. But these businesses should not be held responsible for 100 percent of their liability premiums during months when capacity was drastically reduced due to government shutdowns. The city or state should mandate that insurance companies reduce premiums by the same percentage that those businesses' occupancy was reduced by. Not every New York City restaurant or venue is going to reopen, and not every one that closed is likely to be replaced. But those provided enough support to survive the coming year will have greater room to grow, re-establishing a fertile creative ecosystem that new businesses will be drawn to.

**53. Use technology to improve the permitting and regulatory process for small businesses**

**Gregg Bishop, former Commissioner,  
NYC Department of Small Business Services**

New York City has a reputation for being an extremely difficult place for small businesses, and one of the main reasons is that the many city agencies with roles in the permitting and regulatory process don't have a good way of communicating with each other. Upgrading the city's technology infrastructure is the key to solving this problem—and making New York a significantly easier place to do business. Right now, the city

agencies—including the Buildings, Health, and Fire Departments—all have different technology platforms, and it's difficult for them to share information. When a small business submits a permit in one place, it'd be ideal if other agencies would see that this is happening and move to schedule their own reviews on that business's application. But this typically doesn't happen. Similarly, it would make sense for a small business to be notified the moment its building owner has pulled a permit to put up scaffolding, giving the entrepreneur a chance to prepare for what can be an extremely challenging disruption to their operations. But instead, that small business owner first finds out when she shows up and sees a sidewalk shed over her business. There needs to be a simple way for small businesses to not only connect with all regulatory agencies but also to be informed by agencies when something is happening that affects their business. There was an attempt to create a technology platform across city agencies, but it is very clunky and not easily usable for small businesses. It needs an upgrade.

**54. Encourage corporate employees to interact with their local communities and support small businesses**

**John Wang, Founder and President,  
Asian American Business Development Center**

The return of corporate office workers to NYC's business districts will be a crucial step in the city's economic recovery. But the city can go beyond just harnessing the spending power of the corporate workforce by working together with major employers and local small business communities to encourage and incentivize new partnerships, including pro-bono assistance programs, as is common in the legal services field. Executives can build on their commitments to address social and economic inequalities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic by drawing on their own workforces, who are increasingly eager to be part of the solution. This means recognizing the role of large, corporate employers as stewards of the communities in which they operate and nurturing connections between these companies and local small businesses. For instance, many larger businesses have the capacity to provide non-financial assistance in the form of mentorship, consulting, and advisory services. Companies can also channel the enthusiasm of their employees through company matches, volunteer hours, corporate foundations, and other programming.

**55. Enlist local university students to help small businesses innovate, grow, and scale**  
**Micah Kotch, Managing Director, URBAN-X**

After a devastating year, traditional small businesses, especially those in the retail and hospitality sectors, are entering a new and uncertain chapter that will require them to reconfigure and reinvent themselves for an increasingly digitized commercial landscape. To help ensure that the city's small businesses are able to pivot, transition, and thrive in the post-pandemic economy, the city should call on New York City's university students to help. New York City's Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and Economic



Development Corporation (EDC) should engage New York's major universities to create semester-long Hacking 4 Recovery classes to revitalize Main Street commercial businesses. Teams of students and local business owners across the city are matched by local business improvement districts and university entrepreneurship offices and trained to brainstorm experiments, test and prototype their ideas with customers, and develop innovative new strategies for small businesses. The students would spend the entire semester with the businesses and receive a small stipend from SBS. The roughly 600,000 university students across NYC represent underutilized leverage. Their diversity of talent and perspective, from business and design to engineering and law, represents the right ingredients to spark equitable growth across the city's hardest-hit businesses. Students want to help the diverse communities in which they're immersed. Leaders in city government and academia should empower them to do so. All that's needed to help fulfill the promise of this new partnership is political will, public-private collaboration, and some seed capital for training, support, and evaluation.

#### **56. Provide direct financial support to cooperative businesses**

**Saduf Syal, Coordinating Director, NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives**

Supporting the thousands of NYC small businesses that have been hit hard by declining revenue and lost customers during the pandemic will be crucial to the city's economic recovery. And sustaining worker cooperative business models, which have been demonstrated to increase worker's rights and autonomy, will be especially important as the city charts a more inclusive economic future. While the Worker Coop Business Development Initiative (WCBDI) has been a major assistance, the city should make a new level of commitment by providing direct financial assistance to cooperative businesses to support the continued growth of the solidarity economy and promote worker autonomy and community-driven economic development. The city should encourage accessible loan programs that support cooperative businesses and create a direct grant program for cooperative businesses within communities most impacted by COVID, most vulnerable, and most left out by the current economy.

#### **57. Reduce the burden on small businesses by requiring impact statements for relevant legislative proposals**

**Jessica Walker, President and CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce**

Following a year in which thousands of small businesses shut down, and countless more are barely hanging on, New York City needs to take steps to strengthen and support these vital enterprises—and make sure more are set up to survive the long recovery. One way to support them is by making sure that new legislation does not place new burdens on small businesses by analyzing their economic impact. City Council's Finance Division conducts reviews of the fiscal implications of some legislative proposals but generally does not analyze their effects on jobs and the economy. As a result, mandates passed by

the City Council with the intention of supporting workers can end up being costly and excessively punitive for many small businesses, for instance. New York should follow San Francisco's lead and commit to economic impact analyses of legislative proposals that might have consequences for jobs, small businesses, and the broader economy.

**58. Emulate the AgLanta initiative to scale up urban agriculture in NYC's hard-hit communities of color**

**Mark Gardner, Principal, Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects**

The pandemic disproportionately impacted communities of color in large part due to social determinants of health—the conditions in which people live and work. Indeed, some of the hardest-hit communities in NYC are also food deserts with very limited access to healthy foods and fresh produce, which leads to higher rates of underlying conditions like diabetes that put residents at greater risk of getting severely ill from diseases like COVID. The city needs to get at the root causes and help low-income communities of color become healthier, and it can do this by greatly increasing support for urban agriculture. Although there are already several promising urban agriculture efforts afoot in New York, city officials can accelerate and expand these programs by following the lead of Atlanta and its innovative AgLanta initiative. The program, which, crucially, is run by Atlanta's city planning department, has helped seed and support small urban farms in communities of color by providing resources and making empty lots available. AgLanta has also helped establish edible parks, in which some city parks are now growing fruits and vegetables that are grown and eaten by local residents. New York should similarly integrate urban agriculture into the city's planning agenda and direct a single agency—such as the planning department—to spearhead these efforts. With strong leadership and support from the city in partnership with community-based urban farms, New York can address gaps in food supply and target communities based on their needs. The Department of City Planning has already identified which areas of the city are food deserts—now it should take the next step and cultivate a rich ecosystem of urban agriculture to fill those gaps.

**59. Create economic opportunity zones to spur inclusive innovation in key growth industries**

**Alexa von Tobel, Founder and Managing Partner, Inspired Capital**

New York City has to take bold steps to promote innovation if it wants to remain the epicenter of business in the coming years. The city should create economic opportunity zones to supercharge innovation and company-building across key industries that we know will grow exponentially over the next decade, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, healthcare, gaming, and climate tech. This could take several forms, such as capital gains tax incentives for businesses investing in these industries. It could also include rent subsidies for technical talent and subsidies for top education institutions, like Cornell Tech and Flatiron School, to allow them to expand their offerings, double

down on research and development, and increase financial aid for students. Lastly, the program should expand housing and office development in historically underdeveloped neighborhoods. Such tactics are meant to create opportunities for entrepreneurs and talent alike, sharing broader benefits with the communities in which they work. Ultimately, implementing economic opportunity zones will incentivize companies in these key sectors to stay and grow in New York.

**60. Work with community-based organizations and business assistance nonprofits to direct federally-funded relief grants to New York's hardest-hit businesses and communities**

**Linda Baran, President, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce**

Communities and small businesses across the city have been devastated by the pandemic, but the recent infusion of significant federal dollars into city and state government has the potential to provide targeted relief to the New Yorkers hardest hit by the coronavirus crisis and economic downturn. However, federally-funded block grants that are disbursed by agencies like the Departments of Small Business Services (SBS) and Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) are often allocated based on geographic areas like census tracts, which can sometimes limit their reach. For example, mixed-income communities in less dense parts of the city like Staten Island might be rendered ineligible for funding because of higher median income. These geographic determinations can end up depriving hard-hit businesses and lower-income residents of much-needed relief simply because of where they are located. The city should work more closely with nonprofit organizations on the ground in communities that provide technical assistance to allocate city, state, and federal funding where it is most needed. Community-based organizations understand the needs of the communities they serve and should be empowered to direct relief and assistance accordingly.

**61. Preserve industrial jobs by helping small manufacturers tap into the 21st-century economy**

**Barbara Blair, President, Garment District Alliance**

New York City may never bring back the manufacturing and production jobs that it had during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but there are still many small, family-run factories operating in the city that need support. These factories often have no websites, emails, or social media presence, are run by owners with limited English proficiency and are scattered across the city far beyond the traditional Garment District. The city should help these manufacturers market themselves, first by developing a web presence and showcasing their equipment, capacity, and unique skills. Few if any of these businesses have the capital or expertise to do this themselves, but with marketing assistance and outreach, the city can help these small, MADE IN NY manufacturers find new opportunities to grow.

**62. Lift the caps on opportunities for street vending for licenses and permits**

**Mohammed Attia, Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center**

Street vending has been an essential part of NYC's culture, history, and entrepreneurship landscape for centuries—and supporting street vendors will be crucial to revitalizing the city's streetscape as the city opens up after the pandemic. Yet the vending system has been outdated for decades and needs reform. Arbitrary caps on the number of food vending permits and general (merchandise) vending licenses were put in place in 1983 and 1979, respectively, and have created an underground, price-gouging market for permits while also forcing thousands of vendors to operate their businesses without one. As a result, they face increased risks, such as getting arrested, receiving high fines, and losing their merchandise and property. Current bills like Intro 116 are limited, as they will gradually increase the number of food vending permits over a span of the decade. The city should instead lift the caps on permits entirely. Lifting the caps will help NYC's smallest businesses recover economically from the pandemic, help create thousands of jobs, establish thousands of new, legal small businesses, and get the vendors out of the informal economy.

**63. Incentivize corporate executives to mentor small businesses**

**Jessica Johnson, President, Johnson Security Bureau**

Small businesses have been deeply affected by the pandemic in New York, from being forced to close their doors, terminate or furlough employees, reduce benefits, close physical stores due to rent pricing, and much more. It is critical that the city implement lasting support systems for small to mid-sized businesses in order to maintain the vibrant economy in New York, support employment, and increase localized monetary circulation. This approach encourages corporate leaders to share best business practices that small and mid-sized businesses can right size for their operations. The city should support mentorship programs between large corporations and small businesses in order to allow businesses to provide better benefits to their employees, such as healthcare and retirement deals, and increase incentivization for employee retention. The city could financially incentivize businesses to participate in such partnerships and connect compatible businesses of different sizes with one another. The city could help finance and support large-scale employment for small businesses through these partnerships and encourage corporations to partner and mentor these businesses to create a more attractive deal for employees.

**64. Collaborate with local tech businesses to expand internet access and jobs**  
**Clayton Banks, CEO, Silicon Harlem**

Our increasing reliance on the internet, especially post-pandemic, necessitates increases in network connectivity and tech jobs. The city should create partnerships with organizations like Silicon Harlem to train people as network technicians and construction as it relates to expanding internet connectivity. Upper Manhattan, for example, has an unemployment rate double that of the overall average unemployment while also having only 40 percent of households with internet access. The city can create a program that will not only train individuals to install and expand internet access through workforce training opportunities but also improve the city's broadband infrastructure in the process.

**65. Help businesses compete in the metaverse**  
**Jason Musante, Global Chief Creative Officer, Hugu**

One of the biggest growth areas for the economy will be in “the metaverse,” a persistent virtual world perhaps best epitomized by massively popular games such as Fortnite, Minecraft, and Animal Crossing. Hundreds of millions of people around the world already embrace these virtual gaming worlds—Fortnite alone has an estimated 350 million players worldwide—but this is just the beginning. As more people immerse themselves in virtual experiences, these platforms will advance and many more companies—not just in gaming—will embrace the metaverse for concerts, sporting events, films and many other types of commerce. New York should get ahead of this. One thing the city can do is to help its restaurants and other small businesses move to the metaverse, giving them a powerful new opportunity to market themselves and earn revenue. Some major corporations are already doing this, but few of New York's small businesses know the first thing about this opportunity, much less how to take advantage of it. The city and state might incentivize this type of commerce, while simultaneously promoting New York as a hospitable home for virtual experiences, by taxing income generated in the metaverse at a more favorable rate. Or the city might help establish Business Improvement Districts that operate online.

### III. HELP NEW YORKERS OF COLOR BOOST INCOMES AND BUILD WEALTH



A strong and equitable economic recovery will require a new level of investment in communities of color, focused on connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, building community wealth, and supporting immigrant and minority entrepreneurs.

#### **66. Provide Baby Bonds to every NYC child born in poverty**

**Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College;  
Former NYC Deputy Mayor**

Baby Bonds are a powerful way to close the racial wealth gap, create wealth in historically marginalized communities, and build towards a more equitable New York City economy. The city would set up and seed a savings account for every child born into a family with income at or below the poverty line, with the money growing through interest and additional contributions until the child turns 18. The city already has a model for the bonds in the NYC Kids Rise Save for College program, which sets up kindergartners with \$100 in NY 529 college savings accounts—but the Baby Bonds program can be even more impactful by starting at birth, applying to all families below a certain income, higher seed funding, and even matching funds for family contributions. These Baby Bonds could also be more flexible and used for anything from college tuition to starting a business. A small investment now could be life-changing 18 years later.

**67. Establish a “Curb Recidivism Fellowship” to provide new supports for youth who’ve been involved in the criminal justice system**

**Clayton Banks, CEO, Silicon Harlem**

The city should develop a “Curb Recidivism Fellowship” that covers tuition and living expenses for youth that have been exposed to the criminal justice system. Youth fellows would benefit from training at a community college or technical institute and receive mentorship to help divert mentees from future justice involvement. An effective and equitable post-pandemic recovery requires providing youths opportunity instead of subjecting them to the vicious cycle of an unfair justice system while addressing the gaps in educational attainment that prevent countless New Yorkers from accessing the good-paying jobs driving the economic rebound.

**68. Increase wages for the nonprofit human services workforce**

**Nathaniel Fields, CEO, Urban Resource Institute**

We are at a crossroads. While Mayor de Blasio’s administration has had significant success, and most recently with increases to the indirect cost rate that so many nonprofits rely on to appropriately run their organizations, there is more work to be done. The incoming Mayor and City Council have an opportunity to move past this narrative by addressing wages for the working poor, specifically those who comprise the majority of the nonprofit human services sector workforce. Representing about 30 percent of the city’s total workforce, these employees provide a wide range of essential services, from after-school programs to supportive housing to domestic violence prevention and intervention services. And, unlike city and state employees, their wages are very low, and most of them are eligible for some kind of public benefit. In 2016, average annual wages for employees in the sector were under \$30,000. From a structural perspective, the fee-for-service structure is to some degree responsible for keeping a significant population—largely women from the Black and brown community—at a low living wage. Addressing this inequity is within reach of the city, and ensuring that this workforce has the ability to move toward living wages could enrich the lives of so many New Yorkers.

**69. Increase wages and income supports to build economic stability for low-income communities of color**

**Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director, FPWA**

New York City’s low-income communities of color were hardest hit by COVID, and women of color, who are often primary or sole breadwinners, disproportionately lost their jobs and haven’t recovered them. To bring about real, lasting change for low-income communities of color, the city must first account for the true costs of making ends meet and building savings for the future. This crisis has shown how tenuous the city’s pre-pandemic economic prosperity was, as even New Yorkers earning above minimum

wage had little to no savings to rely on when they lost their jobs. It's clear that a minimum wage job in New York City isn't going to take people very far in terms of economic stability. The city should institute increased wages and revise tax laws to make them more responsive to lower-income people. In addition, the city must make other critical investments in safe and affordable housing, early childhood education, and community healthcare programs, building economy within communities so that people don't have to leave to access what they need. Only by taking a holistic approach—starting with wages and income supports—can the city not only recover from this crisis but build a more prosperous and sustainable economy for all New Yorkers over the longer term.

**70. Help far more women and minority-owned construction firms succeed through capital funding and set-aside projects**

**Cheryl McKissack Daniel, President and CEO, McKissack**

Especially when it comes to ownership, the construction and development industry is not diverse. For NYC to chart an equitable recovery, it needs to foster the growth of minority and women-owned businesses (MWBEs) in this important industry. And one major challenge standing in the way of female developers and developers of color is upfront capital. The city has a promising model to address this in the Emerging Developer Loan Fund, which provided \$10 million to reduce barriers accessing pre-development and property acquisition financing. NYCEDC should greatly expand the fund, but there are additional steps needed to grow MWBE firms and meet the city's participation goals. The city should take a page from the state Dormitory Authority and create a set-aside program where the only businesses competing for a select group of projects are MWBEs. By designating several campuses as set-asides, the Dormitory Authority has created a unique space for women and minority-owned firms to compete with one another and grow. This extends not just to developers themselves but also to architecture and engineering firms, among others. The city should bring this model into city agency projects and greatly expand MWBE participation.

**71. Build infrastructure to support entrepreneurship in New York City's lower-income communities**

**Jo-Ann Rolle, Dean, School of Business, Medgar Evers College**

To boost the city's economic recovery, we need an ecosystem with dedicated resources to encourage, sponsor, develop, and support self-employment, especially for some of the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are currently unemployed or underemployed. The next mayor should set up a network of one-stop shops specifically focused on starting new businesses in lower-income communities. These hubs should provide business planning supports, help preparing a pitch, intellectual property expertise, financial accounting services, social media training, mentorship access, and more. Crucially, they should be staffed with people who are trusted in the local community, which can help overcome some of the natural resistance to seeking help and sharing details of a



business idea. While some of these programs or services exist today, many aspiring entrepreneurs find that they need to travel to several different providers and locations to access all the supports needed to succeed. To help get more new businesses started, the mayor should also work with the state to expand the Self-Employment Assistance Program, which allows New Yorkers to tap into unemployment dollars to seed new businesses.

## **72. Develop geographically targeted financial recovery supports for small businesses in the hardest-hit communities**

**Lourdes Zapata, President and CEO, SoBro**

The economic impact of the COVID crisis on the city’s small business community was felt more in already fragile, economically distressed neighborhoods. Equitable recovery should be promoted by policymakers using zip code-based data to develop locally targeted policy decisions. Rather than create a “one-size-fits-all” approach, the city should seek to implement small business supports that are proportionate to the impact of the crisis within each community, utilizing tools such as commercial tax rebates for small businesses located in the city’s hardest-hit zip codes. Additional supports in the form of grants, forgivable loans and/or extended loan repayment terms, as well as opportunities to decrease small business tax and utility payments, will support the cash needs of businesses. Lastly, support to borough-wide economic development organizations, which are best positioned to address the needs of underserved populations, must be a priority rather than an afterthought.

## **73. Expand Freelancers Hubs across all five boroughs**

**Rafael Espinal, Executive Director, Freelancers Union**

Roughly one-third of New Yorkers earn income from freelance work. To revive the city’s economy, the city should invest in creating free hubs to support the independent workforce. Today, New York is home to a single city-funded Freelancers Hub, which is operated by Freelancers Union. It provides a free coworking and networking space for independent workers in film, writing, and media. Because the space and programming are free to freelancers, we have found that the majority of our members who utilize the space are lower-income workers who don’t have the financial capacity to join a paid coworking space. The Hub also provides free legal and financial assistance and programming that enables independent workers to upskill, receive financial counseling, and access legal assistance. Creating Hubs in all five boroughs will help stimulate the use of underutilized commercial spaces while giving independent workers the tools they need to grow their business and succeed financially.

**74. Launch a community-owned cooperative hub in every borough**  
**Saduf Syal, Coordinating Director, NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives**

During the pandemic, many businesses had difficulty retaining their physical spaces and were forced to downsize, relocate, or lose space entirely. For long-term economic recovery, supporting the retention of space is critical for small businesses and for the success of worker cooperative businesses. For worker coops, space is needed for housing businesses, but also for storage, production, and training—and the city can help. The city should implement cooperative hubs in each borough. These hubs would provide accessible spaces for community development and facilitate new, community-based cooperatives. Established through the community land trust (CLT) model, these hubs would house worker coops and provide educational training to the broader community under CLT community control, allowing for greater autonomy and localized—rather than extractive—economic development.

**75. Help New Yorkers of color start and grow businesses in the marijuana industry**  
**Marlene Cintron, President, Bronx Overall Development Corporation**

Following the legalization of marijuana this spring, there is a significant opportunity for this emerging industry to boost the city’s economic recovery and provide opportunities for New Yorkers disproportionately impacted not just by the pandemic but also by decades of unequal drug enforcement to start new businesses, build wealth, and create jobs. But without concrete steps from the city and state to ensure equity and inclusivity, larger, well-capitalized companies could take hold of the industry. The city and state should go beyond mandates for MWBE participation and reach out directly to New Yorkers of color with prior criminal justice involvement who may need additional supports to break into the industry while it is still being formed. This might include financial literacy classes, marketing training, assistance with business formation, and access to capital. New Yorkers of color must be afforded opportunities to own businesses in all aspects of the industry, from growing operations and edibles production to dispensaries and smoking lounges. This can help ensure that profits from businesses go to the communities harmed by decades of strict drug laws and unequal enforcement while setting the market up for minority entrepreneurs to thrive.

**76. Target investments to support businesses in hard-hit communities**  
**Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, JobsFirstNYC**

Many small businesses in the neighborhoods most impacted by COVID-19 were unable to access the federal Payment Protection Program and other forms of city, state, and federal support. There should be targeted investment to support businesses in those hard-hit communities, including grants and loans for viable businesses and technical assistance for businesses that are not viable or are unable to meet documentation

requirements for existing programs, so that there is a path for every business to access government-backed investment and support.

### **77. Create more inroads for BIPOC-led construction firms**

**Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate, The Shubert Organization**

The city or state should mandate that more BIPOC-led construction firms be hired for projects that receive public funding, tax incentives, or other benefits. In that regard, large institutions that receive real estate tax abatements, including large not for profits, should make best efforts to hire BIPOC-led firms in the construction industry, professional services, and suppliers. Small, minority-owned construction businesses often lack the capacity to bid on large contracts. The city should take the lead by breaking up contracts to make them more accessible to BIPOC-led firms or by helping larger non-minority-led and BIPOC-led companies partner on joint bids. This can create much-needed employment opportunities for firms that were short on capital before COVID and faced massive job losses during the crisis: Up to 50 percent of the NYC-based Minority & Women Contractors & Developers Association (MWCDA) member firms were expected to go out of business by the end of 2020, for instance.

### **78. Enhance supports for local businesses hit hardest by the pandemic**

**Nathalie Molina Niño, Investor and Author**

The federal PPP loan program disproportionately failed New York City's business owners of color. Setting a goal for job creation isn't enough; those jobs should be created by local businesses hit hardest by the pandemic shutdowns and failed federal stimulus. This will require improving access to capital—not predatory venture capital, but grants, loans, and lines of credit, for example—as well as assistance with securing retail and industrial spaces. These efforts can also help ensure that platforms supporting Main Street businesses—like Brooklyn-based ShopIn.NYC, which recently expanded into Manhattan—are equipped to compete with the likes of Amazon, spurring a more comprehensive and inclusive economic recovery.

### **79. Develop a neighborhood-based strategy for promoting and accessing local services**

**Margaret Honey, President and CEO, NY Hall of Science**

Throughout this crisis, service providers that understand the local community are best at providing resources in a way that makes residents feel comfortable. New York City should develop a neighborhood-based strategy to catalyze and make visible local resources. The city could do this by having nonprofits register their services through an app or website—people should be able to google “local resources in Corona” and come up with a comprehensive list of services. The Elmhurst and Corona Recovery Collaborative is an

example of a project that brought institutions like the New York Hall of Science together with local nonprofits to help a hard-hit community access trusted resources, which is so important because if an individual is undocumented, for example, they may be hesitant to go to larger centers like Citi Field because of concerns about immigration enforcement.

**80. Develop a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to revitalize communities of color**

**Sister Paulette LoMonaco, formerly with Good Shepherd Services**

Communities of color were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet make up most of the essential workforce that kept the city afloat. The city should develop and fund a multi-faceted program that comprehensively builds up these communities. The pandemic made school even more challenging for students living in homeless shelters and those attending transfer high schools, and many students have fallen behind or stopped attending classes. To help motivate these students to return to school, graduate, earn a GED, and/or find permanent employment, the city should create more paid internships, such as through a Youth Corps focused on community recovery projects. Community Schools and Beacon programs should be expanded to better assist students impacted by trauma. To stem the tide of community violence, the city should lean on effective programs like Cure Violence while also integrating more social workers and counselors into police precincts. The city should also create additional Family Enrichment Centers to help people before they get involved with ACS. Investment in low-income and supportive housing and robust social services inside of shelters is needed as well. In a plan like this, community-based organizations will be called upon to do more, and the city should fund them robustly through yearly cost of living adjustments to stabilize their essential workforce and ensure full payment of all indirect/administrative costs. The plan would create significant employment opportunities, particularly for young adults, and boost community-based programs so that neighborhoods have the resources to help residents achieve successful and productive lives.

**81. Increase investment in facilities and resources within high-need communities**  
**Anthony Munroe, President, Borough of Manhattan Community College**

To expand academic programming aligned with employment opportunities for the communities with the greatest need, the city should invest directly within those communities in the form of facilities and services—building on the CUNY in the Heights model opening this fall. With greater financial support, access to partnership networks, and reduced bureaucracy, innovative public colleges will be better positioned to provide targeted programming that directly impacts the systemic issues that plague New York City.

## **82. Expand benefits and extend local voting rights to the immigrant communities that will power New York's economic recovery**

**Van Tran, Associate Professor of Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center**

In the 1970s, immigrant small businesses, workers, and communities were critical to bringing New York City back from economic decline. Immigrant communities are localized within every neighborhood of the city and individually make up the largest share of the workforce, especially among front-line workers. Acknowledging the economic importance of immigrant communities and the disproportionate hardship they have experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, the city should expand benefits and supports and increase immigrant civic participation. First, the city should present clear signaling that the Trump-era public charge rule has ended and that immigrants do not need to worry about jeopardizing their immigration status by seeking government assistance. Next, the city should go beyond the state's one-time financial benefit and extend greater social supports to immigrant communities broadly and permanently, including access to healthcare, social services, legal services, and mental health services. Last, in order to empower immigrants throughout New York, the city should pass legislation extending access to voting rights at the local level for non-citizens and carry out a public education campaign to spur civic and political engagement.

## **83. Support the East Harlem 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan**

**Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

New York has a high rate of environmental injustice, so investing capital and resources into historically disadvantaged areas like East Harlem is putting investment back into a place that the city has let down in the past. But it's important to do it in a way the community wants, not a top-down approach. That's why WE ACT convened over 40 East Harlem-based community organizations to engage over 400 community members and stakeholders and develop a Community Vision Action Plan. The plan offers a roadmap to transform East Harlem's under-resourced 125th Street corridor into a thriving economic hub and cultural destination on par with the famed Central and West Harlem portions of the thoroughfare and do it in a way that ensures transit-oriented development benefits the existing community. The plan leverages development following the Second Avenue Subway extension to increase clean and green public space initiatives and revitalize a neighborhood that is low income, mostly people of color, heat vulnerable, and severely impacted by COVID-19. Important, too, are policies to strengthen the neighborhood's environmental and economic sustainability while safeguarding the community and its culture from the gentrification that will follow the subway.

**84. Publicize the facts about companies' hiring of New Yorkers of color**  
**Gail Mellow, Executive Director, New York Jobs CEO Council; former President, LaGuardia Community College**

One of the keys to an equitable economic recovery in New York will be greatly expanding the number of New Yorkers of color who can access well-paying jobs. Much of this will be up to private sector companies, who have the ability to make this happen through investments in job training, internships, apprenticeships and changes in their hiring practices. City Hall can help. Although many employers across the city are taking ambitious steps to hire and promote New Yorkers of color—including the 28 companies that are participating in the New York Jobs CEO Council—the city can ensure that a lot more companies take these steps simply by making public what companies are doing and literally counting how many people are hired. The city's economic development agency should not do just this, but also do it in a big and prominent way: Install a digital clock in Union Square or Times Square that shows how the city is doing in hiring New Yorkers of color in jobs that pay at least \$55,000 a year in real time.

## IV. EMBRACE PUBLIC HEALTH TO MAKE NEW YORKERS HEALTHIER AND GROW THE ECONOMY



New investments to improve New Yorkers' physical and mental health will benefit those hardest hit by the pandemic, make New York better prepared for the next health crisis, and lay a foundation for job growth.

### **85. Make NYC a global capital of public health**

**Seth Pinsky, CEO, 92nd Street Y; former President,  
NYC Economic Development Corporation**

Looking back, one of the best things my colleagues and I in the Bloomberg administration did to get the city's economy going again following the 2008 financial crisis was to set a goal of turning New York into a capital of 21st-century innovation. With that big goal set, we then launched a series of initiatives and investments that people bought into, and New York ultimately did become a global center of innovation. Today, New York's economic development leaders should similarly set a big goal: make New York a global leader in public health. This means investing in hospitals and the healthcare system and also finally making good on the promise of New York becoming a leading hub in commercial bioscience. The stars are finally aligned to deliver on this potential. Following the pandemic, there will be enormous funds flowing into the sector. And whereas New York's aspirations in this field were previously held back by real estate—or specifically the lack of affordable wet lab space—that obstacle is not as big anymore since the commercial bioscience field is increasingly moving to dry labs and computer-based research. This is a huge sector of the economy that can be grown in New York, that will result in well-paying jobs, and, unlike other parts of the economy, can't easily be done remotely.

**86. Plan now to deal with the next infectious disease, borrowing from what worked in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam**

**Jeffrey Shaman, Epidemiologist and Director, Climate and Health Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University**

One of the things we've learned over the past year is that places that succeeded in controlling the coronavirus—including Taiwan, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Vietnam—generally managed to minimize their economic hit from the pandemic. Many of these places actually experienced economic growth in 2020. New York should learn from this. City officials would be wise to understand what these places did that helped insulate them from the worst effects of the pandemic, and then take affirmative steps to develop a plan for the next infectious disease. Creating such a plan and enacting measures so that the city is more prepared for the next pandemic won't just save lives the next time around; it will benefit the city's economy, enable small businesses to remain open, and probably keep residents from fleeing the city. There's no one right set of policies. Indeed, all of these places took different approaches. But New York should take steps now in order to avoid the same health and economic cataclysm that the city experienced from COVID. One step might be to pass laws that give legal authority to the municipal government to do certain things during a pandemic—such as enforcing a legally mandated quarantine.

**87. Help prepare NYC for the next pandemic by making New Yorkers healthier, through investments in public health preventative care and health literacy**

**Wafaa El-Sadr, University Professor and Dr. Mathilde Krim-amfAR  
Chair of Global Health, Columbia University**

Despite the great strengths of New York City's healthcare infrastructure, including its major medical centers and robust city health department, none of it was truly poised to deal with a threat like COVID-19. The pandemic shined a light on the fragility of the city's public health system, revealing supply chain gaps, community disconnects, and more than anything else, the tragic consequences of health conditions that were not prevented or addressed, and which led to high covid mortality rates among vulnerable populations. A new focus on advancing the health of communities and populations will be vital to the city's economic future. There need to be new conceptualizations of "health" means and how to achieve it—moving past the curative model of treating illnesses and towards new preventative models. The city should rebalance incentives to invest more in public health, and not just in the health department, but through community-based clinics and new enticements for large medical centers to support ongoing work in the communities hardest hit by the pandemic. The city should also open public health hubs in every community across the city, starting with those that have been disadvantaged in healthcare access and outcomes. Different than community clinics, these public health hubs would be hubs of information: disseminating health information and improving health literacy, collecting health information to improve services and preventative care, and promoting community



engagement. While everyone cannot become an epidemiologist, a new focus on collective public health literacy can help to encourage healthy behaviors and practices, from regular checkups and screenings to healthy eating, and greatly improve the city's resilience to shocks like COVID.

**88. Create new jobs and career pipelines in mental health to respond to the growing demand for mental health services following the pandemic**

**Pamela Brier, former President and CEO, Maimonides Medical Center**

More than one year into a pandemic that has devastated communities and families and led to high unemployment and unprecedented social isolation, New York City is facing a mounting mental health crisis. But there are not enough mental health providers to respond fully. The city should grow the mental health workforce in order to provide New Yorkers with the care they need, and in doing create thousands of new jobs and multiple career paths in the growing healthcare sector. CUNY can be a big player in this push by scaling up its existing mental health counseling and psychiatric nurse practitioner programs, among others, and by partnering closely with NYC Health + Hospitals to align courses and curriculum with workforce training throughout the city's public hospital and clinic system. With greater coordination, CUNY and H+H can create new pipelines for New Yorkers of all backgrounds to build careers in mental health care, all while helping the city recover from the trauma of the past year.

**89. Learn from the pandemic to make deeper progress reducing the incidence of respiratory illness**

**Jeffrey Shaman, Epidemiologist and Director, Climate and Health Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University**

The preventative public health measures put in place during the pandemic may not have been enough to stop COVID, but it appears that they did succeed in reducing the incidence of flu and other respiratory illnesses. If New York can learn from this and keep respiratory viruses on the run, it would make the city healthier and disproportionately help disadvantaged communities, who suffer from these illnesses at much higher rates. City health officials should first research the extent to which rates of childhood asthma, rhinovirus, flu, and other respiratory illnesses declined over the past year and whether preventative measures like mask-wearing were the reason. If confirmed, the city should take aggressive steps to promote and normalize mask-wearing during flu season or when people are sick.

**90. Invest federal funding in integrated, community-based health**

**Jeanette Moy, Executive Vice President and  
Chief Operating Officer for Public Health Solutions**

A new waiver could allow for healthcare funding to be directed toward innovative programs that can reduce the cost of care. The State should ensure that those funds get invested into community-based health by connecting and supporting local clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers with human service organizations, which are trusted by the local residents. With more robust support, these health centers can better address social determinants of health for the low-income immigrant communities they often serve. People have been putting off regular doctor's appointments and routine care for chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension, on top of being socially isolated, all of which is likely to result in increased healthcare spending as we come out of the pandemic. But community-based providers can help spur economic recovery, so long as they are funded well enough to offer or get people connected to the right types of supports, and addressing the social determinants to improve their health and allow them to get back to work.

**91. Make New York the global city best prepared for the next pandemic**

**Gifford Miller, Principal, Signature Urban Properties;  
former Speaker of the New York City Council**

The most important action that New York can take to create a strong economic recovery is to make density feel safe again. People need to believe that, should a new virus or other public health emergencies threaten the city in the future, New York isn't going to empty out. People won't panic about getting on the subways, and businesses won't be forced to close. There's no chance that this is the last pandemic we'll have to deal with. We've seen four in just the past 15 years, and we're going to experience another here, too. If and when a similar crisis happens again—and we look as toothless and lost—it will be an even bigger blow to the city. Unless we prove that you can safely build your business here, those business that can will go elsewhere. We need to make New York the readiest city in the world for the next pandemic. This will require real leadership and a comprehensive plan to implement every lesson learned from the past year and make New York as pandemic-ready as Tokyo or Hong Kong. This should include significantly improving our ability to do effective contact tracing, training new cohorts of public health workers, ensuring our hospitals are able to maintain pandemic readiness, and stockpiling essential supplies like masks, ventilators, and PPE. If we're successful, New York should become the place you'd want to be when faced with a global health crisis.

**92. Transform the city's test-and-trace corps into a new public health workforce**  
**Christine Kovich, Co-Founder, Harlem Biospace**

In just a few months last year, the city hired thousands of out-of-work New Yorkers to conduct contact tracing. This brand new test and trace corps could be transformed into community health workers who could play a significant role in increasing access to health care and improving public health outcomes across New York City. While many if not most of the contact tracers lack formal training in biology and the life sciences, they have developed valuable soft skills through their work and function as credible messengers within the community about COVID. With additional investment, this rapidly onboarded corps could transition to jobs as part of the city's permanent public health workforce, which will be integral to the city's recovery.

**93. Create the government infrastructure to prepare for the next pandemic by expanding the Mayor's Office of Resiliency mandate to include public health threats**  
**Sam Chandan, Silverstein Chair and Academic Dean, NYU Schack Institute**

As it emerges from the pandemic, New York City should be preparing in earnest for the inevitability of the next public health shock, working proactively to ensure a strong and equitable economic rebound. There is growing agreement among epidemiologists that the emergence of novel infectious diseases that are likely zoonotic in origin, such as COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS, has the potential to increase in frequency in the coming decades. The United Nations Environment Program gives several reasons for this projection, including rapid increases in demand for animal protein in emerging economies, agricultural intensification, the increasing sophistication of the food supply chain, and climate change. Identifying and responding to these emergent threats and coordinating across disparate public and private stakeholders is critical in mitigating the enormous risk to human life and national and local economies. New York City should expand the scope of the Mayor's Office of Resiliency mandate beyond climate change to include investment in processes and infrastructure that will improve resilience to public health threats. Doing so can create a wide range of new jobs while helping ensure the city's overall competitiveness.

**94. Continue to provide free and widespread rapid testing so that unvaccinated New Yorkers can participate safely in the local economy**

**Melva Miller, CEO, Association for a Better New York**

Increased vaccination rates are instrumental in lowering the city's COVID cases and allowing the city's economy to open up and life to return to normal. But even though well over half of all New Yorkers have received at least one dose of the vaccine, there are still many people who have not been vaccinated or do not yet want to be vaccinated but who still need a negative COVID test result in order to fully resume their lives and participate in the local economy. Rapid test results are a crucial alternative to vaccination records for attending live events, dining indoors, and many other activities. The city should commit funding to maintain the availability of free rapid testing sites throughout the five boroughs so that all New Yorkers can be part of the city's safe reopening.

## V. MAKE SKILLS BUILDING THE CENTERPIECE OF AN EQUITABLE RECOVERY



To help reconnect the unemployed to a changing economy and ensure more New Yorkers of color can access the good jobs of tomorrow, New York should make new investments to strengthen CUNY, tech training, ESOL programs, and other workforce development initiatives.

### **95. Launch major workforce training initiative focused on women and the care economy**

**Reshma Saujani, Founder, Girls Who Code**

When the pandemic hit, women experienced job loss at higher rates than men. And then, when daycares shuttered, and schools moved to remote learning, countless working women—especially those without college degrees—found themselves unable to return to work due to household and family care responsibilities. The potential lasting impact of the crisis on women’s careers cannot be overstated. New York City needs to face this challenge head-on with a major workforce training initiative targeted at women and specifically women in industries and jobs that are not coming back. Getting women back to work in pandemic-proof, good jobs is also going to lift up girls. The city should seize the opportunity and launch a large-scale workforce development program for women that acknowledges the need for family supports.

**96. Revitalize the city through a green workforce pipeline for NYC youth**  
**Sue Donoghue, President and Park Administrator, Prospect Park Alliance**

To ensure that city youth are not left out of the industries that are poised to grow in New York’s post-pandemic economy, the city should foster a revitalized youth workforce development and training program centered on the emerging green economy. Increased investment can focus on programs like the Woodlands Youth Crew, which trains and hires teenagers from alternative high schools to learn work in forest restoration and forest management. These programs expose young people to green careers and give students in NYC an opportunity to learn about careers they otherwise would not be exposed to, but which are careers that are especially important to maintaining the parks and open space that have only become more important during the pandemic. Creating a strong, local workforce pipeline into careers like forest management is vital to maintaining and bolstering parks and open spaces. This is just one example of how the city should be thinking more long-term in how it creates meaningful partnerships with foundations and communities to bolster career trajectories and placements in the jobs that will be integral to the city’s future. We must reform the workforce training program to orient students into a pipeline that will get them into good public service jobs in city agencies. We must create feeder agencies and positions that these students, who are now trained, could then go into. This could be supplemented by a curriculum based on knowledge of the green economy and job opportunities that exist within these agencies.

**97. Expand ESOL programs and other workforce training that help immigrants succeed in a changing economy**  
**Steven Choi, Senior Advisor, New York Immigration Coalition**

Many immigrants come to New York with limited English proficiency and a narrow set of job skills, but our infrastructure to help them succeed in the economy has withered away. For every existing English language (ESOL) class seat, there are 40 people waiting in line. Because these systems have weakened, immigrants face a future where a gig-economy job as a ride-share driver is the ceiling, not the floor—all while employers lack the workforce they need. The city should create a comprehensive pathway to economic success for recent immigrants and others in order to make quality jobs more accessible to immigrant communities. This pathway would enable easy access to English-language skills, adult literacy classes, workforce development trainings, and job pipelines.

**98. Prepare New Yorkers from underserved communities to replace municipal workers that will retire in the coming years**  
**Arthur Cheliotis, Chairman Emeritus, CWA Local 1180**

Over the next decade, a third of the city government workforce is expected to retire. In short order, the city is going to need architects, engineers, nurses, planners, and many

more civil service professionals, and it should be working with CUNY to develop talent and be prepared. And by coordinating with CUNY, the city can ensure that far more first-generation immigrant New Yorkers, New Yorkers from low-income backgrounds, and New Yorkers from historically marginalized communities are able to access career civil service jobs with good union benefits. CUNY has demonstrated its remarkable power to take people who would otherwise never have access to opportunity and enable them to get the credentials they need to advance their careers and move into the middle class. The city needs to harness the transformative potential of CUNY to nurture a new generation of talented young people and get them the skills they need to fill the hundreds of thousands of civil service jobs that will turn over in the next decade. Every city agency should map out their specific job needs and then work with CUNY to coordinate and create strong career pipelines. After all, the City of New York is the city's largest employer. If you want to rebuild the middle class and create new opportunities for communities of color, what better place to do it?

### **99. Support the CUNY Internship-to-Employment Model**

**Felix Matos-Rodriguez, Chancellor, City University of New York**

The CUNY Internship-to-Employment Model provides small businesses with the critical capacity to return to productivity and growth following COVID-19 and supports recent CUNY graduates in building technical and professional skills, growing professional networks, and transitioning into career-aligned, living-wage jobs. Based on a 2020 pilot of CUNY and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, this model matches recent CUNY graduates with COVID-19 impacted small businesses (under 100 employees) for an eight-week, full-time, paid internship in a professional field that would then convert to full-time work in professional roles for at least 50% of participants. The full-time work would be supported by a wage subsidy program for 6 months. This program provides needed talent and wage supports to businesses to rebound from COVID-19 where payroll pressure, decreased demand, and hiring freezes impacted business operations and growth. Working with the robust network of small business intermediaries like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, local Chambers of Commerce, and MWBE associations, we would identify employer partners to participate in a hiring program for up to 2,000 hires a year. All internships will be in professional fields aligned to students' studies and career goals. Participating companies' sectors include advanced manufacturing, technology, film and media, construction, insurance, law, and architecture. Ultimately, a professionally focused wage subsidy program for CUNY graduates, who pre-dominantly come from communities that have been tremendously impacted by COVID-19, offers the double benefit of helping small businesses while creating talent pipelines for communities of color to ensure inclusive recovery and growth for NYC.

**100. Close the digital divide and create onramps to tech careers through Community Help Desks**

**Bertina Ceccarelli, CEO, NPower**

Throughout the pandemic, New York’s tech industry has proved uniquely resilient and is poised to grow in the years ahead. Yet people of color represent a mere fraction of overall tech employment, especially in high-wage, IT careers. But a new program piloted in Baltimore, the Community Help Desk, shows a way to address the urgent racial and ethnic disparities in the tech industry while also providing much-needed IT supports to underserved and marginalized communities. The Community Help Desk program offers tech skills, professional development, customer service training, and industry-recognized IT certifications to young adults who live in the very communities lacking digital access. In turn, they complete paid six-month apprenticeships at local Community Help Desks offering IT support and digital literacy to residents, small businesses, community organizations, and nursing homes, which prepare them for entry-level tech jobs with the city’s largest employers. New York City should immediately move to replicate this program as a way to help out-of-work New Yorkers get back into good jobs, and to finally make strides in diversifying this growing part of the city’s economy.

**101. Create more inclusive career pathways by rethinking job requirements and scaling up apprenticeships**

**Jack Azagury, Market Unit Lead for US Northeast, Accenture**

There’s no city with more talent at its fingertips than New York. Some of the best, brightest minds in the world reside here. Yet, many organizations are missing out on cutting-edge ideas from homegrown talent—and now is the time to include more New Yorkers in our future. As we look toward reimagining our city, why not also reimagine a more inclusive pathway for careers? One approach is to rethink job requirements. City employers should challenge the rules and norms and reexamine historic four-year degree requirements that aren’t necessary for certain jobs. They should also work with the city to explore new ways of training New York’s diverse talent base. Scaling apprenticeships with employers across NYC will channel more New Yorkers into good jobs while diversifying the workforce. At Accenture we started a “learn-and-earn” program in 2016 that has trained nearly 1,000 apprentices in 35 U.S. cities. Many of our apprentices come from diverse backgrounds through community colleges and local skilling organizations. After six to twelve months of paid training, most transition into full-time, in-demand tech roles such as cybersecurity and cloud migration. Apprenticeships are taking off in a profoundly important year for NYC’s economy. Forty-four percent of executives believe that NYC is losing tech talent to other cities, according to a new survey. The NY Jobs CEO Council’s goal to hire and apprentice 100,000 New Yorkers—including many CUNY students—offers a path forward.



**102. Invest in training and upskilling for direct care workers****Deborah Estrin, Professor of Computer Science and  
Associate Dean for Impact, Cornell Tech**

Home care workers and home health aides have played an essential role in caring for New York’s rapidly growing older adult population through the pandemic, helping with daily activities and providing social and healthcare support that allows older New Yorkers to continue living in their homes. But despite the great importance of these caregivers, who are disproportionately women from underresourced communities of color, they have few opportunities for career growth and advanced training. By investing in upskilling for home care workers, the city can improve health outcomes and the quality of care for older adults while fostering a health-educated, upwardly mobile home care sector that will continue to add jobs as the city ages. At the same time, an upskilled care workforce would create new demands for healthcare tech that supports their home-based work.

**103. Invest in specialized workforce training programs for entry-level roles in the life sciences that do not require a college degree****Joe Landolina, CEO and Co-Founder, Cresilon**

To achieve an inclusive economic recovery, the city needs to help unemployed and underemployed New Yorkers build careers in the industries that are growing—like life sciences. And while improving college access and success is crucial to broadening opportunities for more New Yorkers of all backgrounds to become high-level engineers and research scientists, there’s also a great diversity of roles in life science beyond engineering and research. In fact, many technician processing roles do not require an advanced degree, or even significant math or science coursework—they only require a GED or high school diploma and additional job-specific programming. The city should fund workforce development programs that allow New Yorkers with an interest in health and the life sciences to get the training they need to qualify for good-paying, entry-level technician jobs. The city should also work with CUNY to create specialized training and placement programs. Importantly, this will require capital investments in the city’s community college facilities so that students can get specialized training with the equipment and technologies (such as aseptic processing) that they would use on the job.

**104. Implement free community college and provide stipends to workers pursuing education****Rosemary Scanlon, Economist, former Divisional Dean,  
NYU Schack Institute**

Working individuals, especially low-income and immigrant workers in food service, agriculture, retail, gig-economy jobs, and other sectors devastated by the pandemic, have limited access to higher education because of financial and time constraints.

Acknowledging the difficulties of balancing part-time education with part- or full-time employment, the city should implement Free Community College for all and provide a \$1,000 monthly stipend to students to financially assist those attempting to pursue higher education while working. This would provide a necessary stimulus to the economy in the immediate term and allow critical workers to pursue skill-building, educational training, and higher-paying jobs in the long run by supplementing the financial barriers to higher education.

**105. Invest in the facilities and faculty of NYC's greatest engine of social mobility: CUNY**

**Michelle Anderson, President, Brooklyn College**

For the city to achieve an economic recovery that lifts up New Yorkers of all backgrounds, it needs to invest in institutions that are engines of social mobility and advancement. And there is no institution in the entire country, let alone New York City, that is a greater force for social mobility than the City University of New York. But for CUNY to continue to provide transformative opportunities to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every year, the system needs to be able to provide students –so many of whom are the first in their families to go to college—with an educational environment that allows them to envision new possibilities and different worlds. First, this requires a major new investment in hiring. The system was understaffed before the pandemic, and when faculty and staff are stretched, they cannot provide the life-changing individual advisement and coaching that empowers students to rise out of poverty. Second, the city must invest in CUNY facilities before it's too late. CUNY has endured deferred maintenance since the 1970s, and it's taking a massive toll. Chemistry labs have to be closed, and research halted, and classes regularly have to be relocated due to leaks, HVAC issues, and other structural issues. When a water main breaks or a bridge crumbles, the city is held back. We need to think about the physical campuses of CUNY in the same way—as essential infrastructure that powers New York's economy. These campuses are the routes within the city to move up.

**106. Invest in the community college to senior college pipeline**

**S. David Wu, President, Baruch College**

The pandemic has led to a drastic decline in community college enrollment. These students often come from underserved communities, and many have lost jobs during the crisis, preventing them from continuing their studies. But the city's community college students faced significant roadblocks even before the pandemic. Too few transfer into senior colleges, and too many students who do transfer don't finish their degree due to a lack of curricular alignment between community and senior colleges. This represents a huge missed opportunity for New York City because CUNY senior colleges can springboard diverse students from low-income backgrounds into the middle class. Baruch, for example, has consistently placed graduates in jobs with prominent city

employers, including financial institutions and investment banks that otherwise recruit from Ivy League and other elite institutions. To create a robust pathway for career success and economic mobility, the city should invest in securing and strengthening the pipeline from community colleges to senior colleges in the CUNY system.

**107. Help CUNY expand certificate programs, enabling more students to boost workplace skills and advance in their careers**

**Frank H. Wu, President, Queens College**

The economy emerging after the pandemic is different than it was prior to 2020, and it will only continue to change. Many New Yorkers who are in the workforce are going to need to enhance their skills or gain new skills to advance in their careers, access better-paying jobs, or transition into emerging fields. CUNY is well-positioned to be the go-to place for New Yorkers of all backgrounds to access this type of lifelong learning, but the university will need to radically expand the number of opportunities for students to earn certificates—credentials that aren't full degrees but which could be achieved by completing a few classes or, in some fields, as little as one class. Queens College is already doing this with our risk management program, enabling people already working in a field like accounting to build the new skills that are now needed to advance where standards and practices have continued to evolve. There are opportunities to help workers do this in a growing number of sectors, perhaps including the emerging cannabis industry. In order to make this expansion possible, now is the moment for investment in CUNY and in programs that will help New Yorkers get ahead.

**108. Break down silos that have kept immigrants from benefiting from most workforce training programs**

**Wayne Ho, President and CEO, Chinese-American Planning Council**

The city creates a separation between immigrant services and workforce development services. Immigrant services include naturalization, adult literacy, and legal services, while workforce development services include job training, skills building, and bridge programs. Immigrants have unique needs and barriers to good jobs, and the city must enact policies and programs to promote better workforce development for immigrant communities, including but not limited to limited English proficient individuals, undocumented immigrants, mixed-status families, immigrants with foreign credentials, international students, and H-1B visa holders. By creating immigrant workforce development services, New York City can ensure an equitable recovery for its large and diverse immigrant communities.

**109. Expand opportunities for minority workers in construction by requiring apprentices on every government-funded contract**

**Bishop Calvin Rice, New Jerusalem Baptist Church**

Construction tied to federal infrastructure investment likely will be a major catalyst for New York City’s economic recovery. Accordingly, jobs in the construction trades—which have remained critical throughout the pandemic—will be an important source of economic opportunity. Trade jobs such as plumbing, electrical, carpentry, ironwork, and masonry could provide a great economic boost to minority populations who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and historically faced systemic barriers to careers in the skilled trades. Apprenticeship programs for trade positions within the city could be a way to support minority populations within New York, offering critically necessary jobs to marginalized communities and supporting broad-sweeping economic growth and revitalization. The city should require a number of apprentices on every government-funded contract, with a certain percentage of positions allocated specifically for minority workers. These apprentices would work 50 percent of a forty-hour work week on job sites and spend 50 percent in a classroom setting established in public educational centers localized within their communities. This program would support community growth and investment, long-term job potential, and economic development throughout the city.

**110. Train New Yorkers to maintain electric vehicle infrastructure**

**Celeste Frye, CEO, Public Works Partners**

To encourage recovery, New York City should design and fund workforce development programs that develop qualified mechanics trained to maintain electric vehicles and electric vehicle infrastructure. Government investments in electric vehicle infrastructure are already underway—the most recent sign of this is President Biden’s \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan, which calls for a \$174 billion investment in the electric vehicle market. New York State programs focused on building this market exist as well, including the New York State Energy Research Development Agency (NYSERDA) Clean Energy Transportation Prizes, which aim to remove barriers to widespread electric vehicle use in disadvantaged communities. Other factors, such as public pressure to adopt cleaner vehicles and existing state-backed incentives to transition to electric vehicles, will also lead to heightened demand for electric vehicle infrastructure in the coming years. As the city invests in more electric vehicles, the vehicles and charging infrastructure will have to be maintained. Training New Yorkers to meet this need through paid apprenticeship programs or other training will propel workers into secured skilled jobs and will position New York as a leader in electric vehicle adoption, which in turn will lead to continued job growth and innovation.

**111. Invest in bridge programs that help New Yorkers with only a high school diploma access quality tech training**  
**Plinio Ayala, President and CEO, Per Scholas**

The pandemic has forced businesses to adopt greater use of technology, with a greater share of jobs now requiring stronger digital skills. But for the over one million New Yorkers who lack a high school diploma and nearly two million who speak English less than very well, fundamental skills needs impede access to high-quality, career-focused tech training. To help more New Yorkers acquire the digital literacy and tech skills they need to thrive in the city’s post-pandemic economy, New York City needs to invest in bridge programs. These programs serve as key on-ramps into effective education and training programs for New Yorkers with lower levels of skills and formal education. Investing in bridge programs will provide more New Yorkers with access to tech training and career advancement in the industries driving the city’s recovery.

**112. Improve job prospects for the many New Yorkers with low literacy levels by boosting funding for adult education**  
**Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks**

To combat New York’s record unemployment rates caused by the pandemic, the city needs to place thousands of New Yorkers back in jobs. But many people who seek assistance with job placement lack literacy. It’s a heavy lift for community-based organizations to find jobs for these New Yorkers, who are often placed in low-wage positions that qualify them for SNAP and other benefits. More robust adult literacy programs can help people obtain higher-wage jobs, and the city should make more funding available to organizations that provide these programs as part of its economic recovery plan.

**113. Use carrots and sticks to get more large companies to fund job training programs**  
**Wayne Ho, President and CEO, Chinese-American Planning Council**

New York City is home to countless large companies, but it appears that the same select companies partner with workforce development organizations. The city should explore how to use its regulatory and procurement powers – as well as any other public policy tools – to ensure that more large companies fund job training programs, collaborate with workforce development organizations, provide high-quality jobs, and promote career ladders. The city has generally focused on short-term workforce opportunities, like development projects. But to promote a more equitable recovery, the City should also work with employers to create a long-term, adequately funded strategy to equip community members for thriving careers.

**114. Remove barriers for dislocated or incumbent workers and expand financial aid for short-term programs**

**Anthony Munroe, President, Borough of Manhattan Community College**

The pandemic has created significant shifts in many industries and forced thousands of New Yorkers to pursue new career paths. But constraints on who can receive local, state, and federal educational financing are preventing some of the New Yorkers who most need post-secondary educational opportunities—dislocated and incumbent workers—from entering short-term workforce, certificate, and degree programs. Public institutions like BMCC, which serve majority-minority student populations, are uniquely equipped to help diverse communities transition from jobs to family-sustaining careers, but the current system of federal and state financial aid does not line up with the innovative short-term programming being developed. To ensure more New Yorkers have access to the higher-paying, more stimulating, and rewarding careers that are possible with a post-secondary credential, policymakers should empower educational institutions to provide more people with the credentials they need to get ahead in the post-pandemic economy.

**115. Create a talent-matching program for biotech**

**Orin Herskowitz, Executive Director, Columbia Technology Ventures**

The biotech industry is growing rapidly in New York City, but many of the biotech start-ups that are taking promising innovations emerging from the city's universities and developing them for the market are struggling to find the mid-level and senior talent they need while continuing to scale up quickly. At the same time, scientists from our local biopharma companies or in other cities are looking for industry positions in NYC but have no reliable way to match their specific skill set to the needs of early-stage start-ups. City agencies like SBS and EDC should work with venture capitalists, public and private academic institutions, and industry leaders to develop a biopharma job bank that can connect this burgeoning talent pool with talent-hungry start-ups and fuel the continued growth of the life sciences in New York City.

**116. Invest in community-based organizations that provide workforce development programs for immigrant populations**

**Aakriti Khanal, Development and Research Manager,  
Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice**

Since the pandemic began, many immigrant New Yorkers have been asked to put their lives at risk by going to work or have lost their jobs and haven't qualified for unemployment benefits. The threat of COVID-19 may be declining, and New York's Excluded Workers Fund will provide much-needed economic relief to many people, but the vulnerability of many immigrant workers—especially those who have limited English literacy—is not only ongoing but has increased as a result of COVID-19. People in the Nepali-speaking community that we serve need to be able to advocate for themselves at work, develop

their leadership skills, and navigate city agencies to access benefits, for example. Improving their knowledge of English can help workers with these kinds of challenges, especially if education programs are tailored for them. Industry-specific English classes, such as for nail salon workers, can give those workers greater confidence and help them feel more comfortable in the workplace, for example. Creating workforce development programming that responds directly to the needs of immigrant populations demands significant resources on the part of community-based organizations. To help ensure that historically marginalized communities can access relevant programming and be part of the city's economic recovery, the city should allocate more funding to community-based organizations that are doing this vital work. At the same time, the city should recognize that CBOs have adapted curriculum and programming to reflect the specific needs of their communities and should not demand that curriculum be changed in order to receive funding through city contracts.

### **117. Create Joint Technical Campuses in every borough to expand technical career pathways for high school students**

**Richard Kahan, Founder, Urban Assembly**

To chart a lasting economic rebound, New York must invest in creating the highly qualified workforce needed to attract and grow businesses. The city can do this by funding programs that provide New York City youth with early exposure to a range of careers so that students can obtain the specialized technical skills—and highly valued soft skills—necessary to succeed in the post-pandemic economy. Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools are designed for this, but each existing CTE school can only offer education in one industry area due to its limited size and staffing. For NYC to scale up its technical education to meet the specialized workforce needs of more industries while also greatly expanding opportunities for students to connect their gifts and passions with good-paying careers, the city needs to create a system that exposes more students to more careers. To do this, the city should create joint technical campuses in each of the five boroughs. These campuses would have specialized equipment and staff with connections to the private sector and could give students a chance to explore as many as ten different career options. Students would spend part of the week at a traditional school and the part of the week at the technical campus. Centralizing CTE would also make it easier to connect these technical pathways with the private sector opportunities that are critical to early career success. With more on-the-job exposure starting as early as the ninth grade, students can zero in on a particular track, transition to paid internships, and be prepared to join the skilled workforce right out of high school or after stacking additional credentials at community college.

**118. Create an upskilling fund to expand access to tech careers**

**David Yang, Founder, Fullstack Academy**

Given the rapid adoption of new technologies over the past year, many workers need to acquire new tech skills or build on their current abilities. With greater support, tech-training program providers can fill that need by helping workers in hard-hit sectors transition into tech careers. NYC's Web Development Fellowship has graduated hundreds of New Yorkers into high-paying tech jobs, but the program requires new financing every time it's offered. For greater continuity, the city should create an upskilling fund for non-traditional education providers, like bootcamps and accelerated training courses, targeted to low-income students and supported by student-favorable income-share agreements. In effect, the city would loan students money to participate in training, with students repaying the city over time only if their training leads to a job. The city (and corporate sponsors) would seed and manage the upskilling fund, while education providers could bear some of the losses if students aren't getting hired. Under this approach, training providers and the city would share in the risk of placing students into jobs. Ultimately, the fund could become revenue positive for the city.

**119. Revamp NYC's vocational education programs for today's economy**

**Kenneth Lipper, former Deputy Mayor  
for Finance and Economic Development**

To ensure that more New Yorkers of all backgrounds are able to get ahead in the post-pandemic economy, the city needs to develop education and career pathways that reflect the workforce needs of the industries driving the city's economic recovery. One powerful pathway that has great promise but needs reform is vocational education. The city should use some of the federal stimulus it is likely to receive through the American Jobs Plan to revamp vocational education programs so that their curriculum can reflect changes in industry and employer needs. From automotive repair and HVAC installation to precision manufacturing and laboratory maintenance, today's mechanical jobs require new levels of tech skills and digital literacy. The city should audit existing programs and then invest in the teacher retraining and new equipment needed to make the city's trade schools reflect the new economy.

**120. Build a youth-focused life sciences talent pipeline**

**Christine Kovich, Co-Founder, Harlem Biospace**

For New York City to achieve an inclusive economic recovery, it must foster career pathways into the industries that are driving growth. And while pathways into the tech economy have received much-needed attention in recent years, the life sciences industry also presents powerful opportunities for students interested in STEM to build a career and move into the middle class. But today, most students in New York City's public school



system don't know what a life science or engineering career would be like. Even for talented students who plan to major in biology, the only career path they see is in healthcare. The city, together with industry leaders, should look to the tech talent pipeline and other initiatives like CS4ALL as models to expand pathways into the life sciences by creating more opportunities for internships, advanced coursework in biology at the high school level, and connections between schools and people working in the industry so that the city's talented young people can acquire valuable work experience and envision themselves as biomedical engineers, geneticists, epidemiologists, biochemists, and more.

**121. Help New Yorkers acquire digital skills and establish a badge for those who meet baseline tech fluency**

**Celeste Frye, CEO, Public Works Partners**

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed added strain on lower-wage workers because the sectors they work in have been the most impacted by the pandemic and because those same sectors increasingly require more tech literacy. Workers need access to digital skills training in order to enter and succeed in almost all jobs. The city should help job seekers access foundational digital soft skills training from the onset of their hiring journey by establishing a universal tech skills baseline, with a "badge" that is regularly reviewed by the training provider, employer, and funder communities. Workforce providers and employers need capacity building to provide the digital skills badges, and then workers need on-the-job skills enhancement over time.

**122. Invest in quality childcare for New Yorkers in workforce training programs**

**Plinio Ayala, President and CEO, Per Scholas**

When the pandemic made it impossible for New Yorkers of all backgrounds to access childcare, it revealed to middle-class workers the difficult choices that low-wage workers must make between caring for their children and going to work every day. But the choice between childcare and job opportunities is even more challenging for New Yorkers from low-income backgrounds looking to acquire new skills and launch new careers in growing industries like tech. Far too many people have chosen not to enroll in job training courses because they have no childcare. New Yorkers shouldn't be prevented from acquiring new skills and preparing themselves for a rapidly changing economy because of family responsibilities. Guaranteeing childcare for parents and guardians enrolled in full-time workforce training would expand access to upskilling and reskilling programs for countless New Yorkers who otherwise would be shut out of opportunities in the city's fastest-growing industries.

**123. Boost funding for summer youth employment and NYCHA youth programs**  
**Liz Neumark, Founder and Chair, Great Performances**

New York City cannot chart a truly inclusive, long-term economic recovery without addressing the fundamental disparities in opportunity for the city's youth. The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) addresses these disparities head-on by helping NYC teenagers find jobs and opportunities outside of their neighborhood contexts, doing things that interest them and making money while doing it. But the program cannot open up new possibilities for tens of thousands of city youth through economic opportunity and mentorship if it isn't fully funded. The cuts to SYEP in 2020 were a major misstep, but the city should go far beyond restoring what was cut to fully fund the program so that every eligible youth who wants a job can have one, and every program participant has the mentorship and guidance they need to use their summer job as a springboard to future college and career success. Alongside SYEP, the city should take steps to support the one in 12 NYC youth who call NYCHA home. NYCHA Youth Now empowers youth residents through civic engagement and leadership programs, CUNY scholarships, and public health initiatives, but could serve thousands more teens and young adults with additional funding.

**124. Adopt a year-round public school schedule**  
**Norma Kamali, Fashion Designer**

Public school enrollment in New York City had been declining before the pandemic, and the trend has only accelerated. Enrollment in 2020-2021 fell by 43,000 students, a four percent decrease compared to the prior school year, and kindergarten enrollment alone fell by 9 percent. Learning losses, especially among students of color, are widening the achievement gap. One way to counteract declining enrollment and make up for learning loss is through extending school into the summer months, which will also help parents return to their jobs. The city should make year-round schooling permanent to help parents return to work in the short term and help ensure that more students are college- and career-ready over the long term.

**125. Create and support workforce programs for women**  
**Christine Quinn, President and CEO, Win;  
former Speaker of the New York City Council**

Women of color have been disproportionately affected by job loss during the past year, and there's evidence that the pandemic is leading to deeper poverty. Several nonprofits offer workforce programs geared to women, but the city should invest even more in skills training and employer incentive programs that target women. Additionally, the city should incentivize the construction of childcare facilities in offices, ensure that New Yorkers in need can access childcare vouchers, and use federal funds to expand childcare

programs. These efforts can help more women gain the skills needed to get hired and keep a job while creating jobs for childcare providers and pushing forward a more comprehensive recovery.

### **126. Integrate clean energy workforce training and installation projects to get people to work and green the city**

**Chris Collins, Executive Director, Solar One**

Integrated projects combining a product (e.g., solar paneling), a trained workforce (e.g. young residents), and a pipeline of buildings (e.g., NYCHA housing) can serve as a model for how the city can get people back to work, ensure a return on investment, provide real savings to residents, and generate clean air and energy. That's what Solar One has done with our affordable housing solar installations, where building owners were encouraged to hire trainees coming out of Solar One workforce programs to do the installations. In the case of NYCHA, 12 residents aged 18 to 24 were hired to do the installations in the buildings with the idea that in four to six months they might get a full-time job with the installers and learn valuable skills. Solar One is just one small non-profit organization, and in the last year we've created about 30 jobs for people, but with added capacity we could do much more. The city can take this integrated model and expand it far beyond NYCHA by funding workforce training programs throughout the city to install renewable energy in affordable housing developments, create retrofit building stock in hard-hit neighborhoods, and more. The city should develop these projects at scale, hire from other programs like Green City Force, and create more systems that integrate workforce with shovel-ready sustainability projects.

### **127. Foster alignment between philanthropy and non-profit organizations**

**Jerelyn Rodriguez, Co-Founder and CEO, The Knowledge House**

In order to realize the benefits of new education and service models introduced during the pandemic that can improve access and help drive the city's recovery, nonprofits and their philanthropic backers should develop a shared understanding and vision of costs and benefits. Though everyone is eager for a return to in-person services, some workforce and educational nonprofits have seen great promise in virtual offerings over the past year and now see potential for hybrid models going forward. At the same time, some funders believe that virtual programs have the capacity to serve a lot more people than in-person classes while reducing related costs. But there are pros and cons to each model, and there is also room for misunderstanding about the costs of providing virtual programming, especially when participants do not have preexisting access to technology and connectivity. To solve this disconnect, nonprofits that are offering virtual and hybrid programs should be in alignment with philanthropy about the cost of those programs, the benefits of those programs and the technology needed to sustain these programs.

### **128. Link workforce development, small business recovery, and job creation**

**Jukay Hsu, Co-Founder and CEO, Pursuit**

To expand access to jobs in the industries that are poised to drive New York City's economic recovery, the city needs to create paths that will allow more people to develop in-demand skills and enter the technology workforce. And it needs to ensure that these quality job opportunities are tied to small business growth. At Pursuit, we offer a Fellowship where low-income adults learn to code and become software engineers, going from earning \$18k to \$85k on average after a year of training. Typically our Fellows make this transformative salary jump by landing jobs through our employer partnerships with top companies like Citi, Microsoft, and Peloton, and we're proud to work with these companies. But we know our city's small businesses suffered greatly from the pandemic, with many closing permanently. What if some of our diverse pool of new tech talent could make that leap by developing websites for small businesses? This potential program would be a double impactor because it helps businesses recover and grow their customer base by giving them an online presence while also creating web design jobs for people in the same community. Small business recovery is crucial to job creation, and the city should look to create more programs that boost small businesses and rebuild the workforce at the same time.

### **129. Strengthen New York City's competitive advantage in a global economy—and spur economic recovery—by focusing on talent development**

**Abby Jo Sigal, Founding CEO, HERE to HERE**

To drive New York City's competitive advantage in a global economy, we need a 21st-century economic development strategy that focuses on talent development. That's how the city can generate a lasting economic rebound: by producing the talent we know we need for our city's future success. Our current challenges present a real opportunity to rethink and reinvent our model. Too often, by the time our curricula are updated and approved, they're already out of date. What we need are consistent feedback loops between industry and education that remain relevant to the needs of the labor market. We can do this by investing in infrastructure that supports braiding work experiences into traditional academic pathways, beginning no later than the first year of high school. All the interest at the local, state, and federal levels on service programs—from President Biden's Civilian Climate Corps to NYC's own Bronx Recovery Corps—presents a major opportunity to do exactly that. The city could set up a single, unified NYC Urban Jobs Corps, pulling together resources already in place, like COVID relief funding, federal work-study dollars, and grants for youth apprenticeship programs. Service opportunities could be connected to coursework at the high school and college level and tied to a sequence of learning experiences mentored by business leaders across the city. An approach like this could not only help the city's economy recover but also build the talent infrastructure needed to support lifelong learning critical to NYC's competitiveness in today's dynamic and global economy.

**130. Revamp NYC's youth workforce development system to support more programs that prepare young adults for good jobs****Edward Summers, Founder, The Thinkubator**

Building a more equitable economy in New York will require not only investing in pathways for New York City's youth but also vastly improving the city's youth workforce development programs. Young people across the city, particularly those in communities of color, have been devastated by the economic impacts of the pandemic. But even before the COVID crisis, far too few of the city's youth were getting on the path to good jobs or even accessing workforce training programs that could help them position themselves for anything other than a low-wage job. This needs to change. City officials should start by investing far more resources in the youth workforce system. But they also should make wholesale changes to the system so that a greater share of funding rewards innovation and supports nonprofits that are preparing young people for the good jobs of today and tomorrow. Currently, too much of the city's youth workforce funding ends up supporting training programs that either do not result in a job or only prepare youth for low-wage positions. And while the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is enormously important, more funding is needed for other programs that give young New Yorkers a deeper connection to the workforce than the six-week SYEP program.

**131. Target workforce development programs for domestic violence survivors and homeless individuals****Nathaniel Fields, CEO, Urban Resource Institute**

Programs and services to address domestic violence and homelessness cost the U.S. billions of dollars every year. Additionally, 98 percent of domestic violence cases also include economic abuse, which can prevent survivors from working. As New York City begins focusing on workforce development for the jobs of the future, efforts should target survivors of domestic violence and homeless individuals. Reinvesting in these populations so that they can become self-sufficient should play an important role in the city's economic recovery.

## VI. REIMAGINE STREETS AND PUBLIC SPACES AND RE-INVEST IN VITAL URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE



Expanding and improving open spaces and upgrading public infrastructure will help create accessible jobs while making the city more sustainable, resilient, and attractive to residents, workers, tourists, and entrepreneurs.

### **132. Transform every tenth street across NYC into “people streets”**

**Bjarke Ingels, Founder, Bjarke Ingels Group**

Improving personal mobility across the city and creating more lively and enjoyable outdoor spaces will provide the city economy with many little boosts and take far less time and resources than large-scale interventions. The city should start this reinvention by radically transforming city streets and changing how we use the Brooklyn Bridge. To start with, city officials should identify every fifth or every tenth street and turn them into ‘people streets’. Reformat these streets away from car traffic and instead have e-buses or e-trams, expanded lanes for bikes and scooters, and include much more open space. This would take pressure off the subway and divert expensive and time-consuming resources otherwise used to expand subway capacity. The city should also remove private cars from Brooklyn Bridge and have only dedicated and public shared electric mobility, bike paths, and much more pedestrian capacity—with the potential for public transportation in the form of electric buses or shuttles. This would create a spectacular public space over the East River.

### **133. Spur economic development in underserved communities by making long-overdue public realm improvements**

**Purnima Kapur, Chief of University Planning and Design, Harvard University**

Economic development typically follows public-realm improvements and investment in integrated sidewalks, bike paths, and improved walkability, but so many of the city's hard-hit neighborhoods have historically been left out of these local place-making projects. By boosting connectivity through access to mass transit and personal mobility options, the city can create a streetscape that will attract investment and deter crime. In particularly hard-hit areas, such as those with significant public housing, high unemployment, and little supportive infrastructure, the city can start by creating pop-up retail opportunities and encouraging public community activities—turning areas with little street activity into highly visible, park-like destinations. This should all be accomplished as pilot projects without complicated and time-consuming zoning maneuvers in order to encourage the market with as little bureaucratic encumbrance as possible.

### **134. Transform regional commutes and city streets by banning private cars in Manhattan**

**Vishaan Chakrabarti, Founder, PAU**

Manhattan's 2,450 acres of roadway (nearly three times the size of Central Park) are overwhelmingly devoted to private car travel. The city should ban private cars in the borough and reallocate much of that street space to parks, sidewalks, and dedicated bus and bike lanes. Taking back this street space—while still allowing for vehicle access for commerce, ride share, and the disabled—could bolster the region at a time when it is reeling from the loss of millions of tourists and hundreds of thousands of office workers. The reclaimed public space could be used for new street vendors and sidewalk cafes, homeless services, better waste management, and the increased pedestrian traffic would boost street-front retail. The city has seen the increased use of parks and the great success of Open Streets and outdoor dining during the pandemic. It should take these lessons to heart and make a visionary commitment to reclaiming public space for the nearly 80 percent of Manhattanites who do not own cars while drastically reducing regional traffic into the CBD. Once streets have been adapted to new uses, which itself will create new infrastructure jobs, dedicated bus rapid transit would decrease commute times, congestion, and air quality for marginalized populations across all five boroughs outside Manhattan and the tri-state region.

### **135. Launch a master plan to redesign NYC's streets**

**Steve Hindy, founder, Brooklyn Brewery**

Over the past year, there's been a growing recognition about the value of New York's streets for the city's overall vitality and economic vibrancy. In every corner of the city,

business owners and New Yorkers young and old have relished the experience of opening up streets and realized they don't want to go back. It's time to go even further and realize an even bigger vision for community-centered streets. While it's great that the City Council and Mayor de Blasio have now signed a law making the Open Streets program permanent, city officials should take the next step and develop a master plan to redesign our streets. This should include more opportunities, all over the city, to close off streets to cars on weekends and reclaim them for communities, businesses and families. We should also rethink the 3 million free parking spaces across the city, create a more rational system for delivery vehicles, and move garbage pickup off sidewalks and into streets.

**136. Launch a WPA-style program to create jobs and upgrade aging infrastructure in city parks**

**Adrian Benepe, President, Brooklyn Botanic Garden;  
former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department**

New York City should invest in a WPA-style public works initiative—similar to the Depression-era federal program that built so much of what we still use nearly 80 years later—focused on expanding and renovating parks and open spaces. Parks were a crucial safety valve for New Yorkers throughout the pandemic, but many communities had no access to nearby open space. Meanwhile, many existing parks need repairs. The city should expand open space in many underserved communities by creating new regional parks along abandoned waterfronts in places like the Bronx side of the Harlem River, the North Shore of Staten Island, East Harlem, and Washington Heights. In particular, there is a unique opportunity to turn an abandoned 3-mile rail line in central Queens into the new QueensWay linear park. The city can also transform 800 asphalt schoolyards into green community playgrounds (a model pioneered with great success by The Trust for Public Land), create hundreds of miles of new protected greenways for cyclists, add one million new trees, and rebuild and expand botanical gardens, zoos, and museums. Doing all of this construction will generate tens of thousands of good jobs, improve our physical and mental health, clean the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change, attract residents and businesses back to NYC, and rebuild our neighborhoods and tax base.

**137. Improve bus infrastructure to support off-peak travel for essential workers**

**Betsy Plum, Executive Director, Riders Alliance**

Essential workers—especially those in the healthcare sector—endure some of the worst commutes in the city. Unlike office workers who commute into Manhattan's central business districts, healthcare workers and social service workers, among others, travel to hospitals, clinics, and community centers spread across the five boroughs in areas with severely limited transit options. And essential workers working second or third shifts often commute when buses come only once or twice an hour. The city can support the health, safety, and quality of life of essential workers by improving the bus infrastructure



they rely on to get to work. In the process, the city can also provide better access to transportation that could be the difference between not only being able to get to a job but also to get a job at all. By expanding dedicated bus lanes, the city can get the economy moving again. New York City has 6,000 miles of roadway but only about 104 dedicated miles of bus lanes and one of the slowest bus systems in the country. The mayor should dedicate at least 30 new miles of bus lanes and give bus riders priority on our streets. The city should also consider an expansion of the Fair Fares program and make sure people know it exists and how to join. The cost of transportation should not be a barrier as we move toward recovery.

**138. Spur private sector investment in open space and transit by replicating what worked in the East Midtown rezoning**

**Dan Garodnik, President and CEO, Riverside Park Conservancy;  
former Member of the New York City Council**

The pandemic has shown how important access to public open space is for New Yorkers. As the city rebuilds its economy and restarts development, it should mandate that commercial district upzoning incorporate open space for the public and transit improvements. The East Midtown Rezoning was the first rezoning to actually build specific improvements for transit into the zoning resolution. That is a surefire way to ensure that public improvements are delineated upfront and delivered when development happens. This type of rezoning requires that in exchange for additional density, developers contribute to a District Improvement Fund that funds significant improvements to the area's transit and pedestrian network. In the case of East Midtown, this helped the city improve green space and infrastructure around Grand Central Terminal. The same framework could be used in future commercial district upzoning so that major new private development projects and high-rise construction contribute to the public realm and improve the city for all New Yorkers.

**139. Phase in paid commercial street parking to generate revenue for the city and take back space for outdoor dining and micromobility networks**

**Margaret Newman, Practice Leader for Urban Places and  
Smart Mobility, Stantec**

During the pandemic, New Yorkers have changed how they use public space. Bicycling has increased dramatically. Open Streets and outdoor dining have provided vital lifelines to struggling restaurants and small businesses and have become so popular that there's a movement to make them permanent. These same programs also displaced curbside parking—yet people have been willing and able to deal with it. This moment presents an exciting opportunity for the city to rethink how it uses its 12,000 miles of curbs. Free parking is holding back the development of protected bike lanes and the continuation of outdoor dining, and it is also depriving the city of a massive potential source of revenue. The city should consider phasing in paid parking on the street—perhaps starting with

commercial parking and delivery services. It would provide the city with much-needed revenue while giving the city the ability to clear the space it needs to maintain outdoor dining and build out a safe, reliable micromobility transportation network for bicycles and scooters.

**140. Activate public spaces and spur arts performances in communities in every corner of NYC by developing tool kits for community groups**

**Eldon Scott, President, UrbanSpace NYC**

Creating lively, public spaces will bring New Yorkers—and tourists—back onto the streets and into parks and plazas, boosting the local economy and jumpstarting the city’s recovery. But activating public spaces shouldn’t require large capital expenditures, production, and agency coordination. We believe in “lighter, quicker, cheaper.” The city could help organizations and BIDs license public space to build low-cost amenities. The city could put out a tool kit of amenities (such as stage platforms, seating, tables, planters, string lights) that can be used at many different sites, so BIDs and community arts organizations are not reinventing the wheel every time they create a space or a garden or cafe. Local grants could subsidize the actual items so BIDs and community-based organizations can more easily and populate outdoor spaces. These organizations know their neighborhoods, and with the help of a toolkit of items, they are best positioned to create exciting performance and amenity space that reflect local character—and they can do it more efficiently, too.

**141. Create a Department of Care to strengthen local capacity to reimagine, maintain, and care for public spaces**

**Justin Garrett Moore, Program Officer, Humanities in Place,  
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

To help New York City recover equitably from the pandemic, city leaders will need to make major new investments in expanding and rethinking public space to meet the needs of communities and neighborhoods across the city. In order to build trust in this process and ensure that outcomes are truly inclusive and equitable, the city will need a much stronger mechanism to facilitate conversations about how communities will be affected and what needs to be done in advance of physical changes. One solution is to create a Department of Care. Working across government agencies and with community-based organizations and local leaders, this entity would be charged with building local capacity to address ongoing maintenance and care needs for public spaces—before committing to physical changes in the built environment. The Department of Care would enable New York City to go beyond the BID/conservancy system and build out a community-level infrastructure of maintenance and care for the spaces we use every day.

**142. Establish a commission to make NYC green—literally****Susan T. Rodriguez, Architect**

New Yorkers' experience over the past year has underscored the importance of the natural world and the value of spending time outside for health and wellness, yet not all New Yorkers have the same access to quality parkland and open space. The city should establish a commission that's tasked with greening the city: identifying and converting hardscapes to landscapes in sites in every neighborhood in all five boroughs. We need to make the city—quite literally—greener, and this can start with an empowered commission that surveys the entire city to pinpoint opportunities to create more equitable access to green space. We should expand the network of parks and open spaces, making them primary, not secondary to the car. This would include making Open Streets a permanent initiative, designing the city to accommodate safer movement for pedestrians and cyclists, and investing in public transportation. We need to put walls around vehicles, not put walls around our parks. This doesn't even require monumental change—it's all about expanding upon the existing networks of green spaces and prioritizing public access over automobile infrastructure.

**143. Turn Eastern Parkway into a global cultural destination****Anne Pasternak, Director, Brooklyn Museum**

New York City and State should invest in turning America's first great European-style boulevard, Eastern Parkway, into a new type of cultural destination. Its wide sidewalks are able to accommodate large numbers of pedestrians. In just a few blocks, it links Brooklyn's biggest cultural institutions: Brooklyn Museum, Prospect Park, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Brooklyn Public Library. And it is a connector of economically and culturally diverse neighborhoods. The city should recognize this world-class asset and launch a marketing campaign to elevate its potential as a global destination for arts and culture and bring new economic activity to the surrounding neighborhoods. And it should activate the Parkway with a new calendar of major events to complement the annual West Indian Day Parade that brings millions of people to the neighborhood every Labor Day.

**144. Improve parks in underserved communities by investing in operations and maintenance****Robert Hammond, Co-Founder, The High Line**

Throughout the pandemic, New Yorkers have flocked to public parks in record numbers only to find many parks in terrible states of disrepair. A modest additional investment in the Parks Department maintenance, operations, and repairs budgets would transform the more than 1,700 public parks located in every neighborhood across New York's five boroughs. Even without radically reimagining public space or undertaking massive new capital projects, the city could greatly improve health outcomes in under-resourced

neighborhoods and boost economic development throughout the city simply by providing parks with a permanent operational boost. With as little as half a percent increase of our overall city budget, the city could invest in urgently needed repairs, regular maintenance, more plantings, and more—improving many of the city’s aging parks that have been allowed to deteriorate from lack of upkeep. To be clear, this would not be an investment in the conservancies of NYC but rather in the parks that do not benefit from private support. This will ensure neighborhood investments that will improve health outcomes, help attract people and talent to New York, and improve the quality of life in the city.

**145. Improve the commutes of essential workers by subsidizing micromobility e-vehicle purchases**

**Paul Lipson, Principal, Barretto Bay Strategies**

The nurses, home health aides, daycare workers, paraprofessionals, social services workers, and food delivery workers who have been on the front lines of pandemic response often have some of the longest commutes to their jobs of any workers in the city. Many of their workplaces are located far from subway lines, requiring them to take both the bus and subway to get to and from work. And in outer-borough neighborhoods like Morrisania and East Tremont in the Bronx, east-west commutes to jobs within the borough are especially complicated and prolonged. For some of these outer-borough workers, an e-bike or electric scooter could greatly improve their commute times and improve their quality of life. But many of these same workers lack the credit to complete purchases of e-vehicles such as bikes and scooters. By supporting a CDFI small-dollar loan program supplemented by philanthropy sponsorships, payroll, and other sources, the city could revolutionize mobility and clean commuting and accelerate demand for safe bike lanes and safe streets.

**146. Launch a Saving Time initiative to reduce commute times for essential workers**

**Jerry Hultin, Chairman and Co-Founder, Global Futures Group**

During the pandemic, remote work has allowed many New Yorkers to get back the hours of the day they once spent commuting. There’s no reason for this reclaimed time to disappear after things return to normal—instead, the city should develop a new initiative that extends this privilege to far more New Yorkers, most notably the essential healthcare workers who worked tirelessly to get the city through the worst of the pandemic but who endure the longest travel times of any workers in the private sector. In the near term, the Saving Time initiative could work with the DOT to improve off-peak transit options through bus rapid transit and smarter scheduling, especially in the boroughs outside Manhattan. Longer term, the initiative would use data to address inequities in access to affordable fresh food and social infrastructure like schools, libraries, community centers, and parks, leading towards the “15-minute neighborhood” model of walkability. A smart cities project in Helsinki has used time-saving as its organizing principle for over five years. Let’s bring that model to NYC.

**147. Extend the Hudson Bergen Light Rail to Staten Island****Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance, College of Staten Island**

The city should take this pivotal moment to implement logical and cost-effective expansions to the Hudson Bergen Light Rail to Staten Island. By bringing this system across the Bayonne Bridge and extending the line south across the Island, the city could expand the footprint of quality transportation into a region that currently has poor mass transit options, in turn expanding employment opportunities to a community on the West Shore of Staten Island.

**148. Embrace the “Bigger Apple” through regional transportation and zoning reform****Jim Venturi, Founder and Principal, ReThink Studio**

The city should embrace innovative regional transportation reform that will allow the city to grow and become more attractive for big business. The ‘Bigger Apple’ is the concept of considering the New York metro area in its entirety. One way the city can take up this idea is by expanding the Midtown commercial district over the East River into Long Island City. Rather than build more offices within Manhattan just because existing zoning rules allow for taller buildings, the city should reform its rules to expand office districts across boroughs linked by existing transportation networks. Bolstering the overall regional platform of the metro area will also strengthen the attractiveness of New York. Many companies will open their offices and warehouses in the surrounding areas and states, but it’s ultimately all interconnected through the same airports. Until our policy makers and planners think entrepreneurially on a platform scale and have the tools to be able to do that, then we won’t be able to compete with cities like London that can. Improving regional housing, office space, and transportation will help to attract tech jobs specifically.

**149. Support the use of city waterways for last-mile package delivery to decongest streets****Paul Lipson, Principal, Barretto Bay Strategies**

The massive growth in package deliveries from e-commerce giants like Amazon, grocery services like Peapod, and logistics firms like FedEx and UPS during the pandemic has accelerated the need for decluttering and decongesting city streets. The city should take advantage of its waterways and incentivize the integration of waterborne delivery into the last-mile logistics chain. Many new distribution hubs, including large warehouse complexes in South Brooklyn and the South Bronx, are already located on or near the waterfront. While congestion pricing will likely compel delivery fleets to rethink freight mobility into Manhattan, the city has both carrots and sticks at its disposal to encourage the use of freight ferries, barges, and purpose-built vessels to carry last-mile cargo to waterfront neighborhoods throughout the city. The activation of select NYC Ferry terminals for roll-on roll-off bike and handcart freight would be a meaningful first step, helping to decongest streets of delivery vans and trucks, promote low-carbon delivery, and improve air quality in the environmental justice communities where these distribution hubs disproportionately are found.

**150. Expand affordable housing options by allowing trailer parks in NYC**

**Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance, College of Staten Island**

The decades-long success of the Goethals Community on the north shore of Staten Island, the sole trailer park in New York City, provides strong evidence that the city should be open to new, old, and perhaps unconventional urban housing ideas. Simple and effective regulations could be implemented to assure that the facilities retain their affordable and stable cost status, such as requiring that land be cooperatively owned as opposed to leased or rented. Changing the city's policy to allow new trailer park projects would allow New York City to experiment with new housing options and support the expansion of the housing stock at an accelerated rate, creating jobs in construction in the short run and expanding housing stock in the long run.

**151. Implement a feminist housing plan to support women and single parents**

**Jessica Katz, Executive Director, Citizens Housing and Planning Council**

To counter the disproportionate economic impacts of the pandemic on women, city officials should roll out a feminist housing plan to support low-income women living in New York's affordable housing. The working definition of affordable housing in New York City requires 30 percent of household income to go towards rent. However, New York's high cost of food, clothing, medical costs, transportation, and childcare put added pressure on women and single-parent households, populations who are more likely to be low-income and have less to spare after rent contribution. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) should reformulate the definition of "affordable" to account for additional expenditures, income level, and household configuration to better support the economic recovery of women and single-parent households.

**152. Create jobs and stabilize housing by incentivizing owners to make building renovations**

**Douglas Eisenberg, Founding Principal, A&E Real Estate Holdings**

Whenever owners of multifamily buildings renovate vacant apartments, they create solid, well-paying jobs for New York City plumbers, electricians, carpenters, painters, and other building workers. They also provide direct support to mom-and-pop business owners and their employees at local building supply, hardware, and electronics stores. As New York emerges from the pandemic with an unemployment rate significantly above the national average, we need these types of jobs now more than ever. Unfortunately, it's become harder and harder for building owners to finance the types of major repairs and upgrades that create new jobs and safe, comfortable places to live. In 2019, New York State capped the value of repairs that owners can recoup \$15,000 per unit, which barely covers the cost of cosmetic maintenance, such as repainting. This change was made to prevent abuses of the system, but it's also had the unfortunate effect of putting responsible landlords in a box. We want to maintain the integrity of our buildings,

improve their efficiency and make timely repairs. Our residents want and deserve updated wiring, plumbing, floors, and appliances—but those upgrades can run \$60,000 or more. To help finance the deeper upgrades apartments inevitably need—while preventing abuse—we need a new tool. The city or state could create a new program that incentivizes owners to put that extra \$45,000 into apartment renovations through an offset in real estate taxes or some other mechanism that enables owners to get a reasonable return on their capital while keeping rents steady. This would allow us and other owners to support job growth, keep apartments in good condition, and do right by our residents.

**153. Repurpose unused commercial space as Big Tech-backed cooperative housing**  
**Anil Dash, CEO, Glitch**

As several of the largest tech companies increase their presence in New York, city officials should push these tech giants to give back to the city. One idea is to get the companies to underwrite cooperative housing in vacated commercial space that is unlikely to return to its former use. Housing would be owned and shared among tech employees and lower-income workers in other industries, who would be supported by subsidies. A similar model exists in Silicon Valley, where Facebook is effectively building a company town for its employees in the form of dormitories. New York has its own history of cooperative housing, such as Co-Op City, but a 21st-century incarnation should draw on the spending power of big tech to boost affordable housing stock while anchoring families in the city and reinventing over-built office space.

**154. Upzone industrial zones and transit-rich neighborhoods to build more housing**  
**Alon Levy, Fellow, NYU Marron Institute**

New York City cannot afford to limit its potential for a post-pandemic economic rebound due to housing constraints. New York needs to change zoning to permit the replacement of small residential buildings with bigger ones and redevelop old plants and rail yards as dense residential construction, especially in neighborhoods with less crowded subway lines. Transit-accessible land that is currently low-density—such as parts of Long Island City, the West Village, and Brownstone Brooklyn—should be used for high-rise residential buildings. The warehouses of Long Island City are attractive for redevelopment, too, since they're on the 7 train, which isn't crowded entering Manhattan, only farther out in Queens. But none of this development should be coerced—upzoning doesn't compel owners to sell; it merely permits the owner of the land, such as a private developer, to build taller without receiving a special permit. With broad upzoning, such a process is no longer necessary, and developers can build more easily. The first 100,000 apartments are likely to be high-end, but the next batch will have to offer middle-class rents to stay competitive, and soon enough, landlords will have to lower rents to compete for tenants. New York should aim to be a bigger, more affordable city, generating growth not from having market-rate rents that only the rich can afford but from agglomerating in size to attract more employers and residents who are turned off by the expense today.

**155. Prioritize affordable home ownership, not just rental housing**

**Sheena Wright, President and CEO, United Way of NYC**

Achieving an equitable post-pandemic recovery will require the city to take steps to address the massive displacement that BIPOC communities in New York City have experienced in recent decades. Instead of focusing solely on subsidized rentals, both the city and employers should prioritize affordable home ownership, including limited-equity cooperative home ownership. For instance, the city should catalyze unions to draw on their pension funds in order to build affordable housing for their members. Creating long-term affordable housing will help fuel a more equitable and lasting economic recovery.

**156. Reinstate city subsidies for community centers in affordable housing developments, redirecting funds from law enforcement**

**Karim Hutson, Founder and Managing Member, Genesis Companies**

After the shock of the pandemic, access to neighborhood gathering places, workforce development, and health resources will be crucial for the recovery of communities disproportionately impacted by the crisis. But despite requiring that community facilities be embedded in city-sponsored affordable housing developments, New York has put less focus on subsidizing those facilities in recent years. As a result, developers will often bring in entities that can pay higher rents and call them “community facilities.” If there were more city funding available, then developers could rent community facilities to mental health and workforce development programs, for instance, while keeping rents low. Programs like these are more crucial than ever for stabilizing communities and helping residents get ahead. City officials should reinstate city subsidies that enable true community facilities to be included in affordable housing developments.

**157. Double city funding for affordable housing development and preservation**

**Rachel Fee, Executive Director, NYC Housing Conference**

New York City has an opportunity to address the longstanding housing crisis—which was acute before the pandemic and has only gotten worse—while spurring the city's economic recovery. The city should double spending for the creation and preservation of affordable housing to at least \$4 billion annually, including \$1.5 billion for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). For every 100 units of affordable housing construction, the city creates 230 jobs and generates \$46 million in economic activity. And investing in NYCHA and funding repairs and green building renovations for affordable housing will make New York more affordable, create jobs in construction and development, and improve the quality of life for affordable housing residents.



## VII. BOOST THE HARD-HIT ARTS SECTOR TO BRING BACK THE CITY'S MAGNETISM AND VITALITY



Policies that reinvigorate the city's now-fragile cultural sector—from working artists and museums to music venues and Broadway theaters—will be key to a tourism revival and a lasting economic recovery.

### **158. Create a Teaching Artist Jobs Corps**

**Kemi Ilesanmi, Executive Director, The Laundromat Project**

New York City can't recover without its working artists. But so many artists, across all disciplines, pay their bills by teaching K-12 and afterschool programs—and most lost their jobs and income as a result of the pandemic. To help the city support and strengthen its cultural vitality, the next mayor should launch a Teaching Artists Jobs Corps. This program would provide a monthly stipend to support teaching artists as creators and gifted educators, working with communities on local projects across all five boroughs. A program like this could tap into the city's incredible concentration of teaching artists as part of a thoughtful economic recovery strategy.

**159. Help struggling performing arts groups by providing free rehearsal spaces in schools**

**Randi Berry, Executive Director, IndieSpace**

As the performing arts industry has been one of the most adversely affected by the pandemic, supporting theater and dance organizations will be necessary for recovery and for bringing tourism back to the city. The city could pair public schools with performing arts organizations to provide programming to students in exchange for free rehearsal space. This would expand arts education while providing arts organizations access to physical space. Scaling this program would reduce expenses for artists and provide arts programming to schools at no additional cost.

**160. Provide a Basic Income for artists to work at cultural organizations**

**Sally Tallant, President and Executive Director, Queens Museum**

Working artists contribute so much to New York's vitality, but they have been among the hardest hit during the pandemic. To provide a boost to this crucial part of New York's cultural fabric and economy, the city and state should replicate or borrow from government programs created to aid artists during previous economic emergencies, like the city's own federally-funded Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project, which in the late 1970s placed over 500 artists with community organizations and paid them each \$10,000 a year (equivalent to over \$44,000 today) to make public art installations, perform, teach classes, and lead workshops. New York City should revive aspects of that pioneering program together with new basic income programs being tested in California. The city should give 10,000 artists a basic income, operated through cultural institutions. With this funding, institutions like the Queens Museum could employ, provide healthcare benefits, and provide workspace for about 10 to 15 artists. This would be an effective employment strategy that supports institutions along with individual artists.

**161. Change city laws that effectively prevent NYC from building artist housing**

**Barbara S. Davis, COO, The Actors Fund**

With New Yorkers in the arts losing work because of the pandemic and fleeing the city because of rising costs, now is the time to create an effective artist housing policy to help bring arts workers back and keep them here. The Actors Fund conducted a survey in February of 2021 that found that 11 percent of all NYC respondents relocated to another state. The current system for applying for affordable housing poses unique challenges for artists, who are episodic workers and thus aren't able to project income. Artist housing, which is allowable under the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, can be found in cities all across the country. Two of the most iconic examples of artist housing in the U.S.—Westbeth and Manhattan Plaza—are in NYC, but both were developed in the 1970s under different regulatory regimes. NYC's Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of occupation in housing accommodations, has prevented any significant

development of artist housing over the past four decades aside from a few projects like El Barrio's ArtSpace PS109. And while the current administration committed to developing 1,500 units of affordable artist housing, it hasn't happened. Now is the time to lower barriers and help arts workers find stable and affordable housing and play a key part in the city's economic revitalization.

**162. Clarify safety guidance for public-facing cultural organizations**

**Dan Gallant, Executive Director, Nuyorican Poets Cafe**

Reopening arts and cultural organizations that serve the public will be critical to revitalizing New York City's economy and public life. But there still an enormous lack of clarity about what is safe and what is financially feasible during a phased or limited reopening. Enthusiasm for reopening has outpaced the practical implementation and communication of reasonable guidelines about how to do so. There needs to be far more dialogue between city and state officials pushing for reopening and the workers of the city's arts and performance venues who will lead the reopening itself. In order to confidently reopen, venues need to know what is permitted when it comes to public performances of poetry, music, stand-up comedy, or theater—anything that involves people speaking into a space towards an audience. Communicating with these organizations and providing comprehensive guidance will be integral to a safe reopening.

**163. Help artists rebuild New York City by investing now in long-term affordability**

**Esther Robinson and Guy Buckles, Co-Executive Directors, ArtBuilt**

It's NYC's unparalleled arts and nightlife that will bring back office jobs—people will come back from Connecticut, the Hudson Valley, or Miami Beach because life there pales beside the cultural possibilities of a re-emerging NYC. But the survival of the artists, entrepreneurs, and immigrants who lend the city its unmatched allure is under threat. To rebuild NYC, it's critical to invest in infrastructure that ensures creative vitality through boom-and-bust years. Our current instability is an opportunity to build long-term creative resilience for NYC. The next mayor should prioritize large-scale nonprofit/mission-driven control of affordable real estate, focused on stabilizing small-scale cultural producers and sole-proprietor businesses. This should include expanding on cooperative ownership models that can help organizations with little cash to secure permanent spaces and developing low-cost financing and larger cash grants to secure long-term leases or ownership.

**164. Replicate successful Depression-era arts programs**

**Louise Mirrer, President and CEO, New-York Historical Society**

The pandemic knocked New York City's world-class arts sector off its feet. Working artists, many of whom pay the bills working in restaurants and retail, were doubly hit when they lost their day jobs and saw opportunities to show work or perform dry up. The city is already looking to its own innovative history of supporting the arts during the New Deal with the new City Artists Corp, a \$25 million program that will hire artists to create works throughout the five boroughs. But it can go further in following Mayor LaGuardia's Municipal Art Committee and also launch a Summer Festival of music, art, dance, and drama to support the performing arts and temporary Municipal Art Galleries for city artists to show their work.

**165. Create workforce development programs for people in the arts**

**Barbara S. Davis, COO, The Actors Fund**

It's going to take years for the arts to come back in full, and the city needs to help artists find other work opportunities in the meantime. The Actors Fund has a Career Center that helps arts workers identify their skills and apply them to other work settings. The city should support programs such as this and help artists secure employment. Since World War II, there have been great programs that have helped employ artists after crises. Cities across the country drew on federal funds to provide jobs for underemployed artists, including hundreds in NYC who got salaried positions with community organizations, and in turn, created hundreds of public artworks and gave numerous no-cost performances. Those kinds of programs are necessary now to help this crucial talent base get back to work.

**166. Expand and improve recovery support for NYC's small arts organizations**

**Dan Gallant, Executive Director, Nuyorican Poets Cafe**

So many small and mid-sized arts organizations were devastated by the pandemic and are barely hanging on. The city must make sure that these organizations have a clear understanding of how to access recovery funds and have the resources to process funds properly and avoid financial risks. A big part of this is ensuring that when dispersing the recovery funds available through city, state, and federal sources, we think beyond the larger organizations and provide targeted guidance for small arts organizations that may lack administrative capacity. Recovery supports should also include new regulations that help protect community arts organizations from predatory real estate financing. Small organizations often spend much-needed funding trying to survive pressure from landlords and creditors, pressure that also puts these organizations at risk of losing their venues and weakens the city's cultural ecosystem as a whole. The city needs to establish protections for entities that are still struggling with the vendors, creditors, and landlords that are undermining their viability in the city.

**167. Streamline the funding and permitting process for live outdoor performances**

**Melva Miller, CEO, Association for a Better New York**

The success of Open Streets and outdoor dining have proven what is possible when city government loosens restrictions and gives New Yorkers the flexibility to get creative and entrepreneurial. The city should continue to evaluate existing regulations and think innovatively about how government can empower New Yorkers to make exciting use of outdoor space. In particular, the city should streamline the process for artists and musicians to perform outdoors this summer. With easier access to grant funding and simplified permitting, New York could unleash a wave of live performances across all five boroughs and give the city a huge jolt of energy just when it needs it. The city and state should enlist local organizations to make it as easy as possible for artists and nonprofits to apply for grants and permits. They should also cut through the red tape around agency jurisdiction that makes it far too challenging for artists to get approval for performances in parks, plazas, and unused city spaces. As New York heats up, it's the right time to support local performers and give them support to put on live events, draw tourists back to the city, and lift up the spirits of all New Yorkers.

**168. Ensure "Community Facility" zoned space goes to community-based arts and culture organizations**

**Randi Berry, Executive Director, IndieSpace**

Arts and culture organizations have been devastated by the pandemic, and many have lost their spaces. One way to ensure access to new, low-cost spaces is by changing how "Community Facilities" are designated as part of new development. Unfortunately, the lack of commitment during the land use review process has shut out prospective arts and culture tenants in favor of medical facilities that can afford to pay market rent. The city should redefine the groups allowed for Community Facilities to give preference to community-based organizations that offer free and low-cost programming to the neighborhood and that otherwise would not be able to afford market rentals. This will allow arts and culture organizations to stay in their long-time neighborhoods and continue to serve and enrich their communities.

**169. Create grant-matched Individual Development Accounts for artists and entrepreneurs**

**Esther Robinson and Guy Buckles, Co-Executive Directors, ArtBuilt**

The city can help artists/entrepreneurs from low-resource neighborhoods build assets by extending Individual Development Accounts, which match savings with grants to support ownership or business expansion; providing down-payment assistance for homeownership; and assisting in savings and financial literacy opportunities. These approaches will build a future for the artists, entrepreneurs, activists, and immigrants who have doubled down on the creative, hard work of rebuilding a city of unparalleled excellence.

**170. Expand the Cultural Institutions Group**

**Louise Mirrer, President and CEO, New-York Historical Society**

The highly original, 19<sup>th</sup>-century idea of public-private partnerships between the City of New York and major cultural institutions, which began with the construction of the American Museum of Natural History on city-owned land in 1874 and evolved into the 34-member Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) has enabled museums, zoos, theatres, and arts centers across the city to flourish while providing access to arts, history, and culture to all New Yorkers (and millions of tourists). CIGs benefit from major capital funding and operating support from the city that confers a high level of financial stability. But the city has added just one institution to the CIG since the mid-90s. The city should expand the ranks of the CIG to offer more institutions the benefits of this hugely successful partnership at a time when the city's cultural sector needs help more than ever.

**171. Ensure that city arts funding goes to organizations that pay a living wage**

**Mary McColl, Executive Director, Actors' Equity Association**

New York's vibrant arts sector has been devastated by the pandemic, and city arts funding will surely play a crucial role in getting artists and arts organizations back on their feet. In turn, these organizations are likely to be key drivers of the city's broader economic rebound: national data shows that every time someone goes to see a live event, they spend another \$31 on additional services, from cabs to parking to dinner, generating a huge halo effect in terms of economic activity. But there's currently no measure in place to ensure that the organizations that receive city arts funding are fully supporting the artists they employ. When New York City commissions a contractor for a construction project, the city is required to pay the prevailing wage, ensuring that construction workers are paid fairly. There is no parallel version of that in the arts. NYC's Department of Cultural Affairs is the single largest municipal arts funding agency in the country, yet there's no requirement that this funding goes to organizations that pay artists a living wage. As New York attempts to recover, it's time for the city to ensure that arts funding only goes to arts venues and organizations that pay a living wage.

**172. Rezone commercial space to lower occupancy costs for independent creatives and artist cooperatives****Jonathan Marvel, Founding Principal, Marvel Designs**

Reviving and supporting the creative industries will be crucial to New York City's economic recovery, yet the cost of commercial space to work and create could push even more artists and creatives out of New York. The city should create rezoning parameters that lower the taxes on independent creatives, mom-and-pop shops, smaller architecture and design firms, and artist cooperatives compared to large retailers or other uses. This will allow the smaller spaces and second-floor spaces to thrive in a more tax-friendly environment. The tax loss will be offset by the job creation and the rent being paid through occupancy of these otherwise vacant spaces. This policy will help foster a cooperative environment for the creative professions that lower barriers to entry and improve diversity and inclusion within the industry.

**173. Rethink commercial and retail space to empower artists and encourage creative industries****Lexy Funk, Founder and CEO, Brooklyn Industries**

Rent increases over the past 20 years have taken power away from creators and given it to landlords and the financial sector. Giving that power back to creators will help rebuild the city's economy and creative ecology. For example, many artists and creators were living and working in commercial lofts in Williamsburg in the 1990s, and numerous new businesses emerged from those mixed-use spaces. That can happen again if the city recalibrates to protect and promote creative economies and artists—people who would typically be considered on the fringe, but who are actually the source of the city's vitality. To encourage artists who left during the pandemic to return and also attract new artists, New York City should enable more fluid uses of commercial and retail space. This could include hybrid models, like live-work retail spaces or former offices converted to storefronts with attached work studios. Artists can find new solutions, but the city should take steps to make innovation possible, perhaps by working with landlords and banks to create different lease structures. The long-term leases that retail businesses are encouraged to enter into favor landlords and large multinational companies, leaving many storefronts empty and discouraging community involvement. So many industries can come out of a creative economy and help spur the city's economic recovery, but first, there has to be some sort of calibration back to a place where creative people can actually afford to live and work in New York City.

**174. Provide grants and guidance that help arts organizations across the 5 boroughs take advantage of the Open Culture program**

**Katie Shima, Design Director, Situ Studio**

This year's Open Culture bill streamlines the permitting process for performances in 200 locations across the five boroughs, but smaller arts organizations need guidance on safety measures regarding how to set up outdoor stages—as well as funding—to fully take advantage of the program. With proper support, local artists, youth groups, and the small to mid-sized arts and cultural organizations they lead could stage public performances and bring cultural opportunities to communities across the five boroughs. By providing opportunities to artists from a diversity of backgrounds and empowering local community organizations to curate their own programming as they see fit, the city could use outdoor space not only to help the arts sector recover but also to build a more equitable cultural infrastructure that will benefit New York far into the future.

**175. Help cultural institutions bounce back with subsidized admission**

**Gordon Davis, Partner, Venable; Former Commissioner, NYC Parks Department**

New York's museums, cultural institutions, and Broadway theaters have long been integral to the city's economic success. They help attract artists, creative professionals, and highly educated professionals to live and work in the city, and they are one of the keys to New York's success in growing its tourism sector, which employs roughly 300,000 New Yorkers. However, cultural institutions and entertainment venues were forced to shut down for most of the past year, decimating their budgets and, for many, creating uncertainty about their financial future. To help this vital part of New York's economy bounce back strong, city and state officials should make it as attractive and affordable as possible for New Yorkers to patronize these venues. They can do so by eliminating admission fees for museums and deeply subsidizing non-premium tickets for performing arts venues and Broadway shows for the next six months—with public funds replacing ticket revenue for these institutions.



## VIII. BUILD A STRONGER AND MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR THE LONG RUN



More than just a short-term recovery, NYC needs policies that build on the city's competitive advantages, spark the creation of middle class jobs, and address structural economic challenges further exacerbated by the pandemic.

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### **176. Create NYC Coin: a local currency for the five boroughs** **Fred Wilson, Founder, Union Square Ventures**

Increased local spending, especially at New Yorker-owned and operated retailers and restaurants, will be critical to creating an economic recovery that includes and sustains the small businesses across the five boroughs that have been devastated by the pandemic. One innovative way to encourage New Yorkers to spend within the city is by creating a local currency: NYC Coin. Local currencies keep money circulating within the community, strengthening the local economy. And with the emergence of cryptocurrency and the widespread use of digital wallets and contactless payment, NYC Coin would be relatively easy to implement. NYC Coin could provide benefits for vendors and consumers through sales tax exemptions, discounts, or other mechanisms, all while showing NYC pride and ensuring the money spent stays within the five boroughs.

**177. Help NYC become a global leader in the sex tech industry**

**Cindy Gallop, Founder, MakeLoveNotPorn**

Tech is already driving New York’s post-pandemic economy, but to supercharge growth in tech, relatively new, emergent industry sectors should be supported. New York City is home to arguably the world’s largest community of women-led sex tech companies, part of an industry projected to be worth \$122 billion by 2024. Fem tech, an industry focused on tech that addresses women’s health issues, is expected to be a \$3 billion industry by 2030. But companies in both sex tech and fem tech face major barriers to success, from biased banking and advertising rules to SBA loan regulations to disinterest from male VCs. New York has an opportunity to become the global leader in women-led tech promoting sexual health and wellness. The city should announce its support of sex tech and fem tech; facilitate access to banking and advertising; and hold the first international sex tech conference here next year.

**178. Attract early-stage entrepreneurs by making NYC a test bed for new technologies**

**Shaun Stewart, CEO, Newlab**

Nearly 40 percent of the companies operating at Newlab relocated from outside of New York State, and many of them opted to build their business here specifically because the Brooklyn Navy Yard is one of the only places in New York where early-stage companies can test their technology. We are testing pipe inspection devices under the buildings, amphibious drones in the East River, and urban farming systems on rooftops. But this shouldn’t only happen at the Navy Yard. Right now, in most other places in the city, city regulations and rules make it incredibly difficult to launch pilots. City economic development officials should change this and make the entire city—or many more parts of it—places where there are few if any prohibitions on testing new technologies, where companies have an ability to pilot things in the public, on the surface streets, on buildings, and on energy systems. That would make it incredibly attractive to the entrepreneurs who are building the fast-growing companies of tomorrow and creating a pipeline of valuable jobs.

**179. Break the logjam around housing development in NYC with a grand bargain around housing and jobs**

**Rafael Cestero, President, Community Preservation Corp.;**  
**former Commissioner, NYC Department of Housing,**  
**Preservation and Development**

The last several years have witnessed significant polarization around affordable housing development, and for very understandable reasons. The pandemic has only amplified the need for bold action to create more affordable housing. But it has also caused hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to lose their jobs. There’s a way for the city to address both of these challenges—getting people back to work and constructing affordable places to live—

but it's going to take leadership. To get past the impasses that have slowed progress on new affordable housing, the city needs to make sure that communities get their fair share of any deal while also reforming the public review process so that projects can get in the ground far more quickly. This adds up to a grand bargain: create a citywide structure that eliminates the power of individual groups or local representatives to scuttle projects because of micro-issues, reallocates housing vouchers to create deeply affordable housing at a mass scale in the communities that need it most, and mandates local hiring on all major projects involving city land or capital. This would allow for several major development opportunities to go forward at a time when there is far greater urgency to create housing and jobs.

**180. Boost the city's economy by making it easier for NYC startups to win city technology contracts**

**Anil Dash, CEO, Glitch**

New York City spends billions of dollars on technology procurement, and this spending will likely only increase in the years ahead as more of the city's government infrastructure incorporates digital tools. But the vast majority of the city's technology contracts currently go to global consulting firms and tech giants headquartered in Silicon Valley. It's time to change this. The city should make a commitment to contract a much larger share of its service needs to local tech businesses that better reflect New York and have roots here, and then reduce contracting barriers that have made it difficult for local tech startups to compete for these contracts. Increasing contracts for local startups would boost the city's economy and help spur more tech jobs for a wide swath of New Yorkers, including those who lost their jobs during the crisis. Tech startups are generally more demographically representative of the city than are global tech companies and more inclusive in their hiring and training.

**181. Develop a master plan that charts a path for creating a stronger and more inclusive NYC economy through 2050**

**Winston Fisher, Partner, Fisher Brothers; Co-Chair,  
NYC Regional Economic Development Council**

It's not enough for New York to put in place policies that help the city recover from the devastating economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. While that is paramount, New York also needs a game plan for building a stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive economy over the long run. Even before the pandemic, it was already clear that New York needed a plan to create more middle-class jobs and a more equitable economy overall. But the pandemic has also accelerated fundamental shifts in the economy, created a host of new structural challenges for superstar cities like New York, and left New York more vulnerable to competition from Miami, Austin, and several other cities. New York is still well-positioned to come back stronger, but to ensure that this happens, New York should develop a master plan for the city's economic future through 2050. Perhaps called

NYC2050, the next mayor should form a public-private taskforce or cross-sector committee to lead an initiative that projects what the city's most important economic engines will be over the next three decades and sets a course for New York to capitalize on the city's potential. This evaluation should find ways we can harness natural assets, nurture the industries best positioned to spur middle-class job growth, create a welcoming business climate, and promote an economic development ecosystem that is pro-business and pro-worker. The plan would map out concrete actions for supporting the recruitment of new businesses and sparking job creation in the city's key pillars of the economy, but it would also identify strategies for building the most diverse workforce possible in those critical sectors—with goals around apprenticeships, workforce training, and the education system.

**182. Create good jobs by making it far easier for hospitals to expand and modernize**  
**Steven Corwin, President, New York Presbyterian**

New York City's healthcare system has pulled the city through its worst crisis in a century, and healthcare infrastructure and institutions will be critical to the city's economic recovery. New York's research and teaching hospitals are emblematic of its position on the world stage. They are also a major source of good-paying jobs: NYC hospitals employ nearly 170,000 people, the majority of whom are minorities underrepresented in other industries. For hospitals to continue being a great source of jobs, the city must take steps to preserve and expand these world-class institutions. The city should recognize that new buildings have to be built and existing facilities must be expanded. The city should reform its land use and regulatory approach to the healthcare sector to remove barriers that have prevented the construction of new facilities. It should also explore new—and old—policy strategies to help spur new development of healthcare infrastructure. A new, 21st-century capital plan to help institutions recapitalize, construct new facilities, and continue to be a valuable and growing source of good-paying career jobs for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

**183. Help women entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses by supporting family care**  
**Jo Ann Corkran, Managing Partner, Golden Seeds**

Unlocking the full potential of New York City's women entrepreneurs can help drive an economic recovery. But because of growing demands for elder care and the continued need to provide childcare—all challenges compounded by the pandemic—women still don't have equal opportunities to start and grow their businesses. To ensure that women entrepreneurs can help lead the city's economic recovery, they'll need more support. The next mayor can help by focusing on creating citywide birth-through-kindergarten childcare. Likewise, the city should look to expand high-quality community-based eldercare. When it comes to supporting the full potential of women entrepreneurs, expanding these crucial supports can provide the best bang for the buck.

**184. Create a Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations to help make NYC's case in Albany and Washington**

**Carol O'Cleireacain, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia SIPA; former Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and Commissioner, NYC Department of Finance**

Responding to the pandemic has required a new level of cooperation between NYC and the state and federal governments. The city should build on this unique opportunity to permanently improve relations with the two higher tiers of government by creating a new Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations. This effort will require the Mayor's full attention and leadership, and in order to be effective, the office would need staff in DC and Albany. The Deputy Mayor would guide relationships and discussions with federal agencies and Albany while at the same time reaching across to the City Council, Comptroller, and New York's congressional delegation for their expertise and support. By coordinating with the city's representatives in Washington, this new appointee can work to restore funding for NYCHA, repair federal funding formulas, and ensure federal agency actions are friendly and funding is proportionate to the city's needs. The Deputy Mayor should also negotiate a détente with Albany so that urgent issues under state control, such as the city's outdated property tax system, can be reformed.

**185. Support infrastructure projects by streamlining the public procurement process**

**Louis Coletti, President and CEO, Building Trades Employers' Association**

Given the new infrastructure plan presented by the Biden administration and the importance of development for recovery, the city should implement a Public Procurement Task Force and cut down on overly bureaucratic steps in its public procurement processes. Eliminating redundancies and having a task force to oversee the steps would ease the process of bidding on work for contractors and allow for design-build to be applied more often. By streamlining the public procurement process, the city could speed up the design and construction process, allowing workers to be hired faster, projects to be built faster, and tax revenue to come in faster.

**186. Deliver city services better and more efficiently by vastly upgrading NYC government's technology systems**

**Andrew Rasiej, CEO, Civic Hall**

In the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, New York City is facing generational challenges. Yet city government is still operating on an outdated, patchwork system of technology. For the city to address this crisis head-on, it needs to fully reboot its technical systems and achieve the level of efficiency that's now a prerequisite in the private sector. Doing so would help the city save money and devote more resources towards housing, education, and small businesses, particularly in hard-hit communities

of color. And it would also enable the city to deliver services faster and more effectively. But executing a system-wide upgrade will require leadership. The current or next mayoral administration should appoint a new Deputy Mayor for Technology with the authority and budget to update all of the city's technical systems to current state-of-the-art standards in cybersecurity, data storage and analysis, software development, and artificial intelligence. The deputy mayor would bring in technologists from the private sector and deploy them throughout every agency to upgrade services, accelerate innovation, and save the city money in the process.

### **187. Accelerate electric vehicle adoption with far more charging stations**

**Cheryl Cohen Efron, Founder, Conjunction Fund**

Manhattan has less than 1,500 fully electric vehicles registered with the DMV, compared to over 250,000 gas vehicles. And across all five boroughs, there are just 8,900 registered fully electric vehicles and nearly 2.2 million gas vehicles. For the city to meet its ambitious emissions reduction goals and move towards a carbon-free economy, it must rapidly increase the adoption of personal electric vehicles. And a big part of what is holding the city back is the lack of charging stations—people just don't have the certainty that they'll be able to charge their car wherever they park it. The City Council made progress in 2018 when they mandated that new garages need charging stations, but they need to go much further. Every new permit or renewal for a garage or parking lot should require electric charging. This would take New York City into the next century, and the government doesn't need to pay for it.

### **188. Build a Green Jobs Task Force to power NYC's clean energy transition**

**Tim Cawley, CEO, Con Edison**

New York City is incredibly resilient and will battle back from COVID-19, but the challenge of climate change remains in front of us. The city's energy future lies in its ability to aggressively reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency, renewable energy and the electrification of transportation and buildings. Our ability to meet this challenge will depend on having a skilled workforce to meet the demand for these green jobs. We must, as civic leaders and institutions, invest in developing a plan to ensure the training programs for these skills are available and accessible to meet our environmental justice and economic opportunity goals as well. A task force of energy, educational, labor, government agencies, building owners and building technology companies should immediately be formed to align current educational programming with the training that is needed to fill these jobs. Aligning around and investing in access to these skills will be central not only to the city's recovery but also to ensuring a just and inclusive clean energy transition.

**189. Incentivize companies to hire employees based in NYC****Andrew Rasiej, CEO, Civic Hall**

After a year of going remote, it's clear to many companies, especially in the tech sector, that they can expand their talent pool and hire people from all over the world without them relocating to the five boroughs. At the same time, cities like Miami and Austin are trying to lure companies and talent away from New York City. The city should respond by incentivizing the hiring of local New Yorkers. This could take the form of a payroll tax credit for new hires who live in NYC or another economic incentive with conditions that existing jobs stay in the five boroughs.

**190. Launch a Startup Culture Card to retain and grow start-ups and tech talent****Steven Rosenbaum, Executive Director, NYC Media Lab**

New York has a unique advantage to attract and retain start-ups and tech talent. The vibrancy of New York's arts and culture community creates an energy that is fuel for entrepreneurs and company creators. The scene is crucial to retaining the young tech talent creating start-ups and driving the city's economic growth. To maintain New York's position as the destination to build and grow start-ups at a time when companies and teams are considering other options, the city should work with the private sector to build a program that gives people who are building a company in New York a unique incentive: an underwritten arts and culture credit card that allows them to experience art, music, theater, dance, culture, and nightlife essentially for free. The Startup Culture Card would enable founders and their teams to tap into the city's glorious mosaic while supporting organizations and artists across the city's cultural ecosystem that may not be reached by other funding. The creative output of the next generation of tech talent is going to be fueled by inputs, and New York's diversity and spirit are unrivaled when it comes to fueling start-up energy and creative spark. The Startup Culture Card would spur that engagement and not only get people to come but also to stay.

**191. Refrain from excessive tax increases that could undermine NYC's economic recovery****Stanley Grayson, Chief Operating Officer, M.R. Beal;  
former NYC Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development**

Ensuring a robust economic recovery following the coronavirus pandemic will require a careful balancing act. The city has endured not just a devastating public health and economic crisis but also unexpected fiscal challenges. In a time of fiscal stress, there are only three things that a municipal government can do: raise revenues, reduce expenses, or a combination of both. To strengthen vital city services while also bringing people back to the city, tackling doggedly high unemployment rates, and boosting the economy, the city needs to do both and strike a balance that will stimulate the industries that are capable of taking New York City to the next level. One part of that—but not the only

part—is understanding that there is a tipping point on taxes. If the city goes too far in raising taxes at a time when people feel like they can work anywhere, it could hurt the city’s chances of growing the industries of tomorrow.

**192. Support the growth of a key NYC industry by extending the film/tv tax credit program**

**Rebecca Damon, Executive Vice President, SAG-AFTRA**

The New York State Film and Television Tax Credit program is vital to the regrowth and continued success of New York’s leadership in entertainment and media. Since the program’s inception in 2004, it has resurrected New York’s film and television industry and made New York a leader in the world of global competition for production, specifically in the growing field of episodic streaming television series. The program is responsible for tens of thousands of good New York union jobs, with strong safety standards and fair wages. The program translates into billions of dollars in economic activity for New York, and it keeps New York at the forefront of the entertainment and media world. Successful programs like this must be continued and enhanced as we revitalize the state and city.

**193. Harness NYC’s competitive advantages in the creative economy**

**Kai Falkenberg, General Counsel, G/O; former First Deputy Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment**

New York’s vibrant creative sector, from film and advertising to music and architecture, has played a major role in the city’s economic growth over the past decade. New York’s position as a bastion of creative expression and a global leader in media and design innovation is one of the city’s greatest competitive advantages. The creative economy can be critical to the city’s recovery if New York City takes steps to reconvene the diverse industry sectors and rekindle connections that may have weakened over the past year of remote work and social distancing. To renew the creative ecosystem that is so central to New York’s economy and identity, the city should launch a summit series to bring together the industry and chart a path forward. Modeled on the World Economic Forum, the summit series would promote visionary new strategies for film, television, digital media, and more that would draw on New York’s unique resources and yield new strategies to strengthen New York’s position in the post-pandemic film, tv, media, and design landscape.

**194. Create a Newlab-type facility for life sciences**

**Shaun Stewart, CEO, Newlab**

The United States is experiencing an explosion in life sciences companies, in part due to the growing investment in healthcare and drug development that has occurred due to the pandemic but also because of the aging of the population and other factors. New York



has long had many of the ingredients needed to capture some of this growth—starting with its first-class scientific research institutions and proximity to large pharmaceutical companies. But despite clear progress, the city still has not fully capitalized on its incredible potential to grow a larger life sciences sector. The city can help rectify this by creating a Newlab-type facility for early-stage life sciences companies. Newlab has been wildly successful as a launch pad and testing ground for innovative new companies in various frontier technology fields, hardware and advanced manufacturing fields. But there are limited resources and facilities like this in New York City catering specifically to emerging bioscience companies. We hear all the time from life sciences companies that they need clean room space and wet labs, but New York doesn't have much of either. That's the biggest reason why life sciences companies started by New York-based scientists too often go to Cambridge or California to launch their businesses. New York can change this and capture a lot of the new jobs that will be growing in this sector, by helping to seed a Newlab for life sciences.

### **195. Grow NYC's presence in the adult entertainment industry**

**Cindy Gallop, Founder, MakeLoveNotPorn**

The proliferation of online sex work during the pandemic created an oversaturated market, making it more difficult for many workers to earn a living. Sex workers also struggled to access COVID-related federal relief funding. While online sex work isn't going away, it's not expected to maintain the same level of popularity. Given this transition moment, New York has an opportunity to become a hub for the adult entertainment industry. The city should welcome the adult film industry into its rich creative landscape and extend its subsidies and supports for film and tv production to adult film, with appropriate stipulations and oversight. These steps can create a legitimate, above-ground, healthy adult film industry that fosters new businesses and creates jobs.

### **196. Revise the real estate tax methodology for commercial entertainment venues that do not receive any public subsidies, tax benefits, or other financial assistance from the city**

**Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate, The Shubert Organization**

Real estate taxes are calculated for commercial Broadway theaters and entertainment venues as if they were typical commercial real estate spaces. The methodology doesn't account for the specificity of the arts and entertainment industry, such as the fact that theaters are dark and accommodating rehearsals for a significant period of time. The city should reconsider how it carries out this tax practice. The city can help reduce venue operators' cost, allowing for funds to pay for additional employees and enhance programming by recalculating how much those commercial venues are taxed on real estate.

**197. Create a Construction Czar to oversee and coordinate major projects**

**Louis Coletti, President and CEO, Building Trades Employers' Association**

With many major development projects slowed and workers furloughed due to the pandemic, the city should create a Construction Czar to oversee and coordinate major projects. Current projects require approval from multiple agencies, such as the Department of Buildings (DOB) and the Fire Department. A Construction Czar could facilitate and expedite the process of working with the different agencies for large projects with 15 stories or higher or 100,000 square feet or more. This would allow large projects to begin building faster, provide necessary jobs in construction and development during recovery, and cut down on bureaucratic limitations in development.

**198. Invest in Sunnyside Yard Intermodal Station and other large infrastructure projects that enhance NYC's competitiveness**

**Elizabeth Lusskin, President, Long Island City Partnership**

To boost the city's economic competitiveness in these challenging times, New York City should invest in major infrastructure projects like the Sunnyside Yard Intermodal Station, which would anchor an internationally relevant central business district and create a massive amount of new affordable housing. The station would take advantage of the fact that Amtrak, LIRR, NJ Transit, the subways and soon Metro-North all converge at Queens Plaza, and a brand-new hub with easy access to both JFK and LaGuardia could be relatively easily and inexpensively built atop the existing rails. This would increase the transit options for the entire tristate region, opening up opportunity to a wider range of residents, reducing vehicular traffic, and make the area even more attractive for the jobs and companies that will take us through this century.

**199. Support manufacturing of PPE and sterilization products and services**

**Marlene Cintron, President, Bronx Overall Development Corporation**

The pandemic revealed procurement gaps in personal protective equipment and healthcare supplies that may have cost the lives of essential workers. The city can protect itself from future public health crises while supporting the city's manufacturing sector by investing in the local PPE supply chain. Rather than sourcing PPE and sterilization from providers outside the city (if not outside the US entirely), the city should commit to procuring its PPE and sterilization needs from manufacturers within the five boroughs. This will require initial capital investment from SBS and EDC, but ultimately it could create a local supply chain that could lower the city health system's dependence on overseas supply chains, reduce overhead costs during crises, and create good-paying jobs in manufacturing.

## **200. Invest in broadband for modernizing manufacturing in the industrial sector**

**Elizabeth Lusskin, President, Long Island City Partnership**

The pandemic exposed a troubling digital divide throughout the city, but it isn't just low-income residents that are struggling to access an affordable and reliable high-speed Internet connection. Perhaps surprisingly, many businesses are also experiencing major gaps in broadband service—particularly those located in the city's industrial areas. Many of these industrial districts still lack reliable and affordable broadband service. This is hurting the city's economic competitiveness at a time when manufacturing companies are getting more advanced and as companies in other fast-growing sectors—from tech to life sciences—are increasingly considering industrial neighborhoods for their growth. As the city considers a range of policy initiatives to expand broadband access for New Yorkers, it should include specific investments to tackle broadband reliability gaps in the city's industrial business areas.

## **201. Build a Tourism Dashboard**

**Vijay Dandapani, CEO, Hotel Association of New York City**

In order to bring back the tourist economy that has been so important to New York City's economic success, the city needs to develop new systems to guide tourists and help them explore New York in new and exciting ways. The city should set up a user-friendly tourist dashboard that informs visitors to the city of tourism opportunities, present and future. Mastercard's tourism insights showed (pre-crisis) that 85 percent of leisure travelers decide on activities after arriving at their destination. New York City should do more to help these travelers navigate the city's arts, culture, food, and attractions once they've arrived. NYC has one of the best tourist ecosystems in a concentric geographical area, but tourists are often unaware of the range and depth of attractions, which leads to shorter stays and less spending across the tourism spectrum.

## **202. Invest in manufacturing companies that sustain and generate employment in marginalized communities**

**Tod Greenfield, Vice President, Martin Greenfield Clothiers**

With so much of the COVID-linked job loss occurring in industries that offered the most accessible jobs, the city ought to prioritize economic development investments that can quickly get these individuals back to work. The city should increase its investments in manufacturing companies that have long generated and sustained stable, middle-wage employment in marginalized communities. Most manufacturing jobs do not require post-secondary education, and many do not require English language skills or high levels of literacy. By generating employment in this field, New York City's immigrants and other people from communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic can obtain a career that provides for their children.

### **203. Keep the tech industry in NYC**

**Dawn Barber, Co-Founder, NYC Creative Tech Week**

New York City should focus on keeping the tech talent that already exists in the city and attracting others involved in the tech sector. This can be done through innovation centers, mentorship, internship opportunities for students, and bridging the disconnect between CUNY's technology curriculum and the technology community so that students understand the opportunities available and are prepared for them. Improving policies to keep the environment across the city attractive to businesses is also essential. This can be done through increased sanitation so that people are comfortable in a cleaner city, reforming policing, and offering financial and administrative assistance to small businesses.

### **204. Make Willets Point a tech and finance hub**

**Dian Yu, Executive Director,  
Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District**

Spurring New York's recovery will require cultivating new locations for growth industries like the technology sector to launch new startups, expand their footprint, and create jobs. Given its connection to the 7 train and proximity to LaGuardia Airport, Willets Point is an ideal location to transform into a tech and finance hub. The city could work to guarantee a certain number of local jobs and put forth an RFP to local developers to build out the infrastructure and space needed for new and growing businesses. The city could construct a Queens-based innovation hub to build on the success of Newlab and other start-up incubators flourishing along the Brooklyn waterfront. Locating a new tech and finance hub in Queens would help attract local talent outside Manhattan, enrich the local community, and encourage young people to develop their companies in Queens.

### **205. Keep workers with families in NYC**

**Sara Holoubek, CEO, Luminary Labs**

Given that many people now have the option of hybrid or remote work, the city needs to provide new incentives to encourage New Yorkers with families to stay in the city. Offering improved benefits for employees of small and large businesses with families or workers looking to start families will be critical. Fully paid and state-supported family leave, child care tax incentives, and other family support mechanisms that uniquely apply to people who live and work in New York can guarantee that workers are incentivized to stay in the city. Furthermore, these same incentives will have an ancillary benefit for the city's most vulnerable workers; reducing the burden of childcare levels the playing field for adult learners and workers for whom remote is not an option.

**206. Ramp up local media coverage and civic engagement****Dick Ravitch, ormer Lieutenant Governor, New York State;  
former Chairman and CEO, Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

As the city's restaurants, bars, theaters and sports venues continue to open up, I have no doubt that New York City will recover from this crisis. Cities are the greatest socializing institution that mankind ever created, and New York is unparalleled in its dynamism and vitality. But there are a number of things that make me nervous about the city's longer-term trajectory. What concerns me most is the almost complete absence of any meaningful coverage of New York in the local media. This has changed in recent years, and it has led to a less educated public and a less engaged civic community. One of the impacts of this in recent months has been the absence of substantive discussion about the city's recovery. Unless this changes, it will have serious negative consequences for our city and make it more difficult for the city to come together and enact the policies needed to move New York forward.

**207. Make New York City the destination for cutting-edge construction technology and expertise by incentivizing innovation and attracting new and diverse talent****Claire Weisz, Founding Principal, WXY Studio**

Construction has long been a pillar of the New York City economy, employing nearly 400,000 people and generating well over \$80 billion of economic activity in 2018 alone. But the pandemic hit the industry hard, and it may be years before the sector rebounds fully. To accelerate the resurgence of a stronger construction industry, the city should take steps to make New York the destination for innovation in construction. NYC should build on a growing startup ecosystem of property tech and construction tech firms by seeding and supporting new ventures working not only in site management, machine learning, and AI but also in materials science and building itself. Through direct investment in new women- and minority-owned firms that break the mold, the city can attract more talent from diverse backgrounds and fields—from artists and mathematicians to technologists and engineers—who are excited to bring their expertise to building New York's future.

**208. Facilitate conversations with Fortune 500 executives and early-stage founders to help NYC tech startups succeed and grow**

**Karin Klein, Founding Partner, Bloomberg Beta**

The continued growth of the tech sector will be crucial to New York City’s long-term recovery from the pandemic. Key to this will be ensuring that even more of the city’s early-stage startups—including new ventures established during the crisis—succeed in growing into larger, flourishing tech companies. City economic development officials can increase the likelihood of success by pairing startup founders with veteran executives, who would mentor, advise, and hopefully share ideas, customers, and distribution partners to the benefit of all. The city’s Economic Development Corporation can start by creating community-building initiatives that facilitate conversations between established corporations and new startups, organized around specific domains such as cybersecurity, real estate, and health tech. These initiatives could only happen in New York, which boasts local, high-caliber talent across so many industries.

## IX. PRIORITIZE HARD-HIT WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES



To counter the unequal economic toll of the pandemic, New York needs new policies that give a boost to domestic workers, restaurant employees, undocumented immigrants, communities of color, and others disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

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### **209. Offer a re-orientation program for 3K-12 students**

**Jeanette Moy, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer,  
Public Health Solutions**

The trauma and upheaval caused by the pandemic have affected few New Yorkers as much as school-age children. After over a year of remote and hybrid classes that have disrupted learning and socialization, the city and DOE should bring students back for a reorientation program before the school year begins in September. This could include outdoor programs, classroom walk-throughs, and informal meetings with teachers, and also offer vaccinations for children and their caretakers. A program like this can help students, teachers, and caretakers reacclimate and feel safe and prevent back-to-school chaos for families and businesses alike. The city can help businesses get back on track and make things easier on students and families by providing programs to help ensure students' emotional readiness for school.

**210. Boost the impact of impact of local nonprofits to help hard-hit communities by paying nonprofits on time**

**Gail Mellow, Executive Director, New York Jobs CEO Council;  
former President, LaGuardia Community College**

Nonprofit organizations have been pivotal in helping vulnerable New Yorkers during the pandemic, but their herculean efforts to support the city's hardest-hit communities have left them financially vulnerable. NYC needs a strong nonprofit sector to ensure that all New Yorkers can access the services they need and participate in the city's economic recovery. The city can bolster the amazing nonprofits doing this work in communities across the five boroughs simply by paying their bills on time. The average time for payment for city contracts can sometimes exceed a year. By paying nonprofits promptly for the services they provide, the city can boost this increasingly precarious but vitally important sector. Doing so would stabilize the finances of community-based organizations and help avoid layoffs and furloughs for a workforce that is disproportionately women of color. If the city can just pay its bills on time, service providers on the ground in every neighborhood in New York City can expand their efforts, plan for the future, retain their workforce, and ensure that struggling New Yorkers are included in the city's recovery.

**211. Prioritize essential workers in affordable housing lotteries**

**Jessica Katz, Executive Director, Citizens Housing and Planning Council**

Essential workers have been critical in supporting New York City during the pandemic. However, high housing costs have made living in NYC unaffordable for lower and middle-income workers in healthcare, education, social services, and other sectors that are crucial for the city's recovery. As many jobs in these sectors are not centralized in Manhattan's business districts, essential workers are disproportionately affected by the growing transit gap in New York. The city has constructed thousands of new affordable housing units over the past decade, most of which are allocated by random lottery. For the next year, the city should prioritize access to affordable housing for essential workers, as defined by the PAUSE order, providing them with more secure and conveniently located housing and limiting the effects of the transit gap on in-person work.

**212. Embrace branch libraries as a key driver of an equitable recovery**

**Katy Knight, President and Executive Director, Siegel Family Endowment**

To support a strong and inclusive recovery for the New Yorkers hit hardest by the pandemic, city leaders should be investing right now in public libraries. Libraries have unparalleled reach and trust in neighborhoods citywide, serving as a central community resource and point of connection while spanning language barriers, economic obstacles, and the digital divide. But branch libraries need sufficient resources to keep pace with these growing needs and to provide a full range of supports and services—whether that's access to a high-speed Internet connection or digital literacy training or ESOL classes



or help writing a resume, or connections to a range of other programs provided by government and community partners. New York has an important opportunity to strengthen this vital social infrastructure and harness branch libraries as a driver of the city's recovery.

**213. Provide financial relief to low-income New Yorkers by extending energy savings programs to summer months**

**Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

Utility issues and energy costs are a burden for millions of New Yorkers. But while New York State—through the federally-funded Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)—helps lower-income residents cover the cost of heat during the winter, it does not help subsidize air conditioning in the summer, despite the extreme heat issues faced by many communities. Changing this would provide serious financial relief, especially at a time when so many New Yorkers have lost income during this crisis. The state should use the extra federal funding it received for HEAP during the pandemic to help people with utility bills that are often 20 to 30 percent higher in the summer.

**214. Continue funding for civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers**

**Sheila S. Boston, President, New York City Bar Association**

During the COVID-19 crisis, robust funding for nonprofit legal services organizations has enabled them to respond quickly to the immediate needs of hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. For instance, since March 2020, the City Bar Justice Center has been able to expand its free Legal Hotline; establish a Small Business Remote Legal Clinic; and provide legal services for frontline healthcare workers with planning and estate questions – on top of the Justice Center's existing dozen civil legal services projects. But since many of the pressing needs New Yorkers face will not go away when the city opens up again, increased government funding and support for civil legal services will be crucial to a strong and equitable COVID-19 recovery. Legal assistance helps low-income individuals and families in accessing fair and equal justice, accessing mental health services, maintaining stable housing and employment, leaving abusive relationships, and obtaining benefits to which they are entitled. It also stabilizes families, ensures representation in court, and improves the administration of justice. And reliable funding supports an industry of nonprofit workers, legal and non-legal, who assist low-income communities throughout the five boroughs. New York City is a national leader in providing legal assistance to low-income families and individuals—as evidenced in the city's first-in-the-country Right to Counsel law guaranteeing legal services to low-income tenants facing eviction. Let's keep it up, and let's be prepared to go even further.

**215. Support efforts to train restaurant workers for current industry needs**

**Rev. Prabhu Sigamani, Director, ROC-NY; and Director, CHOW, ROCUnited**

Although NYC is reopening, restaurants are struggling to find employees with the right skills. Many people transitioned out of the restaurant industry and into other sectors. Staffing needs have also changed considerably since the pandemic began. Now, restaurants need workers who can perform two jobs, such as taking orders online and delivering, or waiting tables and processing orders placed through various apps. Training workers for these kinds of jobs will be crucial to the restaurant industry's recovery, and community-based organizations like ours have been doing this work for months. Many of our members are in demand for employment as a result. But CBOs that are already providing training need additional funding to evolve their operations, become more technically equipped, and provide workers with tablets and internet access for online learning. Some experts have suggested that economic recovery will take at least three to four years, and we know that frontline workers have been most impacted by this crisis. The city can take on more of the responsibility for supporting workers' needs by making sure that CBOs have the necessary funding to prepare workers for jobs right now. That support should come in addition to concentrated efforts to educate workers about COVID-19 vaccines, as well as allowing them four hours of paid time off to get their shots.

**216. Support the informal childcare ecosystem**

**Sheena Wright, President and CEO, United Way of NYC**

Families depend on informal childcare providers, who are overwhelmingly BIPOC women and who lack the certification needed to access public funds. The Bronx nonprofit WHEDco has done great work to identify and support informal home-based providers, and the city should follow their lead. Significant investments, technical assistance, and capacity building from the city can help informal childcare providers become financially self-sufficient sources for affordable, high-quality early childhood education. These providers are found predominantly in low-income communities of color where so many essential workers live and where the city hasn't provided enough resources to support their engagement in the workforce.

**217. Provide new income supports for NYC's fast-growing (but low-wage) direct care workforce**

**Jodi M. Sturgeon, President, PHI**

More than 323,000 direct care workers—including nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care aides—support older adults and people with disabilities across long-term care settings in New York City. Already the largest workforce in the city, direct care is projected to add more new jobs and have more job openings than any other single occupation from 2016 to 2026. This workforce is therefore central to the city's economy—but persistently overlooked and undervalued, as reflected in direct care workers' low pay,

inadequate benefits, and limited career advancement opportunities. New York should invest in and elevate direct care jobs. First, the base compensation for the direct care workforce—nearly half of whom live in or near poverty—needs to be increased, and the state can make this happen by using federal stimulus money earmarked for home and community-based services. In addition, the city should explore ways to enhance compensation for direct care workers by improving their access to vital employment benefits and supports. One immediate option is to transform short-term supports extended to essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic into long-term benefits, as seen with paid sick leave at the state level. Going further, the city could establish a Home Care Jobs Innovation Fund, providing workers with transportation funds, scholarship programs, and retention bonuses as a way of recruiting and retaining home care workers. Second, New York City should invest in training and career pathways for direct care workers to improve their job quality and economic prospects, maximize their contribution to care quality, and strengthen recruitment and retention.

**218. Create a new office targeting K-12 students who disconnected from school during pandemic**  
**Reshma Saujani, Founder, Girls Who Code**

Any successful economic recovery plan has to make sure the city doesn't have a broken and lost generation of New Yorkers. While many school-age children and youth were able to continue learning through the pandemic despite the challenges of remote schooling, thousands of students never even logged on, or were only sporadically engaged with online classes—and this learning loss could have devastating economic and social impacts if the city doesn't take immediate action. The Department of Education should launch a new office targeted at the students who disconnected from school during the pandemic and make sure they (and their families) have the support needed to keep pace with their classmates.

**219. Support initiatives to boost financial literacy among marginalized communities**  
**Neil Blumenthal, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Warby Parker**

With so many low-income and marginalized New Yorkers out of work, and small businesses struggling to stay afloat, different forms of financial education will be crucial in the coming months. Free city-funded and nonprofit programs can help people manage debt, improve or obtain credit, create budgets, and apply for public benefits. These kinds of programs may offer simple actionable advice, such as transferring money out of no-yield checking accounts, switching to a credit card with lower interest rates, or taking a closer look at spending habits. The city should invest in scaling these kinds of supports in order to reach tens of thousands of New Yorkers who have low or negative assets, creating powerful fuel for the city's economic recovery.

**220. Create a city-funded Section 8-like housing benefit**

**Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Advisor to the President, Hunter College;  
former Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**

Existing rental subsidies and vouchers are a powerful tool in helping low-income families find housing and stay in their homes. But existing programs like Section 8 are limited, and the creation of new, deeply affordable housing in New York City is far exceeded by the need. To reduce the rent burden on low-income families, the city should fund its own housing benefit voucher for every working family earning an income of less than \$25,000. Even a modest subsidy would provide these families relief, allow for savings, and help to correct the seemingly inexorable racial wealth gap.

**221. Improve inclusivity through a path to citizenship  
for undocumented New Yorkers**

**Jennifer Sun, Co-Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality**

Immigration policies at the federal level that deny undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship also have the consequence of consistently excluding these fellow New Yorkers from social safety net programs. City leaders, together with New York's congressional delegation need to advocate for a path towards citizenship. This is a crucial step towards ensuring that the whole population of immigrants New Yorkers has equitable access to safe, quality jobs with opportunities for advancement—in addition to social safety net support, like unemployment and SNAP food assistance benefits, and job training programs that are foundational for economic stability and mobility. The city's recovery can be truly inclusive only with the help of a social safety net that reaches and serves all vulnerable New Yorkers.

**222. Persuade NYC's leading law firms to commit  
their pro bono time to help New York-based clients**

**Deborah Farone, Strategic Marketing and Management Advisor,  
Farone Advisors**

—The legal profession has long been a key pillar of New York City's economy—and though legal services were shaken by slowdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic, the industry has largely bounced back. As New York's leading law firms have regained their strength, these same firms can play a crucial role in helping the rest of the city recover. Nearly all of the city's large firms have longstanding commitments to pro bono services, asking firm associates and partners to devote a certain number of hours each year to pro bono work. But while pro bono work can take many forms, today, it's New York City that needs the help. The city's unemployment rate is still nearly double the national average, and countless New Yorkers are struggling to access benefits, stay in their homes, and keep their small businesses open. The city should rally New York's legal services community

to make a commitment to devoting half or more of their pro-bono hours to important projects benefiting struggling New Yorkers, including help to businesses and nonprofits trying to access CARES Act programs, assistance negotiating leases or filing for bankruptcy, and providing aid to survivors of domestic violence or trafficking. The mayor should convene the leading figures in the sector to make this pledge.

### **223. Integrate and expand ethnic studies educational programming**

**Vivian Louie, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning and Director of the Asian American Studies Center and Program, Hunter College**

New York City has seen racial, ethnic, and economic inequalities unearthed by the pandemic, protests against anti-Blackness in policing practices, and a rise in anti-Asian hate. Education at all levels is crucial to responding to these inequalities and countering hate in all forms. The city should incorporate ethnic studies into educational programming that can reach all New Yorkers, not just those with access to higher education. Implementing ethnic studies and racial education into K-12 curriculums can be used to reach young people and initiate these conversations earlier. CUNY already has a strong ethnic studies tradition, which should be expanded, and CUNY faculty can be resources for expansion into other settings. Programming in public libraries and community-based organizations will reach adults who have never been exposed to the many stories that make up American history.

### **224. Leverage the city's rich nonprofit sector to spur interracial/ethnic dialogue**

**Vivian Louie, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning and Director of the Asian American Studies Center and Program, Hunter College**

New York's profound racial and ethnic segregation and economic stratification were brought into sharp relief by the disparate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. To make post-pandemic New York live up to its promise as one of the most diverse cities in the entire world, the city must learn from the lessons of the past year and bring communities together. Along with medium and long-term housing policies that would reduce residential segregation and improve overall access to resources, the city should pursue a short-term strategy to facilitate coalition-building among community-based organizations. The city could incentivize local nonprofits to develop joint programming that brings their varied constituencies together. New Yorkers would come into meaningful contact with their fellow residents around shared policy issues and what they need in the city's recovery. Supporting interracial and -geographical coalition-building would open up dialogue between communities that currently have little access to communication.

**225. Build a new, foundational safety net centered on the needs of immigrant communities**

**Steven Choi, Senior Advisor, New York Immigration Coalition**

Immigrant communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to inadequate access to quality healthcare as well as widespread job loss. The current safety net for immigrants leaves many without access to critical services that provide emergency food, shelter, health care, income assistance, and more. And, with the rise of the gig economy, many more New Yorkers have no real, steady “paycheck.” The city should fill in the holes in the current safety net to create a new foundation of social protection that expands critical services and does not discriminate based on immigration status or ethnicity. With this foundation, immigrants and all New Yorkers can have the security and support they need to be able to succeed in the 21st century.

**226. Launch a Care Corps to create quality caregiving jobs while helping parents and other family caregivers pursue education and training**

**Katy Knight, President and Executive Director, Siegel Family Endowment**

Many New Yorkers would like to pursue further education or workforce training but struggle to balance those commitments with the need to care for children or older relatives—a problem seriously exacerbated by the pandemic. At the same time, many jobs in the care economy pay relatively low wages, lack benefits, and operate informally. City leaders can begin to address both of these challenges simultaneously by launching a Care Corps. This program would hire caregivers to provide support to parents and other New Yorkers responsible for the well-being of a family member, enabling that person to pursue a community college credential, participate in a career training program, or earn a high school equivalency diploma, among other potential pathways to economic opportunity.

**227. Create a new “flexicurity” program to cushion the blow for New Yorkers who lose work due to automation**

**Emil Skandul, Founder, Capitol Foundry**

The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated New York’s shift to a more automated economy, a shift that will have especially drastic effects on occupations disproportionately held by residents in underserved communities with historically high underemployment in lower-wage occupations. At the same time, NYC is struggling with an unemployment rate of nearly 11 percent, one of the highest in the country. To improve employment opportunities for a changing labor market and reduce the time New Yorkers spend unemployed or underemployed, the city has to address both of these challenges and prepare those hardest hit by pandemic-linked job loss and increasing automation in industries such as hospitality and transportation. The city can get ahead of job displacement caused by automation by providing displaced workers with a new, extended form of financial

security that enables them to upskill and reskill during periods of unemployment. Drawing from Denmark’s “flexicurity” program, the city should create an unemployment fund that ensures six months of additional unemployment insurance combined with specialized education and retraining programs and personalized employment services. This program would also allow businesses greater flexibility around hiring while providing for and incentivizing workers towards lifelong learning of new skills during gaps in employment.

### **228. Ensure a stable, well-trained security workforce in all homeless shelters**

**Kyle Bragg, President, 32BJ**

Maintaining safety for all New Yorkers will be critical to the city’s overall recovery, especially for homeless New Yorkers who are likely facing other challenges. But underinvestment in the security workforce in subcontracted homeless shelters undermines the safety and effectiveness of the shelter system at a time when the city cannot afford it. When New York City directly operates shelters, the contracted security officers are paid prevailing wages and benefits and are subject to a 40-hour enhanced security training requirement and annual refresher training. This helps maintain a stable, well-trained, and experienced security workforce—something that is essential in shelters for the safety of workers and residents alike. However, similar standards are not in place for security officers at shelters run by third-party providers the city contracts. New York City should require that all security officers at shelters are paid prevailing wages and benefits and receive the necessary training.

### **229. Use city-owned real estate and unused lots to create indoor spaces for teens and young adults**

**Alain Sylvain, Founder, Sylvain Labs**

Playing sports is an important part of growing up for countless New York City youth, and organized sports keep teens and young adults busy and out of trouble. But while the city has basketball and handball courts in nearly every corner of the five boroughs, there are far too few no-cost or low-cost indoor spaces for underprivileged city youth to continue playing sports in the winter or when it rains. The Parks Department has just 36 recreation centers across all five boroughs, including just five centers in all of Queens, which has over 465,000 residents under the age of 18. The city desperately needs to expand its recreational infrastructure and provide indoor sports facilities to kids when they need it most, and there are a lot of spaces available. There are unused warehouses along the waterfront, additional armories that could be converted into community spaces like the Bedford Union Armory, and more. The city should get creative, find spaces that have laid dormant and underutilized, clean them up, and put up basketball hoops or gymnastics mats. More wintertime sports opportunities will keep kids busy and boost mental wellbeing at a time when this generation needs it most.

**230. Implement real estate tax abatement for nonprofits**

**Paul Wolf , Co-Founder, Denham Wolf Real Estate**

Small arts and cultural organizations and community-based nonprofits provide critical energy to neighborhoods and generate traffic for local businesses. The return and reopening of these organizations will support the city's recovery from COVID and beyond. The city should implement a real estate tax abatement program for commercial renters that benefits the nonprofit community—one already exists for nonprofit owners—and encourages organizations to locate where they are most wanted and needed. The abatement should run with the tenant and not be linked to a specific building or neighborhood. Similar to location-specific tax abatement programs in the past, this plan could be limited to a certain amount per square foot for a specific number of years to minimize the impact on the city's tax revenue. This abatement could motivate a significant number of arts and culture and community-based organizations and the people they employ to return to the city; help landlords to lease their vacant space; and increase tourism. Particularly when arts and culture users occupy retail spaces, it helps city neighborhoods feel safer and more vibrant and helps the commercial market by demonstrating that there are people and activity on the streets.

**231. Provide remote work opportunities for New Yorkers who must shoulder at-home caregiving**

**Nathalie Molina Niño, Investor and Author**

Before the pandemic, New York City was home to as many as 1.3 million informal caregivers, often women and older adults who provide care for children and elders. That number is likely to rise due to COVID-19 and the city's growing older adult population. Remote work opportunities will be increasingly important for these caregivers, so long as professional eldercare and childcare remain financially out of reach (or undesirable) for so many. This creates an opportunity for upskilling that targets women and others who provide such care, connecting them to jobs with new technology platforms that lean on algorithmic-based work. The city should help create and fund partnerships between large tech platforms and tech skills-training programs so that graduates are prioritized for these kinds of jobs. Informal caregivers are indispensable to the city's overall functioning, and economic recovery depends in part on their ability to sustain themselves financially.

**232. Offer free, extended-day childcare for eligible families**

**Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks**

As the economy recovers, the city needs to make sure that barriers to accessing childcare do not prevent lower-income New Yorkers from returning to their jobs and careers. The city has done great work expanding universal pre-K and 3-K, but these programs often close before 3 pm and are not funded during the summer. This leaves working families scrambling to find someone to pick up their child from daycare, or it



puts the onus on providers to either get additional funding to extend the day or charge families more. To avoid an economic recovery that ends up excluding far too many New Yorkers from returning to work, the city needs to offer free full-day, year-round childcare for families that are eligible.

### **233. Create and fund a prevailing wage for the human services sector**

**Frederick Shack, CEO, Urban Pathways**

The hundreds of thousands of frontline workers who make up New York City's human services sector—most of whom are women and people of color—have been essential to the city's pandemic response and recovery. Yet the majority of human services jobs are grossly underpaid, leaving many workers eligible for public benefits and having deleterious effects on their communities. The city should create and fund a prevailing wage for nonprofits it contracts with. This would be life-changing for workers and is also in the city's economic interest. Higher wages would boost revenue for local businesses and build wealth in communities that for too long have been left out of the city's economic growth.

### **234. Continue to exercise the city's local power to establish standards for gig workers**

**Kyle Bragg, President, 32BJ**

At the height of the pandemic, countless New Yorkers were able to stay safe and socially distanced due to the work of app-based gig workers. And pandemic-driven shifts in consumer behavior will likely increase demands for their work, increasing in kind the importance of affording these essential workers the labor protections they rightly deserve. New York City has taken important steps to establish protections for workers who have not been treated as traditional employees, such as drivers for Uber and Lyft, and independent contractors more broadly. For example, the city has established minimum compensation standards for drivers and limits on the number of vehicle licenses. There is currently discussion about needed protections for delivery workers. It is essential that the city continue to hold and exercise power to provide regulations that protect workers like these and ensure their safety and well-being. This is good for workers, as well as for city residents who benefit from services provided by gig workers and who may experience congestion and other negative consequences of sectors that grow without appropriate regulations.

### **235. Require free or highly subsidized Internet in every new affordable housing unit**

**Cheryl Cohen Effron, Founder, Conjunction Fund**

New York will not succeed in building a more equitable economy until it makes significant progress in closing the digital divide. The pandemic shined a light on the alarming gap

that still exists. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers from low-income communities weren't able to work or attend school remotely—or take advantage of numerous city services that were available digitally—because they lacked a high-speed Internet connection at home. The city can make some progress in closing this divide by requiring any new housing development that received city subsidies or abatements—or any unit participating in the city's RAD program—to include free or highly subsidized Internet. With this as a requirement, developers would be motivated to negotiate with Internet providers to get better deals than residents could on their own. But the greater benefit would be to residents and, in the long run, to New York's economy.

**236. Tackle the digital divide through broadband infrastructure and digital literacy support**

**Jennifer Sun, Co-Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality**

To ensure an equitable recovery, the city must tackle the persistent digital divide—both in terms of connectivity and digital literacy. There's a real opportunity with federal infrastructure support to expand broadband access to all five boroughs. Investments in the installation and maintenance of broadband throughout the city will also create new jobs. Alongside infrastructure expansion, it's crucial that the city expand programming for digital literacy so that more New Yorkers are able to participate fully. This is especially important in the city as the government continues to move all of its services online.

**237. Scale up funding and speed up rollout to close the digital divide**

**Barbara Byrne Denham, Senior Economist, Oxford Economics**

Addressing the digital divide is one of if not the most important priority for the city in terms of inclusive economic development. As long as 30 percent of New York City households lack access to broadband, the city cannot chart an equitable recovery. Without reliable, high-speed internet, communities are cut off from virtually all aspects of economic, social, and civic life, including education, employment opportunities, healthcare, government assistance, and more. Over the past year, the city has admirably launched valuable programs to narrow the digital divide by funding the buildout of 5G networks and deploying free and low-cost broadband in NYCHA communities. But to succeed in these efforts, current city leaders and the next administration will need to follow through on these initiatives and continue to make this a priority—not just this year but in the years ahead. They also could scale up funding and speed up vendor licensing to provide free or low-cost high-speed WiFi or in-unit internet access to all New Yorkers as quickly as possible.

## X. SHORE UP THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF NYC'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS



A fast and full economic recovery will be difficult without policies that ensure New York remains a safe, clean, and highly livable city.

### **238. Prioritize quality of life investments that help NYC attract and retain its talented and diverse workforce**

**Seth Pinsky, CEO, 92nd Street Y;**

**former President, NYC Economic Development Corporation**

The single most important reason for New York City's economic success over the last 20 years was its ability to attract highly educated, creative, and entrepreneurial people in all aspects of the workforce. That unmatched workforce attracted businesses to locate in the city, even if it meant paying among the highest office real estate prices in the country. And when those businesses grew here, it attracted more talented people to New York. New York's current and future leaders need to understand this dynamic and grasp that continuing to attract a talented and diverse workforce is key to keeping the city competitive in the years ahead. There are many reasons why people come to New York, but the single most important thing city policymakers can do is to think of investments in quality of life as economic development investments. That means prioritizing efforts to keep crime under control, keep streets clean, invest in a strong cultural foundation, and ensure a vibrant street life.

### **239. Focus on the fundamentals**

**Mary Ann Tighe, CEO, New York Tri-State Region, CBRE**

There are a lot of policies that would help New York rebound from these challenging times, but there are some things that are so fundamental to the city's success that they should be prioritized right now, especially given that resources are limited. These fundamentals are: keeping the city safe, clean, and in a state of good repair. If the city's leaders succeed in doing these things and doing them well, you couldn't keep the smart people out of New York. But there's work to do. At the current moment, there is cause for concern in each of these core areas. It's time to shore up these building blocks of New York's success.

### **240. Maintaining safety and cleanliness must be a priority**

**Stanley Grayson, Chief Operation Officer, M.R. Beal;  
former Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development**

New York City cannot afford to have a serious diminution of services even during tough times. After all the hard work the city has done since the 1970s and '80s to put a new coat of paint on the city and restore safety and confidence, it would be a huge mistake to have all this progress eradicated by the pandemic. But beyond directly tackling sanitation issues and an uptick in violent crime, the city must also address the widespread belief that there's been a decline in cleanliness and public safety. Whether a problem is real or not, perception is key. New York must continue not only to be—but also to feel like—a safe, clean place. And that comes from prioritizing public safety and sanitation while also controlling the narrative and making it clear that New York City is not backsliding.

### **241. Invest more resources in street cleaning**

**Vijay Dandapani, CEO, Hotel Association of New York City**

Improving cleanliness will help make New York welcoming to tourists while also improving the quality of life for New Yorkers. This crucial step in getting the city back on its feet as it reopens is an important investment, and one area the city should prioritize is cleaning around government buildings, such as fire and police stations. The city should also encourage community resident leadership on keeping streets clean. Just as we have business improvement districts for commercial districts, the government should offer incentives for the formation of community improvement districts that can ensure their neighborhood is kept clean at all times. It may well instill both pride and competition, resulting in a cleaner city.

**242. Restore safety for residents and businesses by bringing together community leaders and NYPD**

**Dian Yu, Executive Director, Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District**

Maintaining public safety is vital not just for the health and wellbeing of New York City residents but also for ensuring the city's economy recovers from the shock of the pandemic. The lockdown has caused people to scatter, and rising crime risks deterring others from coming to the city to conduct business. At a time when many people have left, New York City has to give people the confidence to stay and invest here. The police and the community should come together more regularly to address community needs and concerns. There are many things that need to be reformed, but those changes have to come from within in order to be effective. The NYPD has to be able to enforce the law—for example ensuring street vendors and others have proper licenses in partnership with other city agencies. This is one instance where NYPD should have a dedicated and specially trained unit that can deal with these businesses and know the difference between outdated licenses and legitimate vendors.

**243. Prioritize efforts to keep NYC safe**

**Kenneth T. Jackson, Barzun Professor Emeritus of History, Columbia University; President Emeritus, New-York Historical Society; Editor in Chief, The Encyclopedia of New York City**

The most important condition for New York's full recovery is public safety. Without the dramatic drop in crime after 1990, Gotham would not have returned to prosperity and promise. But violent crime has increased again in recent years, with the number of shootings in the city up by 184 percent between May 2019 and May 2021. This is a huge issue that overshadows everything else. Reversing this disturbing trend, and making the city safe from violent crime, must be a top priority for all city officials.

**244. Enlist neighborhood alliances to boost public perception of safety**

**Neil Blumenthal, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Warby Parker**

The pandemic has forever changed how many New Yorkers think about work. As the city tries to bring workers back into commercial districts and revitalize those neighborhoods, it needs to consider what might keep employees from returning to the office. Given the option between remote or in-person work, employees who don't feel safe coming into the city are far less likely to head back. To address this challenge, the city should enlist employees of neighborhood associations, like the Times Square and Downtown Alliances. Having more folks in uniform who've gone through bystander intervention training walking the streets and subway stations could elevate the perception of, and even improve, safety. We need people to return to offices to spur economic recovery—and ensuring that people feel safe enough to travel to the office is a crucial step.



**Center for an Urban Future**

New York, NY

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