<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Note From Our Executive Director &amp; Editor in Chief</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 By the Numbers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How We Talk About Impact</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explainers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat Reporting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborations &amp; Partnerships</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ NYC</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Team Behind THE CITY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Development</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Engagement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CITY Fest</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Supporters</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financials</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Readers,

We are often asked what it is that makes THE CITY different from legacy news companies, beyond our nonprofit legal status. The answer is that we were founded not to sell subscriptions, or to serve up advertising, but to advance the cause of a just, democratic and thriving New York City through quality journalism. We believe that rigorous investigative reporting, useful explanatory coverage, and deep community engagement with local communities drive better outcomes for New Yorkers. When we think about how we are doing, then, we turn first to our impact, rather than subscriber numbers or advertising revenue. THE CITY’s journalism was directly cited by City Council lawmakers as the inspiration for groundbreaking new legislation to protect the rights of bike delivery workers, by FBI officials announcing the indictment of then-Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin, and by Attorney General Letitia James when she launched public hearings into the failure of New York state to provide adequate mental health facilities for kids and teens. Our coverage helped to save a beloved pool hall in Queens, prodded Eric Adams to fulfill his promise to make Diwali a public holiday, and prompted Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez to investigate fraud in the borough’s Democratic Party. Impact isn’t just about that kind of headline-making change, of course. Some of the proudest moments in our newsroom happen when people write to tell us that our explanatory reporting helped them to join the community board in the neighborhood, that our tools made it easier for them to vote, or that our coverage made utility bills easier to understand. We care about the reach of our reporting, too. Great local journalism builds a shared world of facts around which New York can convene, debate and make decisions. A growing audience is a sign that more and more people trust us to deliver the news that is closest to home. For all of us at THE CITY, fair, accurate, and relevant reporting, grounded in local expertise, are the most powerful tools available for delivering accountability, understanding and engagement — and we are just getting started.

Nic Dawes - Executive Director
Richard Kim - Editor in Chief
OUR MISSION

THE CITY serves the people of New York through independent journalism that deepens democratic participation, answers pressing civic questions and holds the powerful to account.
WHAT WE TALK ABOUT
WHEN WE TALK ABOUT IMPACT

THE CITY is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of New Yorkers. Our impact is not measured solely by the stories we publish, but also by the changes we help bring about. We aim to achieve the following types of impact:

• Influence policy change: We seek to hold those in power accountable, and to shed light on issues that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

• Spur civic action: We believe that an informed and engaged public is essential to a healthy, active democracy.

• Help New Yorkers navigate the complexities of the city: Our reporting demystifies bureaucratic processes, empowering readers to make informed decisions.

• Strengthen the local news ecosystem: We believe that a robust and diverse media landscape is crucial to the health of our democracy. Through collaborations with other news organizations and by training the next generation of journalists, we are working to ensure that quality journalism continues to thrive in New York City.
EXPLAINERS HOW TO NEW YORK

THE CITY’s explanatory work includes producing guides with practical information such as how to access services or know one’s rights.

What We Reported

THE CITY created a guide to community boards, the “entry level” of local government. The guide explained what community boards do, how members are chosen, how to join a community board, and what to know before you apply.

What Happened

Our explainer led to an increase in applications to join community boards.

“Thank you for helping familiarize readers with the process. I know it made it a lot easier for me to apply. Thank you for educating us and for advancing democracy.”

— Reader

What We Reported

After an influx of asylum-seekers poured into New York City, we reported on the network of charities, volunteers and mutual-aid workers scrambling to house, feed and assist the newcomers. We also highlighted what readers could do to help.

What Happened

One reader reached out to tell us that our story had helped with her organizing and relief efforts to aid new Venezuelan migrants arriving in Staten Island.

What We Reported

We explained how to find out if your apartment is rent stabilized, and what to do if you think you’re being overcharged.

What Happened

Several readers reached out with tips about landlords who haven’t adhered to rent-stabilization guidelines. In addition, Queens Community Board 3 held a special meeting facilitated by its Housing committee to address the decrease in the number of rent-stabilized apartments in Jackson Heights, North Corona and East Elmhurst.
INVESTIGATIONS DIGGING INTO THE CORE OF THE BIG APPLE

THE CITY’s investigative efforts span all our reporting, with a special focus on money, politics, and influence; justice and courts; and real estate and housing. Our reporters uncover stories that might otherwise slip under the radar. In 2022, our investigative stories had impacts that reverberated through City Hall and Albany — and demonstrated that New York City is in dire need of local investigative journalism.

What We Reported

In partnership with ProPublica’s Local Reporting Network, we investigated the crisis in child mental health care following New York’s downsizing of the system. Our investigation showed the impact of policy decisions on the families who were affected by them. It revealed a dramatic drop in the number of beds at state psychiatric hospitals, leaving people with too few places to turn for treatment of serious mental health conditions.

What Happened

Our reporting prompted state Attorney General Letitia James to hold two hearings. One of the parents profiled in our coverage testified at the initial hearing, and James thanked ProPublica and THE CITY in her opening remarks. In Gov. Kathy Hochul’s recent budget, she highlighted the restoration of mental health beds that were cut. She is also looking to boost pay and forgive loans for mental health staff.

What We Reported

In 2021, THE CITY broke the story of dubious donations to then-Lt Governor Brian Benjamin’s earlier campaign for state Senate. We continued to follow the story for well over a year, exposing multiple incidents of wrongdoing.

What Happened

Our coverage got the attention of state officials, leading to a federal investigation into campaign fraud, and ultimately to Benjamin’s indictment and resignation as lieutenant governor in April 2022. On the day Benjamin was indicted, our reporting was cited and referenced in more than 50 news stories.
THE CITY’s beat reporting covers a range of critical topics, including City Hall, climate and environment, education, health, housing and homelessness, immigration, justice and policing, labor, transit and the boroughs. Borough reporters are rooted in NYC down to the neighborhood level, which results in stories that are resonant to people’s lives, and that provide a perspective on communities that too often go unnoticed. It leads to impacts like accountability for landlords who left tenants without heat, increased awareness of community fridge resources, and the prevention of foreclosures on beloved businesses.

What We Reported

THE CITY’s reporting revealed that people were put on the ballot for county Democratic Party positions in Brooklyn without their knowledge — or consent. Our reporting unearthed multiple forged documents filed with the city Board of Elections, as well as allegations that party leaders conditioned paid poll work opportunities on campaign volunteering or political loyalty.

What Happened

The Brooklyn District Attorney launched an investigation into forgeries, favoritism and potential fraud in the borough’s Democratic Party.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THE CITY IN NEW YORK CITY

THE CITY’s community partnerships ensure that our readers, sources and the citizens of New York are engaged in our reporting.

Over the last year, we have continued work on MISSING THEM, an award-winning project to honor those lost to COVID-19. We launched MISSING THEM in May 2020 as a collaborative effort to name every New Yorker who died of COVID and tell a story about them. Over the past two years, we heard from thousands of people. We recorded over 2,600 names and published more than 500 obituaries.

In 2022, THE CITY took MISSING THEM into New York’s neighborhoods to connect with the communities that were hardest hit by the pandemic. We co-hosted a neighborhood conversation and food distribution event in Elmhurst, Queens, with Woodside on the Move, a local nonprofit; and we participated in a community health fair organized by a local church in Harlem. We also held virtual events to allow New Yorkers to share stories of those they’ve lost, and produced a theatrical adaptation of the MISSING THEM project with Working Theater, an off-Broadway theater company.
FAQ NYC, “the New Yorkest podcast”, became part of THE CITY in 2022. Co-hosted by Fordham associate professor of political science Christina Greer plus THE CITY’s own Senior Reporter Katie Honan, and Senior Editor Harry Siegel, the show drew in more than 250,000 listeners in 2022.

Highlights included penetrating interviews with everyone from Alvin Bragg, Manhattan’s ambitious and embattled new district attorney, to Eddie Gibbs, the state Assemblyman who went from prison to the legislature; and from former Gov. Andrew Cuomo to Karen Hinton, one of the women who accused the former governor of sexual wrongdoing.

Episodes also covered topics such as the Adams administration’s high-profile push to force severely mentally ill “street people” to hospitals for evaluations, the ways the city still isn’t prepared for the next devastating storm a decade after Sandy, and how the pandemic transformed our 24-hour city.

FAQ NYC

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

THE CITY works closely with media partners across the country to collaborate on investigations, and to expand our reach and reporting power.

In 2022, for example, THE CITY partnered with the Texas Tribune, the leading nonprofit Texas newsroom, to co-report coverage of Gov. Greg Abbott’s efforts to send buses of asylum-seeking migrants from the U.S.-Mexico border to New York City. This unique collaboration between two local newsrooms allowed us to cover a story that required reporting from both ends of the journey.

Over the last year, we’ve also partnered with:

- ProPublica
- Chalkbeat
- New York Magazine
- Type Investigations
- Columbia Journalism Investigates
- City Limits
- Documented
- The Trace
- New York Focus
- Brooklyn Paper
- The Guardian

FAA NYC

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- Brooklyn Paper
- The Guardian

17
THE CITY’s internship program gives students from a variety of backgrounds the opportunity to gain practical experience in journalism and media. We offer paid internships to students from colleges across the city.

Our program is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in a fast-paced newsroom environment. Interns work closely with our experienced journalists learning the ins and outs of reporting, writing and editing. They also have the opportunity to contribute to our award-winning coverage of New York City.
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Over the last year, we used surveys, interviews and face-to-face engagement with our readers to identify our core audiences. Those audiences consist of New Yorkers who rely on public services and need assistance navigating these systems; philanthropists, leaders and advocates, who look to THE CITY for information to help them do their jobs; and heavy news consumers, who are especially interested in beat and investigative reporting. Knowing more about our audience enables us to produce content that better serves their needs. In order to ensure that we are able to provide our audience with the information it needs, we hired Zainab Shah as our first Director of Engagement and Audience.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Incorporating news tools and apps into THE CITY’s coverage makes our work more thorough, interactive, dynamic and easily understood. Tools and apps also encourage readers to share THE CITY’s work with peers. In 2022, we hired our first-ever chief product officer, Scott Klein, to help us ensure that our reporting is serving the needs of our audience.

One of our interactive apps, Have I Been Redistricted?, helped New Yorkers navigate the 2022 election season after the state’s chaotic redistricting process. By entering their address, voters could see whether their district had changed, and how that impacted their ballot and polling location. The tool was widely cited for its innovative approach, and was even copied by The New York Times. 64,000 unique users accessed the tool.
On November 3, THE CITY hosted its first annual event, THE CITY Fest, at the Edison Ballroom in Times Square. More than 200 New Yorkers joined us to enjoy a performance by Fogo Azul, New York City’s all woman/trans/nonbinary samba reggae drumline; a presentation of quotes about Why I love New York City quotes from the Miranda Family Foundation fellows; and a performance by Chanese Elifé, a songwriter and “one-woman band” hailing from Harlem. Our editor-in-chief Richard Kim and deputy editor Alyssa Katz also held a lightning-round conversation with labor reporter Claudia Irizarry Aponte and news apps developer Sam Rabiyah. The evening closed with the “Hell of a Town” panel discussion on all things New York City with the co-hosts of FAQ NYC podcast — Harry Siegel, Christina Greer and Katie Honan — along with special guest Luis Miranda, Jr.

"CITY Fest is not only about celebrating the type of journalism that holds the powerful to account, but also the kind of reporting that puts the people who make this great city what it is, front and center."

- Nic Dawes, Executive Director of THE CITY
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