

2021

Annual Report

THE  CITY

Letter from the **Executive Director**

Dear New Yorkers,

Our city is at an inflection point, a moment full of peril and possibility of the kind that comes along perhaps once in a generation.

There is no denying the scale of the challenge we face: deep scarring from a pandemic that hit New York harder than any other major city, escalating climate, housing and criminal justice crises, the compound damage of racism and inequality.

And yet change is afoot.

A new Mayor took charge on January 1, along with a new City Council where women, for the first time, are in the majority. There are deep disagreements among elected officials, but also uncommon amity between Albany and City Hall, and the promise of federal support for long-cherished infrastructure projects. Power — political, cultural, even economic — is shifting to neighborhoods, and communities long excluded.

If New York is to emerge from this moment a more equal, thriving, democratic home for 8.8 million people, it will be with journalism actively committed to the task. At THE CITY, we have been working since our launch in 2019 to build a news institution rooted in the five boroughs, responsive to the needs of New Yorkers, and focused on accountability.

In 2021, we were able to show what that looks like.

Our reporting consistently helped to deliver better outcomes for New Yorkers, whether securing decent working conditions for immigrant delivery workers, more equitable access to vaccines, or improved access to teachers for incarcerated kids. It made sense of a sometimes bewildering electoral cycle, and helped people navigate the complexities of rental assistance and unemployment benefits.

Our journalism helped to drive accountability too, producing a federal indictment for campaign finance violations, and reforms to mayoral fundraising.

Our contribution has been that much more crucial against the backdrop of a local news sector that continues to struggle. New York may be the media capital of the world, but most of its leading outlets are ever more focused on distant horizons than they are on the people down the block.

We rely on the support of our readers, foundations, and major donors to fund work that is not only filling the gap, but reimagining the way local news works, with a newsroom that listens to local communities, prioritizes diversity, and is unapologetic about its mission.

Our supporters understand that without a healthy information commons, civic life is hollowed out, and they are joining a movement to rebuild local journalism.

Our readers, too, are voting with their attention. Some 40% more people read THE CITY in 2021 than in 2020.

THE CITY, like New York, is at an inflection point, poised for growth and ready to meet this moment.

We hope you will join us.

Nic Dawes
Executive Director



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Who We Are

Local news to solve local problems

THE CITY is an independent, nonprofit news outlet dedicated to hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York. Our reporters pound the pavement in all five boroughs, working with New Yorkers to tell their stories and, hopefully, make their lives better.

We're here to listen to New Yorkers, dig into their concerns, and deliver stories that drive the public conversation and set the agenda on key issues. At a time when the media has been upended by technological, economic, and political shifts, we want to reconnect people back to local news – and reconnect local news to influencing action.

As we approach our third year of daily publishing, THE CITY has become an engine of impact, award-winning journalism, and civic engagement.

THE CITY's team of 20 journalists have made their presence known across the city, from the streets of the five boroughs to the corridors of power in City Hall and Albany. We have brought focused accountability reporting to the city's most critical beats and delivered impact on issues ranging from housing to justice, and from city spending to transportation.

Our coverage of core issues affecting New Yorkers politically, socially, and economically contributed to a more responsive and responsible city government and a better-informed public.

We have delivered results in five key, measurable areas:

- Our **impact** on issues as complex as fundraising by elected officials, labor rights for food delivery workers to equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Our media-**ecosystem effects**, measured through partnerships with ProPublica, The Marshall Project, and The Fuller Project to name a few, republications of our journalism, mentions by other outlets, and other news organizations following our lead on stories we break with their own reporting. In 2021, our work was republished or cited an average of 300 times per month.
- **Audience growth**, measured by traffic to our website, our newsletter audiences, and social media engagement. In 2021, we averaged roughly 750,000 unique monthly visitors, and about 1.1 million page views monthly, while our primary newsletter reaches more than 56,000 subscribers.
- **Peer recognition**, evidenced by a slate of more than 50 local and national journalism awards that is unrivaled for an organization of our size and youth.
- **Membership**, which has grown to deliver 10% of total revenues.

"The most consistently comprehensive and critical set of local journalists the city of New York has to offer."

- 2021 Member Survey

We provide a consistent drumbeat of stories, major investigations, data-rich examinations of trends shaping New York life, and explanatory journalism that helps New Yorkers navigate the city.

Company Updates

After successful two-and-a-half years with THE CITY, founding editor-in-chief Jere Hester returned to the Craig Newmark School of Journalism at CUNY where he is now heading their editorial projects and partnerships program. Hester is succeeded by Richard Kim, who joins THE CITY from HuffPost, where as executive editor he oversaw core editorial teams including those for breaking news, trends, and the front page. He was previously executive editor of The Nation magazine.

Jere Hester

Under Hester's leadership, THE CITY has experienced tremendous growth, earning more than 50 local and national awards, including Editor & Publisher's EPPY Awards, the National LION Publishers Awards, RTDNA's Edward R. Murrow Awards, and prizes from the Society of Professional Journalists, Online News Association, and New York Press Club, among others.

With Hester's guidance, THE CITY became the go-to news site during the pandemic and primary election season. THE CITY's reporting led to a significant impact in the realms of accountability and action — catalyzing the end of solitary confinement in city-run jails, sparking reforms in the Department of Education to better serve children with special needs, and spurring laws mandating better working conditions for app-based food delivery workers.

THE CITY'S development team is also expanding. Mary Taylor joins THE CITY as its new director of development, where she will be leading fundraising efforts.

Richard Kim

As editor-in-chief, Kim will work closely with THE CITY's newsroom to grow reporting capacity and streamline editorial processes. He'll also collaborate with THE CITY's product and audience teams to expand reach, impact and revenue.

“Study after study has shown that when local news disappears, the public checks out or turns to social media, where misinformation and conspiracy theories abound. Political polarization becomes even more extreme. Mistrust in government grows, and voters become more susceptible to manipulation,” said Kim. “That's why THE CITY's mission is so crucial, not just for New York and New Yorkers, but as part of a national movement to revive democracy by reviving local news.

“I am in awe of what the team at THE CITY has accomplished. In the last year alone, their groundbreaking reporting has made sure vaccines went to hard-hit local communities instead of out-of-town opportunists, spurred legislation to improve working conditions for essential delivery workers, exposed a scheme to deliver improper campaign donations and helped hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers make sense of a wild election,” said Kim. “I'm honored and humbled to lead this pioneering organization into its next chapter.”

Our Commitment To Diversity

Our nonprofit newsroom is charged with covering the most vibrant, diverse city on Earth — a task that requires a team up to the challenge, on all levels.

Our full-time editorial and business lineup bring a rich mix of work and life experiences.

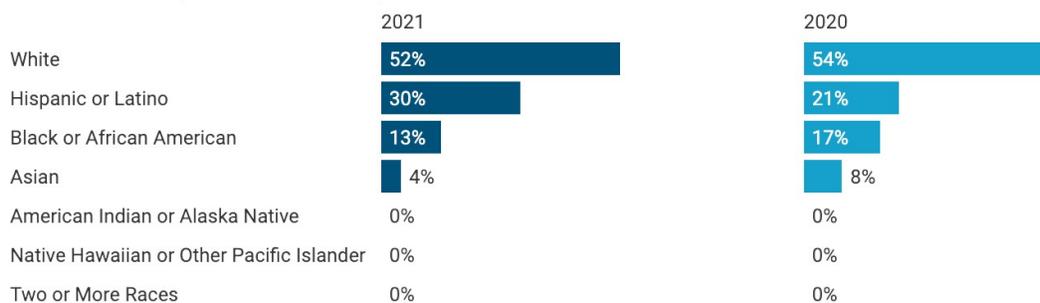
While our staffers hail from various backgrounds, we're very cognizant we have a way to go to better reflect the city we serve. And we have much additional work to do in bringing more diversity to the senior ranks of our newsroom, where women and people of color are underrepresented.

We issued our first diversity report after our debut in April 2019. In 2020, we set some appropriately ambitious goals for making our newsroom more equitable. We've made some strides — including creating a uniform hiring structure, enlisting a more diverse group of interns than in 2020 and establishing an equal vacation time policy for all full-time employees.

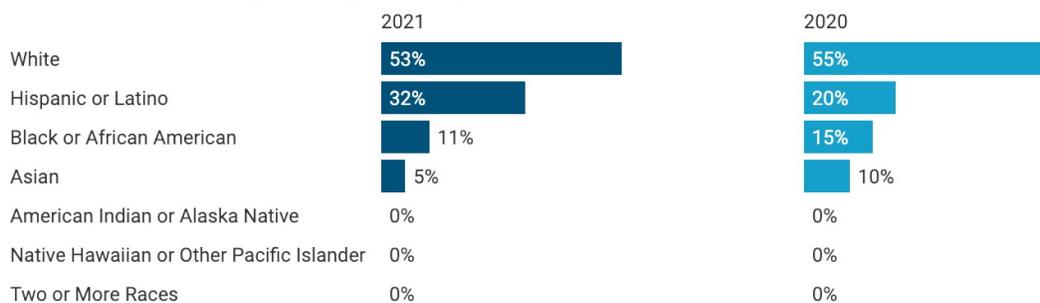
Ultimately, we ask to be judged by our work — work we believe is made all the stronger by efforts to field a team that reflects the city we cover.

Race and Ethnicity

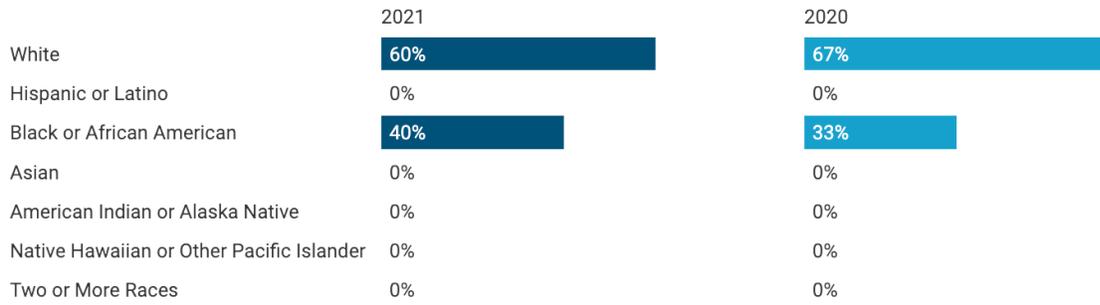
All Full-Time Staff (23 in 2021, 24 in 2020)



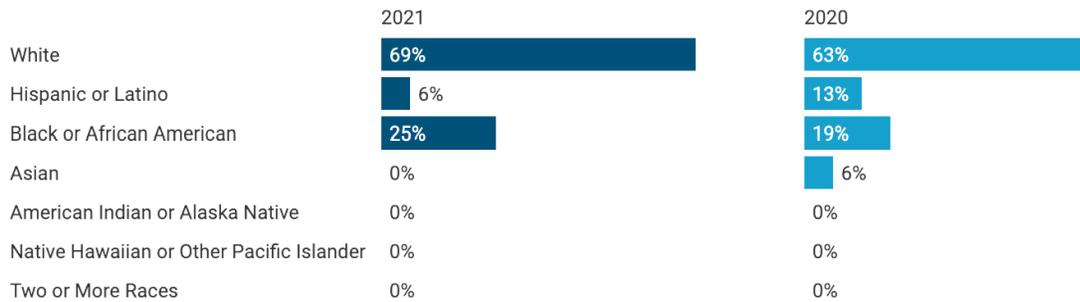
All Full-Time Editorial Staff (19 in 2021, 20 in 2020)



Managers (5 in 2021, 6 in 2020)



Board (16 in 2021, 16 in 2020)



Gender

All Full-Time Staff (23 in 2021, 24 in 2020)



All Full-Time Editorial Staff (19 in 2021, 20 in 2020)



Managers (5 in 2021, 6 in 2020)



Board (16 in 2021, 16 in 2020)



Methodology

Our team of reporters covers a wide range of topics including education, economy, transportation, health care, housing, justice, elections, environment and climate, public safety, and work.

However, we know covering a community or beat effectively requires understanding the perspectives of people impacted at every angle and scale of an issue. To that end, THE CITY has a reporter in each borough, dedicated to covering underreported issues and giving a voice to New Yorkers, often left out of the very conversations that impact them the most. We also put an emphasis on special investigations that take a deep dive into the inner workings of the city and hold elected officials accountable for their actions.

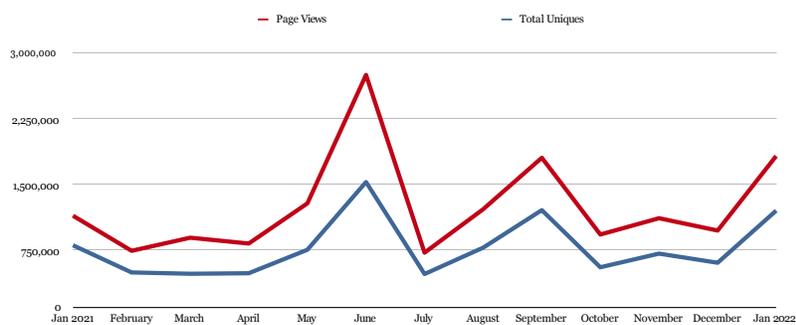
Our reporting and work are also heavily driven by data and inform and guide our engagement efforts and editorial projects, including Meet Your Mayor and the Coronavirus Tracker.

Our Reach

With the onset of the pandemic, THE CITY became a go-to news source for readers looking for information about COVID-19 testing and restrictions, and pandemic effects on everyday New Yorkers and essential workers. We kept the public informed every step of the way and it was reflected in our traffic.

While many outlets soon saw the increased traffic around the pandemic begin to subside, at THE CITY we were able to retain a large portion of our readers who first discovered us in the early days of the pandemic. We saw readership average 1.2 million monthly pageviews, with a peak of nearly three million pageviews in June at the height of primary election season.

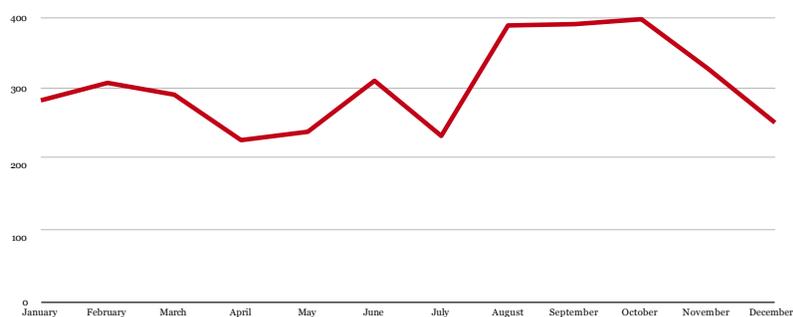
Website Page Views - 2021



3,200

Members

Mentions, Republishing, and Media Hits - 2021



56K

Newsletter
Subscribers

Impact

THE CITY is consistent and persistent in our coverage. We stay on the story, and we are relentless about follow-up, which is key to generating accountability and action.

We seek to tell stories in ways that shift dominant narratives and challenge injustice. We've brought accountability reporting to the city's most critical beats and our equity-focused reporting has a strong record of delivering impact.

Our approach to impact measurement is focused on specific judicial, legislative, and policy actions — such as investigations, legislative hearings, and bills passed — that were prompted by THE CITY's reporting. We also value the impact our reporting has on shifting discourse about issues important to our readers and all New Yorkers. From mentions of our reporting cited in other outlets, to references of our coverage in policy reports and campaign speeches, our stories influence the people leading conversations on issues important to New Yorkers. We also measure impact in neighborhoods through improvements to services and infrastructure that were prompted by our reporting.

We're also well positioned to produce accountability journalism with a focus on equity because we have a team that reflects the diversity of the city we cover, a commitment to telling stories of citywide relevance that originate in New York's neighborhoods through the work of five borough-based beat reporters, and a strong track record of engaging New York's communities to produce relevant and responsive journalism.

What follows are standout examples of THE CITY's real impact across our coverage areas.

The CITY is New York City's go-to source for what happens locally here, not via soundbites on local TV but via real investigative reporting - and where you can truly learn about what is happening in our city.

- 2021 Member Survey

Covid-19

Local Residents Get Priority Access to Washington Heights Vaccines, Hospital Says in Switch After THE CITY Exposed Inequities



Washington Heights resident Juan Reyes spoke in Spanish about his experience getting his coronavirus vaccine. Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

In January, THE CITY visited the Ft. Washington Avenue Armory in Washington Heights to investigate if the site — touted by then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo as bringing vaccinations to the kind of neighborhood especially hard-hit by the pandemic — was serving the largely Latino community in which it is located. What reporter Josefa Velasquez found was [a line composed mostly of white people from distant neighborhoods and the suburbs of Westchester and New Jersey](#). To compound the problem, no one was available outside the facility to assist Spanish-speakers struggling to navigate the process. Our reporter quickly found herself acting as an interpreter.

The story set off a flurry of controversy, both in other media outlets and online, and by the end of the following day, [New York-Presbyterian Hospital had agreed to set aside 60% of available appointment slots for residents of Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx](#). Gov. Cuomo later designated Yankee Stadium as a vaccination site for Bronx residents only and opened several other sites across New York City with eligibility limited to residents of neighborhoods hard hit by the virus.

The following week, with the return of indoor dining approaching, Velasquez asked the governor at a news conference whether restaurant and delivery workers would be added to the eligibility list for vaccination, given their potential for exposure to COVID-19. Cuomo dismissed the question as "a cheap, insincere discussion." [The following day he reversed himself](#) — giving local governments the option to add delivery and restaurant workers to the list.

Attorney General Investigates CareCube

THE CITY reported in August about [widespread consumer complaints concerning CareCube](#), a chain of COVID-testing storefronts that sent many customers bills connected to COVID tests that by law are supposed to be free, while also charging their health insurance plans.

In January, state Attorney General Letitia James announced her office has [launched an investigation](#) into the company.

Joe Rogan Show Spurs Bill for Uniform Vaccination Rules for Home and Away Teams

Following a [report](#) from THE CITY in September, highlighting the city’s unequal approach in regulating vaccine requirements for out-of-town athletes and performers (including podcaster Joe Rogan), Sen. Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) introduced a [bill](#) in October that would mandate visiting athletes and performers appearing in New York’s biggest arenas to receive the COVID vaccine.

The legislation, called the Fairly Applying Individual Requirements (FAIR) Vaccine Mandates Act, would bar local governments from “discriminating in enforcement of vaccine requirements” at entertainment venues based on where performers and athletes live or primarily work.

Housing

Securing Repairs in Public Housing

THE CITY’s coverage helps ensure that tenants in public housing get repairs, in a system plagued by massive maintenance backlogs.

In January, [we reported the story of Eleanore Bumpurs](#), a NYCHA resident whose son was lead-poisoned while living in the Forest Houses in Morrisania. She was also struggling to get NYCHA to make repairs for her collapsing bathroom floor, among many other problems. While her experience is all too typical for many NYCHA residents, her story stands out because her namesake great-grandmother was gunned down by police in 1984 while she herself was a public housing tenant withholding rent over what she said was NYCHA’s failure to address repair requests. The day after our report, [NYCHA began repairs](#) to Bumpurs’ apartment.

In at least one instance, THE CITY’s reporting about tenant issues resulted in repairs without a story even being published. A tenant at the Bay View Houses in Canarsie wrote THE CITY’s tip line to say that she and some neighbors had gone without water service for months. Our Brooklyn borough reporter visited to confirm the conditions, then called NYCHA — which promptly sent in a crew to fix the problem.

Workers' Rights

New York City Passes Landmark New Protections for Food Delivery Workers



Delivery cyclists ride down Broadway in Manhattan to protest a lack of protection during the coronavirus pandemic, Oct. 15, 2020. Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

The City Council led the nation on Sept. 23 by passing a set of bills to ensure bathroom access, minimum pay and more for the app-based delivery workers who kept New Yorkers fed during the pandemic. Reporters Claudia Irizarry Aponte and Josefa Velasquez [followed their plight to justice](#) for over a year, chronicling and giving voice to the grievances and calls for better treatment from deliveristas many of whom are indigenous Guatemalans and Mexicans.

Following our reports, several City Council and state lawmakers said they were [mulling ways to improve working conditions for the couriers](#). And the New York City Hospitality Alliance, a trade group that represents New York City's hospitality industry, issued a recommendation that restaurants provide bathroom access to third-party food delivery workers, addressing one of the Deliveristas' main workplace complaints. Council member Justin Brannan [credited our reporting](#) on the organizing efforts of food delivery workers when he and several colleagues introduced the [legislative package designed to improve working conditions](#).

However, their journey is far from over. Here's a peek at some key events in the Deliveristas' ongoing saga:



Education

Family-Friendly Reactions to Pandemic School Absences

As schools shut down in the spring of 2020 and shifted to remote learning, THE CITY was the first to report that [child welfare authorities were probing families](#) for so-called educational neglect, as they are legally required to do whenever reports come in from schools to a state hotline alleging potential abuse or neglect.

In the final three months of the 2019-2020 school year, city educators filed 361 cases of educational neglect reports against parents after kids failed to sign on for online classes. Following THE CITY's coverage, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams [demanded the purging of records of those probes](#) in a letter to Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza.

The chancellor pledged to drop any probe sparked by a missing iPad or other device.

By the time school reopened in September 2021 for the current academic year, Carranza's successor, Meisha Ross Porter, [declared a shift in practice](#): child welfare workers will only intervene if there is a "clear intent to keep a child from being educated, period."

MTA Reverses Course on Plan to End Worker Apprenticeships Early



Sandra Diaz has been taking part in an MTA mechanical apprenticeship at the Fresh Pond bus depot, Feb. 19, 2021. Hiram Alejandro Durán/THE CITY

In February, THE CITY [reported](#) that an apprenticeship program that trains high school graduates for jobs at the MTA was on the chopping block — even though the transit agency had just received \$4 billion in federal aid. The Transit Mechanical Apprentice Training Program prepares graduates of public schools to work as bus mechanics or electricians and maintainers at MTA depots. The cut threatened the jobs of 18 apprentices who had yet to complete the three-year program, which they described as a pathway out of poverty.

Less than three weeks after we published our report, [the MTA reversed course](#) and announced it would allow the 18 apprentices currently enrolled in the program to complete their training.

Elections and Politics

Brian Benjamin Campaign Backer Prosecution

In January, THE CITY spoke with three New Yorkers who had never heard of Brian Benjamin, a state senator running for city comptroller, even though [they were listed among 23 donors who gave \\$250 apiece to the Harlem politician](#), via money orders, in late 2019. Among them: the 2-year-old grandson of a top Benjamin supporter. The Benjamin campaign had sought nearly \$17,000 in public matching funds based on the 23 donations. After THE CITY's report, the candidate agreed to relinquish the donations.

A few weeks later mayoral candidate Zach Iscol dropped out of that race and filed paperwork to run for comptroller. [He told the New York Times](#) that THE CITY's story on Brian Benjamin prompted him to switch races.

Benjamin placed fourth in the race — then was named by Kathy Hochul as her lieutenant governor after Andrew Cuomo resigned. By November, the man federal prosecutors allege was behind a scheme to illegally secure public campaign matching funds on Benjamin's behalf, Gerald Migdol, was [arrested](#) in and charged with fraud and identity theft. His case is now pending in federal court.

Eric Adams Amends Tax Returns Following Irregularities Found by THE CITY



Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams waits for the subway while campaigning for mayor in May. Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

In September, Democratic mayoral nominee Eric Adams announced he would [amend](#) his tax returns for a second time after THE CITY pointed out irregularities concerning filings on his Bed-Stuy residence.

Adams is also a landlord who owns a four-unit red-brick Brooklyn townhouse where he says he rents out three apartments and, since 2017, has lived on the ground floor. But tax and city records show potentially serious irregularities tied to his management of the Bedford-Stuyvesant property.

Amended personal income tax documents Adams released following his June 22 primary victory clashed with his claim that he used the building's ground floor as his residence — reporting zero days living at the property.

The filings could have allowed him to reduce his taxable income by tens of thousands of dollars, said accountants who reviewed the records at THE CITY's request. After amending three years of tax returns once already, he said he would refile for 2017, 2018 and 2019 yet again after THE CITY pointed out the discrepancies to his campaign.

Consumer Protection

CITY Focus on High Airport Concession Prices Spurs Reductions.

In August, THE CITY highlighted sky-high prices on food and beverage concessions in New York City's three area airports. Less than a week following THE CITY's [report](#), the Port Authority's inspector general announced an [investigation](#) into OTG — the company that runs concessions at Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark Liberty — to see whether it or any other airport concessionaires are violating guidelines that only allow them to charge up to 10% more than “street pricing.” A followup visit to the airport by THE CITY found that beer — which had been priced up to \$27.85 — was now reduced to a more down-to-earth \$11.50.

Government Integrity

Following the Jan. 6 insurrection, Mayor de Blasio announced that all city contracts with the Trump Organization would end — including a deal to run the Ferry Point Links golf course in The Bronx. Despite a lawsuit from Trump, the city parks department signed a deal with a new operator to run the high-end course — which THE CITY [revealed](#) to be an unlikely choice, a homeless services organization with hundreds of millions of dollars in existing city contracts.

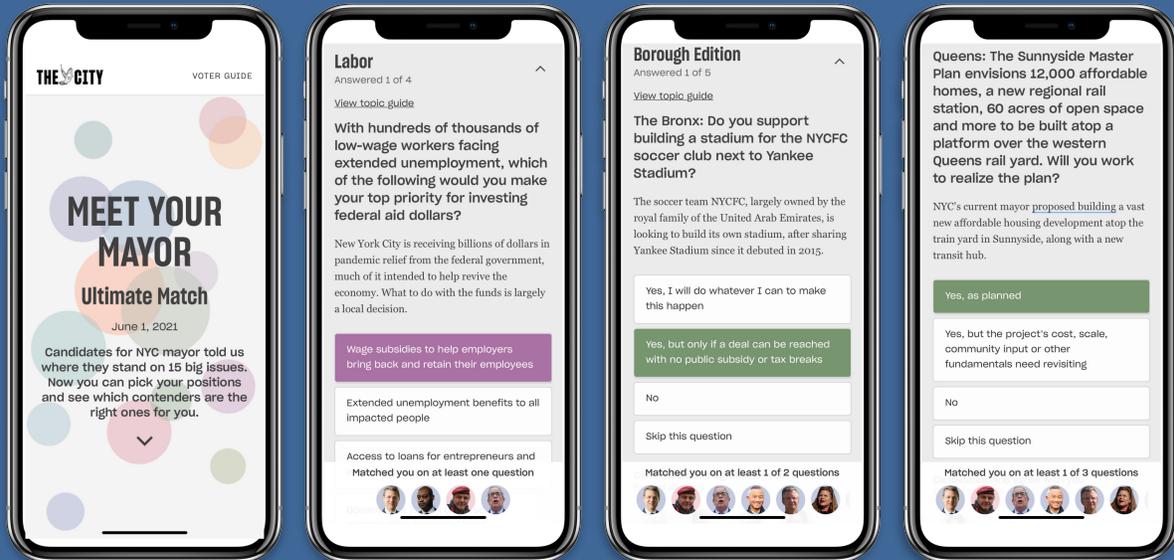
Days later, the Department of Parks and Recreation announced that CORE Services Group had [withdrawn](#) from the golf course project, on which it had teamed up with Atlanta company Bobby Jones Links. By then, THE CITY had obtained documents showing CORE was under a corrective action plan with the city Department of Homeless Services, related to financial mismanagement and improper subcontracts enriching related organizations. While THE CITY prepared a followup story on CORE's management, the New York Times and New York Post posted investigations of the group and its leader. The Trump Organization obtained a court [injunction](#) blocking the transfer and has [referenced](#) THE CITY's coverage in filings with the court. A decision is pending.

Campaign 2021

In 2021, as New York emerged from the pandemic and prepared to hold elections for citywide offices, we at THE CITY recognized this was a transformative moment for New Yorkers. With nearly every citywide office up for grabs, we saw the need for accessible, trustworthy information to help New Yorkers make informed decisions as they headed to the polls and to help them re-engage with civic life more broadly.

During this unprecedented election season, THE CITY became an indispensable resource. During the 2021 campaign season, we published 118 articles on the election that garnered 1.8 million page views. In addition to our robust coverage, here are the ways in which we made sure voters had all the information needed to make informed decisions.

Meet Your Mayor



In March, we launched Meet Your Mayor, an interactive guide that showed voters where candidates stood on 15 key issues of concern for New Yorkers during the primary election season. The tool was created to help New Yorkers navigate through a vast array of candidates in the June mayoral primaries, and see where their positions aligned.

With Meet Your Mayor, readers were able to answer a few quick multiple-choice questions on some of the biggest challenges facing the city — from COVID recovery to public school admissions to NYPD discipline and much more.

Meet Your Mayor then revealed users' best match or matches among the major candidates — along with glimpses of how they say they will govern, via excerpts from their public comments.

“You brought it down to the individual level - helping me develop my understanding of who’s running to represent me, what they do, what do my candidates think... and it was available throughout the city, so anyone could have that option.” - 2021 Member Survey

In the week leading up to the primary election, Meet Your Mayor received more than 250,000 unique visits, a number equal to about a quarter of the electorate.

As part of the process, THE CITY’s editorial team sent three multiple-choice surveys with five topics each to every Democratic and Republican on the ballot, starting in February. Of 15 candidates, 11 responded to all or nearly all questions.

Civic Newsroom

Building on the success of the Open Newsroom, begun in 2019, THE CITY launched the Civic Newsroom in February. The goal was to better understand what voters wanted and needed to know about the elections. This wide-ranging project included a series of virtual events to help us learn about voters’ information needs, a weekly newsletter, and a number of guides — like who’s running for Mayor and how ranked-choice voting works.

The Latino population makes up 31% of foreign-born New Yorkers in the city. In an effort to reach and engage that community, THE CITY translated into Spanish the series of guides and explainers featured in Civic Newsroom.



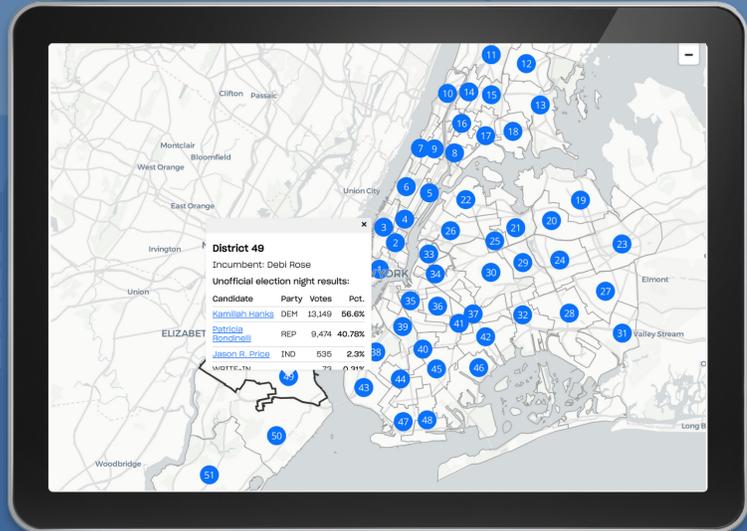
THE CITY’s Bronx reporter Claudia Irizarry Aponte and then-engagement director for THE CITY, Terry Parris Jr. during Voterfest in the Mott Haven section of The Bronx. Photo Credit: Vania Andre, THE CITY.

Voterfest

Civic Newsroom culminated in June with our first Voterfest. The voter engagement event featured three sessions, taking place in The Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, in collaboration with community-based organizations. The outdoor community event featured music, poetry, information and activities to help voters learn more about the coming election. Each Voterfest provided information on open public positions, ranked-choice voting, voting locations, and how they aligned with mayoral candidates using THE CITY’s Meet Your Mayor tool.

NYC City Council Map

While there was a lot of energy around the mayor’s race, we also wanted to make sure our readers had the information they needed to participate in other crucial races that were on the June 22 primary ballot. With more than two-thirds of City Council up for grabs, we compiled a map of candidates to show readers who was running in their district, with links to the candidates’ campaign websites and social media.



2021 NYC City Council Election Results

Election Guide

From picking the next mayor to filling 51 City Council seats, voters’ choices in these elections would shape the city’s pandemic recovery. THE CITY created an election guide to make voters’ decision-making easier, with details on the candidates’ positions, guides on how to use the new ranked-choice voting system, and more.

Published in English and Spanish, the guide featured Meet Your Mayor, key dates and details, the City Council Map, and information about candidates.

Mayoral and Comptroller Debates Co-Hosted by THE CITY



The first Democratic mayoral debate drew the top eight contenders. Screenshot/NY1

On May 12, THE CITY’s Capitol reporter, Josefa Velasquez, co-moderated the first New York City mayoral debate featuring the eight leading Democratic candidates for mayor Eric Adams, Shaun Donovan, Kathryn Garcia, Ray McGuire, Dianne Morales, Scott Stringer, Maya Wiley and Andrew Yang.

The debate was co-moderated by Errol Louis from NY1 television and Brian Lehrer of WNYC radio, and broadcast on both those stations. It was the biggest audience for the mayoral candidates after months of online forums.

On June 7, THE CITY’s explanatory and service reporter, Rachel Holliday Smith, co-moderated the Democratic primary debate for city comptroller, alongside NY1’s Errol Louis. The debate featured Brian Benjamin, Michelle Caruso-Cabrera, Zach Iscol, Corey Johnson, Brad Lander, Kevin Parker, Reshma Patel and David Weprin.

Coverage Highlights

Women Take the Lead in City Council Fundraising Race After Years of Gender Imbalance:

Female candidates have collected more cash than male rivals, with boosts from small donors and the city's expanded public matching fund, THE CITY's analysis found. Seven of the top 10 female fundraisers are women of color. (March)

"The City has great on-the-ground coverage to help New Yorkers make sense of life in this complex and confusing city." - 2021 Member Survey

"Local insightful news that keeps me engaged with my community and make decisions." - 2021 Member Survey

Dominican Leaders Trounce Super-Rich Outsiders in Bronx Special Election Influence Battle:

With absentee ballots yet to be counted, early signs show a candidate backed by U.S. Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-Manhattan/The Bronx) with an edge. Meanwhile, \$200K-plus in Walmart heir and real estate dollars barely made a dent. (March)

Asian New Yorkers See Hope in Preliminary Political Map That Unites Some Neighborhoods:

One of the dueling maps proposed by the divided redistricting commission would create four state legislative districts with at least a plurality of Asian residents. Brooklyn and Queens activists welcomed the early move, but say more needs to be done. (October)



How We Work

Explanatory reporting and service journalism

We understand journalism is about more than just covering the news. It's also about helping readers find answers to questions and solutions to real-life problems. To that end, THE CITY has added value to New York's complex and challenged local news landscape through our explanatory reporting and service journalism that help New Yorkers to navigate their city. Our journalism is backed by an innovative program of direct engagement through our award-winning [Open Newsroom](#).

We've doubled down on our commitment to this type of journalism by dedicating a full-time reporter to produce services pieces and guides. Our readers and members repeatedly cite our service pieces and guides as a critical resource they seek from THE CITY. Our pieces became an indispensable resource for readers, particularly during the primary election season.

Coverage highlights:

[Not Just the Mayor: NYC's Other City- and Borough-Wide Seats in November's Election](#): Sure, New Yorkers will choose a new mayor on Nov. 2, but there are other big city jobs up for grabs. Races for city comptroller, public advocate, five borough presidents and Manhattan district attorney are all on the ballot. Here's a guide to who's running. (October)

[How Does Congestion Pricing Work? What to Know About the Toll System Taking Manhattan](#): The idea's been kicked around by politicians and transit advocates for years but never tried in the U.S. Here's a guide on what it all means, whom it will affect — and when we may actually see it in New York. (September)

[How to Clean Up After Ida: A Guide for the Flooded](#): What you should know about safely putting your place back together, where to look for financial help and whether renters insurance covers flood damage. (Answer: Rarely.) (September)

Engagement

From THE CITY's inception, engagement has been a core pillar of our mission and work.

Our engagement efforts during 2021 centered around crowdsourcing and engaging the public on issues related to city elections and pandemic repercussions that New Yorkers are still dealing with, such as concerns about jobs and housing. Engaging with our readers continuously allowed us to better address their information needs by providing relevant and accessible resources, including explainers, a series of election guides, and dedicated newsletters on the 2021 city elections, rent and employment issues.

We worked with community members who were experiencing these challenges firsthand, as well as tenant organizers, employment lawyers, and other experts to create these regular updates in [both English and Spanish](#).

By combining our journalism skills — and the broad reach of our newsroom — with the knowledge of others, we created a powerful resource to equip New Yorkers with the information and the tools they need to cope with these confusing times.

The newsletters reach about 4,200 people via email and 700 people via text. These updates, published on THE CITY's website, have accumulated about 300,000 page views. They continue to be searched and read daily.

MISSING THEM



Another example of our newsroom’s engagement with New Yorkers is [MISSING THEM](#) — a collaborative project with Columbia Journalism School, the Brown Institute for Media Innovation and the Craig Newmark School of Journalism at CUNY that used crowdsourcing to gather stories about New Yorkers who died from COVID-19.

In the early months of the pandemic, our team found that publicized deaths of those who died of COVID-19 skew male and younger and disproportionately come from wealthier enclaves of the city.

In response, THE CITY invited New Yorkers to [share the stories](#) of their loved ones so they can be remembered in our [searchable database](#) and in [virtual memorial events](#). The effort has been successful. While about 70% of published obituaries in local media are for white New Yorkers, MISSING THEM’s community submissions, fueled by our engagement efforts, more closely mirror the city’s reality when it comes to COVID-19 deaths.

MISSING THEM also led to investigative features that exposed wrongdoing and advanced accountability.

In March 2021, city government drew, in part, from MISSING THEM for images of those lost to COVID-19 for a memorial. The faces of those who died were projected onto the Brooklyn Bridge, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the first known death due to the pandemic in New York. (A time-lapse video can be seen [here](#).) The same month, the [Brian Lehrer show on WNYC](#) invited hundreds of listeners to read aloud the names of 1,780 New Yorkers from MISSING THEM in an on-air memorial.

To date, nearly 600 obituaries have been produced.

MISSING THEM Awards & Recognitions:

Award for Special Event Reporting
New York Press Club

Knight Award for Public Service
Online Journalism Awards (Online News Association)

Punch Sulzberger Innovator of the Year Award
News Leaders Association

Best use of social media/crowdsourcing
(fewer than 1 million unique visitors)
EPPY Awards (Editor & Publisher)

Community Champion Award finalist
Nonprofit News Awards (INN)

Coverage Highlights:

[One in 10 Local COVID Victims
Destined for Hart Island, NYC’s
Potter’s Field](#)

[NYC Jail-Related COVID Fatalities at
Least Double Official Three Who Died
in Custody](#)

[NYC Nursing Home Gave Dozens of
Veterans Experimental COVID-19
Treatments. Some Families Had No
Idea](#)

Our Partners

THE CITY is a distribution partner for Apple and Spectrum news. THE CITY's stories are shared through those platforms daily and promoted to their audience via regular Spectrum News push alerts and Apple News' main NYC local feed.

Our stories published on the Spectrum News app garnered more than 35,000 page views in 2021, while Apple News generated nearly 15 million page views.

Republishing Partners

THE CITY has a strong relationship with community and ethnic news outlets in New York City. Our articles are regularly republished by a number of local outlets that have unique and engaged readerships. The outlets that republish our articles range from community outlets like [Illyria](#), an Albanian-American newspaper, and [Queens Latino](#), which covers the Hispanic community in Queens, to larger outlets like PIX11, NBC and Yahoo News that have significantly larger audiences.

Reporting Collaborations

THE CITY has collaborated with a number of nonprofit news outlets to publish stories about issues impacting New Yorkers. Through our reporting collaborations, we've produced groundbreaking stories that resonate with New Yorkers and have national appeal. Below are highlights from our reporting collaborations this year.

The Trace: In August, we collaborated with The Trace, the only nonprofit newsroom dedicated to reporting on gun violence, to produce a [story](#) that examined a new model of gun violence prevention that provides incentives for nonviolence to those most likely to commit them.

ProPublica: In March, we co-published [Over 700 Complaints About NYPD Officers Abusing Protesters, Then Silence](#) with ProPublica, the influential investigative newsroom. The story examined abuse complaints made by New Yorkers who took part in Black Lives Matter demonstrations during the summer of 2020.

WNYC/Gothamist: In April, we collaborated with WNYC/Gothamist on a series of articles on criminal justice. [NYC Jail Officers Lash Out at Inmates With Few Consequences, Discipline Records Show](#) revealed 11 Department of Corrections officers were disciplined for at least three confirmed misconduct incidents over an 18-month period.

The Marshall Project: In April, The Marshall Project, which focuses on criminal justice, collaborated with us on an [article](#) highlighting the rise in anti-Asian bias attacks in the early months of the pandemic, as well as a [guide](#) informing New Yorkers of what to do if attacked.

Columbia Journalism Investigations/Type Investigations: In February, THE CITY partnered with Columbia Journalism Investigations and Type Investigations to produce a series of stories that emerged from "MISSING THEM." Published stories include an expose of [experimental COVID treatments](#) given to dozens of veterans at a Queens nursing home without family notification.

The Markup: In May, The Markup, which investigates technology's effects on society, and THE CITY collaborated on a piece that highlighted how [Black and Latino students are regularly screened out](#) of top-performing high schools.

The Fuller Project: THE CITY collaborated closely with The Fuller Project, embedding a reporter from their newsroom full-time within THE CITY to focus on issues affecting women in New York City, including their ability to rejoin the workforce following pandemic disruptions. Stories from other Fuller Project reporters focused on immigrant and second-generation women, including City Council candidates who made [taxi drivers' financial crisis](#) a centerpiece of their campaigns

Chalkbeat: THE CITY continued its joint reporting with this education news organization, focusing on [special education](#) services. Our two news organizations also regularly cross-post content.

New York Focus: This small local advocacy and investigative reporting start-up regularly collaborate with our team to generate and edit [stories](#) published on both organizations' websites.

Events

In an effort to expand our impact and further engage with our readers, THE CITY launched a speaker series about the future of New York City as we transition into another phase of the pandemic. We also partnered with documentary filmmakers to host a screening of a recently-released film that takes a look at the joys and challenges of running a local news outfit.

THE CITY and 'Storm Lake' filmmakers team up for screening and discussion about the future of local news



(L-R) Mazin Sidahmed, co-executive director for Documented; Art Cullen, editor of The Storm Lake Times; Jay Rosen, journalism professor at New York University; and Claudia Irizarry Aponte, The Bronx reporter for THE CITY. Photo Credit: Hiram Alejandro Durán/THE CITY

In December, THE CITY hosted a screening in Chelsea of **STORM LAKE** in partnership with the film's directors. The 2021 documentary follows Art Cullen, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, in his fight to inform and unite his rural Iowa farming community through his biweekly newspaper, *The Storm Lake Times* — even as the paper hangs on by a thread. The screening was followed by a panel discussion on the future of local news featuring Cullen, Claudia Irizarry Aponte, Bronx reporter for THE CITY, and Mazin Sidahmed, co-founder of the Documented news site.

THE CITY Hosts Conversation on Police Reform in NYC

In the fall, we launched the first installment of our speaker series on the city's future with a discussion about police reform under a new mayoral administration. Moderated by THE CITY Deputy Editor Hasani Gittens, the November discussion explored police reform efforts that have worked and how they could be implemented by the NYPD.

Panelists included Mark Winston Griffith, executive director of the Brooklyn Movement Center and a member of THE CITY's board of directors; Jullian Harris-Calvin, director of the Greater Justice New York program at the Vera Institute of Justice; NYPD Lt. Edwin Raymond, former City Council candidate in Brooklyn; and Alex Vitale, professor of sociology and coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College.



THE CITY Deputy Editor Hasani Gittens. Photo Credit: Ben Fractenberg, THE CITY

Awards & Recognitions

2021

Edward R. Murrow Award (Radio Television Digital News Association)

- Feature Reporting Award - [How Los Deliveristas Unidos Banded Together](#)

The Society of Professional Journalists

- Sunshine Award: [The Complaint Files the NYPD Doesn't Want You to See](#): co-published by ProPublica

New York Press Club

- Special Event Reporting: With Columbia Journalism School and the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY - [MISSING THEM](#)

Silurians Press Club

- Merit Award for Business and Financial Reporting: "[Small Businesses Battle for Survival Amid the Pandemic](#)"
- Merit Award for Investigative Reporting: "[How New York City Bungled the Purchase of Life-Saving Medical Supplies During the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)"
- Merit Award for Breaking News Photography: [Racial Justice Demonstrations](#)

The Sidney Hillman Foundation

- Award for Social Justice Reporting: Allison Dikanovic for developing THE CITY's [rent and eviction-focused newsletters](#) while a student at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY

Livingston Awards Finalists

- Finalist for Local Reporting - Ann Choi, Rachel Holiday Smith and Will Welch: "[Inside New York City's Housing Lotteries](#)"
- Finalist for Local Reporting: Eileen Grench: "[Education, iPads, and Child Welfare Workers in the Age of Covid](#)"



Josefa Velasquez and Claudia Irizarry Aponte from THE CITY received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Feature Reporting for their coverage on food delivery workers during the pandemic. Photo Credit: RTDNA

EPHY Awards (Editor & Publisher)

- Best use of social media/crowdsourcing (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - THE CITY, Columbia Journalism School & Newmark Journalism School at CUNY for “[Missing Them Memorial Events](#)”
- Best use of data/infographics (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - [Meet Your Mayor](#)
- Best collaborative investigative/enterprise reporting (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - [NYC Nursing Home Gave Dozens of Veterans Experimental COVID-19 Treatment](#)
- Finalist, Best investigative/enterprise feature (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - [How New York Bungled Pandemic Medical Supply Purchase](#)
- Finalist, Best online-only news (fewer than 1 million unique visitors)
- Finalist, Best business reporting (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - [New York in Job Hunt as City Seeks Economic Comeback from COVID](#)
- Finalist, Best innovation project on a website (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - [Meet Your Mayor](#)
- Finalist, Best news or event feature (fewer than 1 million unique visitors) - Claudia Irizarry Aponte and Josefa Velasquez for “[Deliveristas](#)”

Online Journalism Awards (Online News Association)

- Knight Award for Public Service - [Missing Them, a COVID-19 Memorial and Accountability Journalism Project](#)
- Excellence in Newsletters (Single Newsletter) - [Civic Newsroom Newsletter](#)
- Finalist, Excellence in Newsletters (Portfolio) - [THE CITY Newsletters](#)

Nonprofit News Awards (INN)

- Breaking Barriers Award - [The Deliveristas' Long Journey to Justice](#)
- Finalist, Startup of the Year
- Finalist, Community Champion Award - [MISSING THEM Memorial Events](#)
- Finalist, Insight Award for Explanatory Journalism - [Civic Newsroom initiative](#) and [Meet Your Mayor tool](#)

One Hundred Black Men of New York

- Leadership Through Local Journalism Award: [Jere Hester, Founding Editor-in-Chief](#)

News Leaders Association

- Punch Sulzberger Innovator of the Year Award: With Columbia Journalism School and the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY - [MISSING THEM](#)

From the judges: “This profoundly human journalism project was well executed. “Missing Them” turned the traditional obituary to place the audience at the center of the journalism, telling stories from people in communities that no other media organization was covering this way. Community outreach and partnerships with Columbia and CUNY journalism schools show the drive for innovation, when crisis reporting seems like an impossible endeavor.”

Our Donors

As a nonprofit news organization, THE CITY relies on donations and grants from foundations, individuals and sponsors who support our mission to produce hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York.

THE CITY is grateful to everyone who supports our work. Here are donors who have contributed \$1,000 or more since launch.

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