



# GUIDE TO ELECTED OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK CITY

## Elected city wide

**MAYOR** ▶

**PUBLIC ADVOCATE** ▶

**COMPTROLLER** ▶

## Elected in your district

**CITY COUNCIL** ▶

## Elected in your borough

**BOROUGH PRESIDENTS** ▶

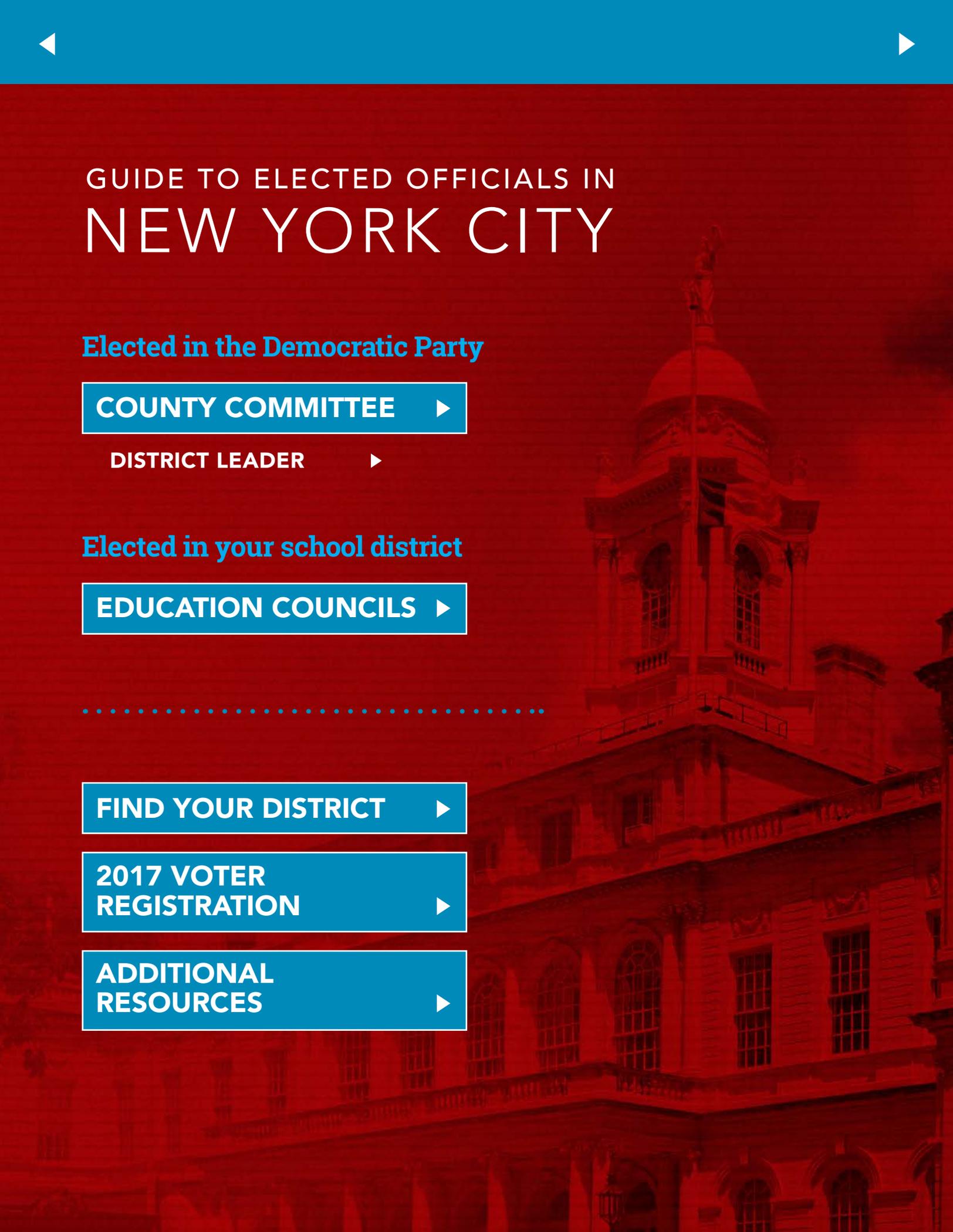
**BOROUGH BOARDS** ▶

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GUIDE TO ELECTED OFFICIALS IN  
**NEW YORK CITY**

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# MAYOR

The mayor is the head of the executive branch of New York City government, which means that he runs the city's day-to-day business and city services and is responsible for law enforcement.

The mayor appoints the heads of the city's many agencies, boards, and departments including police and fire. The mayor oversees the city's \$85 billion budget.

The mayor is on the board of many city cultural organizations including museums and performance venues.

The mayor can serve no more than two four-year terms in a row.

## MORE INFORMATION

### Office of the mayor

[www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/index.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/index.page)

### Run for office

[runforoffice.org/elected\\_offices/21331-new-york-city-mayor](http://runforoffice.org/elected_offices/21331-new-york-city-mayor)



# PUBLIC ADVOCATE

## What is the public advocate?

The New York City public advocate acts as the citizens' direct connection to city government and helps coordinate information for the public. The public advocate can serve no more than two four-year terms in a row. Should something happen to the mayor, or should he leave office, the public advocate would become mayor.

## What does the public advocate do?

The public advocate is a non-voting member of the city council. He or she can't vote but can introduce and support legislation. The public advocate serves as a "watchdog" for city government by monitoring city government, and investigating citizen concerns or complaints.

## Appointments by the advocate

The office of the public advocate has staff appointments to a wide range of committees, boards and organizations. These include the NYCERS Pension Fund, the City Planning Commission as well as entities related to voter assistance, representing transit riders, budget and audit organizations and various cultural and educational entities.

### MORE INFORMATION

**Public advocate for  
the City of New York**  
[pubadvocate.nyc.gov](http://pubadvocate.nyc.gov)

**Run for office**  
[runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21332-new-york-city-public-advocate](http://runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21332-new-york-city-public-advocate)



# NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER

With a budget of roughly \$85 billion a whole lot of money flows through New York City. The comptroller watches over it.

The comptroller is the city's chief financial officer. He or she is elected to a four-year term, and is responsible for overseeing all of the city's finances.

## Comptroller oversight includes:

- Auditing all city agencies.
- Reviewing city contracts.
- Issuing and selling city bonds.
- Advising the city's pension funds.
- Resolving financial claims against the city.
- Watching over wage and benefit rates.
- Reviewing the city's budget.
- Managing the city's debt.

### The mission of the comptroller's office

**"To ensure the financial health of New York City by advising the mayor, the city council, and the public of the City's financial condition."**



# NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER *(cont'd)*

## The office of the comptroller

The comptroller's office has a staff of 760 employees. This staff includes accountants, economists, lawyers, financial analysts, and claim researchers.

## Bureaus within the comptroller's office

- **The Bureau of Accountancy**  
Oversees the city's accounting.
- **The Bureau of Asset Management**  
Oversees the \$165 billion investment portfolio of the city's five pension systems.
- **The Bureau of Audits**  
Audits all city agencies at least once every four years.
- **The Budget Bureau**  
Monitors the city's monetary positions.
- **The Bureau of Contract Administration**  
Reviews and registers all city contracts.
- **The Bureau of Economic Development**  
Creates opportunities for economic growth.
- **The Bureau of Labor Law**  
Sets and enforces wages and benefits.
- **The Bureau of Law and Adjustment**  
Settles claims on behalf of, or against, the city.
- **The Bureau of Public Finance**  
Manages the city's borrowing and its bonds, and monitors the city's \$110 billion bonds.

## MORE INFORMATION

**New York City comptroller**  
[comptroller.nyc.gov](http://comptroller.nyc.gov)

**Run for office**  
[runforoffice.org/elected\\_offices/21333-new-york-city-comptroller](http://runforoffice.org/elected_offices/21333-new-york-city-comptroller)



# CITY COUNCIL

## What is the city council?

The city council makes the laws for New York City. There are 51 members from 51 districts, the people in each district elect one member. Each district has about 160,000 people. City council members can only serve two four-year terms in a row.

### The city council:

- Passes local laws and resolutions.
- Monitors city agencies such as the Department of Education and the NYPD to make sure they're effectively serving New Yorkers.
- Reviews and adopts the budget of the City of New York.
- Reviews land use and makes decisions about the growth and development of our city.

### Council members may also:

- Serve as advocates and organizers for the communities they represent on public policy issues affecting the community.
- Help their constituents navigate government bureaucracies.
- Get money from the city's budget to pay organizations that provide services in their district and for capital projects in their district.
- Advocate on federal, state, and city policies that have citywide impact.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS BY BOROUGH

<b>The Bronx</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Manhattan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Queens</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>3</b>

## FIND YOUR DISTRICT





# CITY COUNCIL *(cont'd)*

## How does the council work?

### Council speaker

Council members elect a speaker to lead the council. The speaker is the most powerful member of the city council.

### Committees

Council members are assigned to committees that study topics like education, transportation, consumer affairs, as well as many others. There are at least five council members on each committee. They study how local laws and public policies affect the city. They then make recommendations for all 51 council members to consider and vote upon.

### Caucuses

Council members may form caucuses to make sure the needs of specific communities are represented.

#### CAUCUSES INCLUDE:

- Black, Latino/a, and Asian Caucus
- Irish Caucus
- Jewish Caucus
- LGBT Caucus
- Progressive Caucus
- Women's Caucus

#### MORE INFORMATION

**New York City Council**  
[council.nyc.gov/](http://council.nyc.gov/)

**Run for office**  
[runforoffice.org/districts/3792-new-york-city](http://runforoffice.org/districts/3792-new-york-city)



# CITY COUNCIL *(cont'd)*

## How does the council pass laws?

### Step 1: Bill Introduction

Council members work with the **Legislation Division** to write the bill. The bill is assigned to the appropriate committee.

### Step 2: Public Hearings

The committee holds hearings to ask the public and other government entities what they think of the bill. Depending on what they find out, the committee may make changes or add **amendments** to the bill.

### Step 3: Voting

The committee votes on the bill. If the bill passes the committee by **majority vote**, the full city council votes on bill. The bill must pass by majority vote to move forward.

### Step 4: Mayoral Decision

The committee sends the bill to the mayor to sign. The mayor has 30 days to review the bill.

- If the mayor signs the bill, it becomes law.
- If the mayor **vetoes** the bill, it is sent back to the council. The council can override his veto with a two-thirds vote to make the bill a law.
- If the mayor does nothing, the bill becomes law.

### Step 5: Bill Becomes Law

The law is added to the **NYC Charter** or **Administrative Code**.

## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Legislative Division**

Each council committee has a team of lawyers and analysts. This team researches the subject of a bill and arranges public hearings to help the committee make decisions that benefit NYC.

### **Amendment**

A change in a document.

### **Majority Vote**

A number of votes that is more than half of the total number.

**Veto** Rejecting a proposed bill.

### **NYC Charter**

This is like the city's constitution. It outlines the job duties and responsibilities of different city officials, as well as governmental agencies.

### **Administrative Code**

Contains the local laws of New York City.



# BOROUGH PRESIDENTS

Each of the five boroughs (Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island) elect a borough president.

Borough presidents serve four-year terms that are concurrent with the mayor's, and can serve up to three terms (12 years) in a row.

The annual salary for each of the five New York City borough presidents is \$179,200/year.

## What does the borough president do?

The borough president:

- Advises the mayor.
- Comments on land-use and zoning in the borough.
- Advocates for meeting borough needs in the annual city budget.
- Advocates for the borough with the city council, city agencies, state government, private business, and others.
- Appoints members to the NYC Planning Commission.
- Holds public hearings on borough issues.
- Appoints community boards.
- Chairs the borough board.
- Serves on various boards and committees.

### MORE INFORMATION

#### Contact a borough president

[www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/3083/contact-a-borough-president](http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/3083/contact-a-borough-president)

#### Run for office: Brooklyn borough president

[runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21334-brooklyn-borough-president](http://runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21334-brooklyn-borough-president)



# BOROUGH BOARDS

Each borough has a borough board.

## Who serves on a borough board?

They are composed of the borough president, city council members from the borough, and the chairperson of each community board in the borough.

## What do they do?

Borough boards can:

- Hold public or private hearings.
- Adopt by-laws (rules).
- Make suggestions for land use and planning.
- Resolve disagreements among two or more community districts.
- Submit reports on spending and what the borough needs.
- Judge the progress of spending and the effects of services provided by agencies.
- Consider any other needs of the borough.



# COMMUNITY BOARDS

Community districts were created to standardize public services in the city. These districts have the same boundaries as fire, police, and sanitation districts. There are 59 community districts in the city. Each district has a community board.

## Who serves on a community board?

- Community boards are made up of 50 volunteers appointed by the borough president. Borough presidents and city councilors look at applications together.
- Board members serve two-year terms, with half of the members' terms ending each year.
- Board members can serve multiple terms.
- All city council members representing the community district are non-voting board members.
- Community boards are led by a district manager, with an office and staff, whose main purpose is to coordinate community services.



Community board applications are on the borough president's website

[brooklyn-usa.org/community-board-membership-application/](https://brooklyn-usa.org/community-board-membership-application/)



# COMMUNITY BOARDS *(cont'd)*

## What do they do?

Meetings are monthly and open to the public. Community boards are advisory and cannot make or enforce laws.

Community boards:

- Advise on land use and zoning. Affected community boards (along with borough boards) may hold public hearings and recommend action to the City Planning Commission. They may organize opposition to certain projects.
- Participate in the city budget process, and meet with city agencies.
- May submit plans for community improvement and growth.

Board offices help with complaints from residents and process permits for block parties and street fairs, organize tenant associations, and coordinate neighborhood cleanup programs.

Each community board has committees that do background work on topics like land use or budget, or who work with specific city agencies. Non-board members may work on committees.

### MORE INFORMATION

#### **Mayor's Community Affairs Unit**

[nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/about.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/about.shtml)

**Community boards explained**  
[nyc.gov/html/bkncbl/html/explained/explained.shtml#Community\\_Districts\\_and\\_Boards](http://nyc.gov/html/bkncbl/html/explained/explained.shtml#Community_Districts_and_Boards)



# DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Each borough of New York City has its own district attorney (DA). The DA is elected to a four-year term that runs at the same time as the mayor's term. The DA is the borough's chief law enforcement officer, and is responsible for managing the prosecutor's office, investigating crimes, and filing criminal charges.

## The office of the district attorney

The DA's office is responsible for prosecuting violations of New York state law. It's a very busy place. The Manhattan office, for example, employs more than 500 attorneys, and more than 870 investigators, analysts, and case managers. In 2016, it processed 80,000 cases.

The DA's office has several different divisions.

- **The Trial Division** prosecutes felonies, crimes punishable by jail time over a year and misdemeanor crimes, which are punished with fines or jail time of less than a year.
- **The Investigation Division** prosecutes fraud and corruption, as well as crimes with a more international scope, such as terrorism and money laundering.
- **The Appeals Division** makes sure that proper convictions are upheld.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Brooklyn DA**  
[brooklynda.org](http://brooklynda.org)

**Run for office: Brooklyn DA**  
[runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21335-brooklyn-borough-district-attorney](http://runforoffice.org/elected-offices/21335-brooklyn-borough-district-attorney)



# COURTS AND JUDGES

## NYC court system

### Civil court

- Civil matters up to \$25,000.
- Judges are elected for 10-year terms.

### Housing court

Judges are appointed to five-year terms.

### Small claims court

Civil matters up to \$5000.

### Criminal court

- Crimes punishable by fines or prison up to one year.
- Judges are appointed to 10-year terms by the mayor.

### Surrogate's court

- Wills & estates.
- Judges are elected to 14-year terms.

### Family court

- Families and children
  - Adoption, foster care, custody, juvenile delinquency, and domestic violence.
- Judges are appointed to 10-year terms by the mayor.



# COURTS AND JUDGES

## NYC court system (*cont'd*)

### Supreme court

- There are three divisions.
  - **Criminal** for felony cases.
  - **Civil** for major civil cases.
  - **Appellate** for intermediate appeals.
- Judges are elected to 14-year terms.

### Appellate court

- The highest appeal court in the state.
- The seven judges are appointed by the governor.
- They serve 14-year terms.

## MORE INFORMATION

### Ballotpedia

[ballotpedia.org/Judicial\\_selection\\_in\\_New\\_York](https://ballotpedia.org/Judicial_selection_in_New_York)

### New York State Courts Guide

[nycourts.gov/admin/NYCcourts-IntroGuide.pdf](https://nycourts.gov/admin/NYCcourts-IntroGuide.pdf)



# COUNTY COMMITTEE

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Democratic Party is governed by committees of citizens who are registered democrats, from the national level down to state and community level. County is the most local level of party governance in New York.

### The county committee

- Elects the county officers.
- Nominates judges to run as democrats in judicial elections.
- Endorses candidates (even in primaries).
- Adopts platforms.
- Appoints the democratic candidate when a position becomes open before a term is over.
- Selects the democratic nominee in special elections.
- May organize the district.

Almost a third of the elected officials in the New York Assembly were appointed by county committees.

The committee meets shortly after the primary every two years to elect officers who are on the County Executive Committee. Other regular and special meetings may be called. The Executive Committee meets more frequently. Each assembly district also has its own subcommittee.

### COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx are elected in **even-numbered years.**

Manhattan and Staten Island are elected in **odd-numbered years.**



# COUNTY COMMITTEE *(cont'd)*

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY

### How do you get on the county committee?

A county committee member represents an election district, which is the smallest political unit, usually made up of 700–1000 people, or 1 to 3 city blocks.

Although not much is asked of you in an official capacity, individuals and groups that make up the party structure can have tremendous influence on national, state, and local policy.

For those interested in some day running for higher office, serving on a county committee can provide a platform for leadership. It's the perfect place for young people to begin advocating for issues they think our elected officials should be paying attention to.

- Committee members are elected volunteers who serve a two-year term.
- Voters elect members at the September primary.
- Each election district has two to four positions, with multiple election districts per assembly district.
- In each election district there is at least one male and one female committee member.
- You can represent any election district in your assembly district.
- You can petition onto the ballot with 15-60 signatures, depending on the size of your district.
- There are no special appointments or elections if someone leaves before the end of their term.



# COUNTY COMMITTEE *(cont'd)*

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY

While all terms end after two years, it is easier to get elected if you find a vacancy. There would be approximately 3000 members if all slots were full. Many districts have vacancies, but it can be difficult to find out the ones in your district.

You can find your election district [here](#).

Each borough divides representation differently. If you are interested in getting involved in your election district, contact the Democratic Party in your borough for more information (see links below).

### NYC DEMOCRATIC PARTY WEBSITES

#### **Brooklyn Democratic Party**

[brooklyndems.com](http://brooklyndems.com)

#### **Bronx Democratic Party**

[bronxdems.org](http://bronxdems.org)

#### **New Kings Democrats**

[newkingsdemocrats.com/county\\_committee](http://newkingsdemocrats.com/county_committee)

#### **New Queens Democrats**

[newqueensdems.org](http://newqueensdems.org)

#### **Manhattan Young Democrats**

[gomyd.com/open-seat-project/county-committee-faq/](http://gomyd.com/open-seat-project/county-committee-faq/)

#### **Staten Island Democrats**

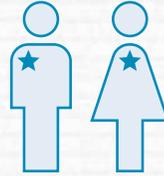
[sidemocrats.com](http://sidemocrats.com)



# DISTRICT LEADER

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Every two years, democrats in each assembly district elect two district leaders: **one male, one female**



District leaders are volunteers. They represent the members of a political party in their district within the party structure.

District leaders sit on the executive committee of the county committee, hire poll workers and election inspectors, and help run local political clubs. They can also take on more activist community roles.

### MORE ON DISTRICT LEADERS

#### **New Kings Democrats**

[newkingsdemocrats.com/county\\_committee](http://newkingsdemocrats.com/county_committee)

#### **Manhattan Democrats**

[manhattandemocrats.org/about/district-leaders](http://manhattandemocrats.org/about/district-leaders)

#### **Community Free Democrats**

[cfdnyc.org/what-we-are/our-district-leaders-3/](http://cfdnyc.org/what-we-are/our-district-leaders-3/)



# EDUCATION COUNCILS

## What are education councils?

Education councils let parents and other community members provide input into the educational system at the local and city level. There is a Community Education Council (CEC) in each school district and there are four citywide councils.

## Community Education Councils (CEC)

There are 32 CECs, one in each district.

Each CEC has 11 voting members:

- Nine parents of students in district public elementary, intermediate, and/or junior high schools.
- Two voting community members appointed by the borough president.
- One non-voting high school senior living in the district appointed by the superintendent.

## Citywide Education Councils

CECs let parents and others advocate for specific student populations. They are:

- Citywide Council on High Schools (CCHS).
- Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE).
- Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL).
- Citywide Council for District 75 (CCD75).

Most members are elected parents, with a small number of individuals appointed by the public advocate.



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION *(cont'd)*

## What do education councils do?

The education councils:

- Help promote student achievement.
- Advise policy makers on educational policies and programs, including a district report card.
- Annually evaluate the superintendent, and consult on superintendent selection.
- Hold public hearings on school enrollment and utilization.
- Approve zoning lines.
- Citywide councils also annually report on how well their populations are served.

## Who can serve on education councils?

NYC's education councils are chosen in odd years for two-year terms.

**For further information see**  
[schools.nyc.gov/Offices/CEC/GPInformation/default.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/CEC/GPInformation/default.htm)

Many of the councils have vacancies. Check the list of current members and if your council has a vacancy you can apply to finish the term.

**Contact [CCECinfo@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CCECinfo@schools.nyc.gov)**  
**or call 212-374-1936.**

## MORE INFORMATION

**NYC Department of Education CECs**  
[schools.nyc.gov/Offices/CEC/GPInformation/CommunityEducationCouncils/one.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/CEC/GPInformation/CommunityEducationCouncils/one.htm)

**List of current CEC members**  
[schools.nyc.gov/NR/exeres/C37FBA8A-16AB-4578-AF32-B2FD5198C2FE,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published](https://schools.nyc.gov/NR/exeres/C37FBA8A-16AB-4578-AF32-B2FD5198C2FE,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published)

**Find your school district**  
[www1.nyc.gov/apps/311utils/addressinfo.htm](http://www1.nyc.gov/apps/311utils/addressinfo.htm)



# FIND YOUR DISTRICT

## Federal Districts

- New York state is one district for the purpose of electing our two senators.
- There are 27 congressional districts in New York state. Find your district at: [house.gov/representatives/find/](https://www.house.gov/representatives/find/)

## State Districts

- All of New York state elects the governor, lieutenant governor, comptroller, and attorney general.
- There are 63 state senate districts in the state. Find your district at: [nysenate.gov/find-my-senator](https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator)
- There are 150 state assembly districts in the state. Find your district at: [nyassembly.gov/mem/search/](https://www.nyassembly.gov/mem/search/)

## City or Municipal Districts

- The whole city elects a mayor, a public advocate, and a comptroller.
- Each borough elects a borough president.
- There are 51 city council districts in New York City. Find your district at: [nyc.councilmatic.org/council-members/](https://www.nyc.councilmatic.org/council-members/)
- There are 59 community districts in New York City. Find your district at: [www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml](https://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml)
- There are election districts in New York city. This is where you vote. You can find your voting location or polling place at: [vote.nyc.ny.us/html/voters/where.shtml](https://vote.nyc.ny.us/html/voters/where.shtml)



# 2017 VOTER REGISTRATION

## PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Some years New York has two primaries, one for state and local candidates in September, and one for candidates for federal office in June. In 2017, there is only one primary in September since there are no federal candidates being elected. Note there are special deadlines for military voting.

### Deadlines to be able to vote in the September 12, 2017 state and local PRIMARY

To be able to vote in a primary you must be registered as a member of a political party. It is currently too late to change your party designation for the 2017 primary.

#### Mail registration

- Application must be mailed by **August 18th**.
- Application must be received by a board of elections by **August 23rd**.

#### In-person registration

- Register at your local board of elections or a state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act by **August 18th**.

#### Change of address

- Changes of address must be received by **August 23rd** by a board of elections.



2017 NY State  
Election Calendar

[elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/  
law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf](http://elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf)



# 2017 VOTER REGISTRATION

## PRIMARY ELECTIONS *(cont'd)*

### Absentee ballots

Request for absentee ballot

- Mailed application for the ballot must be sent by **September 5**.
- In-person request for absentee ballot must be made by **September 11**.

Submitting absentee ballot

- Mailed ballot must be sent by **September 11**.
- Mailed ballot must be received by a board of elections **September 20**.
- In person absentee ballot must be delivered by **September 12** by someone other than the absent voter.

### Deadline to change party for the September 2018 PRIMARY

An application to change or enroll in a party for 2018 must be received by a board of elections by October 13, 2017.



2017 New York State  
Election Calendar

[elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/  
law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf](http://elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf)



# 2017 VOTER REGISTRATION

## GENERAL ELECTION

Deadlines to be able to vote in the  
General Election on November 7, 2017

### Mail registration

- Application must be sent no later than **October 13th**.
- Application must be received by a board of elections by **October 18th**.

### In-person registration

- Register at your local board of elections or a state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act by **October 13th**. (If honorably discharged from the US Military or became a naturalized US Citizen after October 13th, allowed until October 28th).

### Change of address

- Changes of address must be received by **October 19th** by a board of elections.

### Absentee ballots

Request for absentee ballot

- Mailed application for the ballot must be sent by **October 31st**.
- In-person request for absentee ballot must be made by **November 6th**.

Submitting absentee ballot

- Mailed ballot must be sent by **November 6th** and received by **November 15th**. Military ballots must be received by **November 21st**.
- In-person absentee ballot must be delivered by **November 7th** by someone other than the absent voter.



2017 NY State  
Election Calendar

[elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/  
law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf](http://elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2017PoliticalCalendar.pdf)



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Board of Education

To find your district put in your address at:  
[elections.ny.gov/district-map/district-map.html](https://elections.ny.gov/district-map/district-map.html)

## County Board of Elections

Clickable map:  
[elections.ny.gov/CountyBoards.html](https://elections.ny.gov/CountyBoards.html)

PDF list:  
[elections.ny.gov:8080/reports/rwservlet?cmd-key=nysboe\\_roster](https://elections.ny.gov:8080/reports/rwservlet?cmd-key=nysboe_roster)

## NYC Campaign Finance board

Follow the money at: [nyccfb.info/](https://nyccfb.info/)

## League Of Women Voters of NYC

“Who represents me” at:  
[lwnyc.org/elected\\_officials.html](https://lwnyc.org/elected_officials.html)

## Run for Office

Information about running for over 51,867 elected offices across the USA at: [runforoffice.org](https://runforoffice.org)