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# Policy Summary

Robin Hood, The Century Foundation, and Next100 have developed a bold and ambitious policy agenda for the incoming mayoral administration to create a more fair, equitable, and just New York City. The agenda was developed through a comprehensive, inclusive policy process that combined the knowledge and experiences of New York City’s largest anti-poverty organization and its community partners with the expertise of two leading think tanks with a proven record of effecting policy change at all levels of government.

In developing these recommendations, our teams relied on focus groups and conversations with residents, advocates, nonprofits, and other stakeholders. After conducting a large initial survey of New Yorkers and analyzing data on various hardships they experienced during the pandemic, we identified six key issue areas that present considerable challenges for residents, as well as opportunities for policy impact: child care, education, economy and jobs, housing, policing, and human services.

Throughout the agenda, we propose evidence-based policies that range from immediate, urgent responses to acute challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as longer-term, structural solutions that address existing inequities and will lead to higher-quality child care and education services, higher-quality jobs, and higher-quality services for all New Yorkers. For example:

## **Building a High-Quality Child Care and Early Learning Infrastructure for New York City**

The next mayoral administration must prioritize a child care and early learning system that provides sufficient public funding to equitably guarantee affordable, high-quality child care to families when and where they need it; investments in high-quality, early childhood education have been demonstrated to have amongst the highest returns on investment. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

- 1. Expand New York City’s supply of high-quality, equitable child care and early learning options** by restoring what was lost during the pandemic and building back a better system by investing in high-quality care and care jobs and expanding the supply of diverse child care options for all families.
- 2. Support New York City parents’ and other caregivers’ ability to work, continue their own education, and participate in job training or workforce development activities** by expanding access to child care assistance—slots and vouchers—for all New Yorkers who need it the most.
- 3. Support socioeconomic and racial integration in early childhood classrooms** and expand integrated early learning opportunities for children with disabilities and non-disabled children.

## **Creating High-Quality, Inclusive, and Equitable Educational Experiences for All of New York City’s Students**

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need it; investments in high-quality, early childhood education have been demonstrated to have amongst the highest returns on investment. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

1. **Mitigate pandemic-related learning disruption and the social, emotional, and mental health toll the pandemic has taken on students and families** by providing targeted, personalized, high-impact tutoring; acceleration academies; and tiered mental health and social emotional supports.
2. **Improve the quality and cultural responsiveness of the curricula and instructional materials all students are learning from, and provide educators with aligned, high-quality preparation, professional development and other supports**, including working with educators, families, and students to develop, or identify and adapt these materials, and supporting strong implementation across all schools.
3. **Give more students access to socioeconomically and racially diverse learning environments** by implementing more equitable enrollment policies, funding and supporting community-driven integration planning processes, and opening new high-quality integrated schools.
4. **Create a college and career readiness pipeline from elementary school through college, in district and charter schools**, that provides aligned experiences for career awareness, exploration, planning, preparation, and training, including paid internships and apprenticeships as well as opportunities to earn college credit while still in high school.

### **Promoting a Rapid, Equitable Economic Recovery from COVID-19 for New York City**

The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed an unprecedented jobs crisis in New York City, particularly for low-income New Yorkers and New Yorkers of color. A new administration should put in place a comprehensive strategy that accelerates hiring and invests public resources into getting more low-income New Yorkers and New Yorkers of color on the track to family-sustaining jobs with the dignity that all workers deserve and a pathway to upward professional mobility. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

1. **Revitalize the workforce development system to empower workers displaced by the pandemic to find new, better-paying jobs** by investing substantial public funds in a sustainable workforce development plan that responds to job displacement and the pre-existing and expanded inequities in the wake of the pandemic, working with New York City's training providers, educators, and employers.
2. **Implement a new wage subsidy program that will incentivize hiring and boost small businesses, particularly those owned by women or people of color**, guiding aid through intermediaries across the city that can identify businesses that were left out of previous federal programs, and expanding the City Service Corps to provide employment pathways for young adults.
3. **Invest in shovel-ready infrastructure in ways that will build a more equitable New York City**, including infrastructure investments in caregiving, broadband, transit, schools, health, and climate resilience, to create hundreds of thousands of jobs and shape a more equitable city. To ensure these investments create jobs for the New Yorkers that need them, infrastructure investments should include strong targeted and local hiring requirements, and improved bridge and apprenticeship programs.

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4. **Establish a strong floor of worker protections that prevents exploitation of the most vulnerable workers**, including minimum wage standards for more gig workers, new policies to lift restaurant workers to the \$15 minimum wage, and policies and enforcement to protect all workers from wage theft, retaliation, and arbitrary dismissal.

## **Strengthening Housing Stability and Opportunity for Low-Income Families in New York City**

New York City's decades-long housing crises have only intensified in the wake of the pandemic and subsequent economic fallout. As part of the city's recovery, the next mayor should pursue a comprehensive, ambitious, and integrated housing and homelessness plan that centers racial equity and economic justice for all New Yorkers, with a focus on increasing housing stability and affordability for low-income households with children. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

1. **Reform the One-Shot Deal program to expand takeup and avert evictions**, utilizing an existing New York City program to bridge the gap between outstanding rental arrears from pandemic-related economic distress and prior hardships and New York State's emergency rental assistance program.
2. **Expand and fully implement New York City's Right to Counsel program**, expanding it up to 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) in order to avert evictions moving forward.
3. **Expand the power of CityFHEPS (New York City's Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement) voucher program to promote housing stability** by injecting significant new funding into the program, reforming eligibility requirements, improving bureaucratic processes, and changing renewal requirements to avoid a benefits cliff.
4. **Maximize the impact of housing vouchers on economic mobility and well-being** by creating a housing navigator program to support New Yorkers looking to move, and stamping out source-of-income discrimination.

## **Reimagining a More Equitable Policing and Public Safety System in New York City**

For decades, New York City's policing and public safety structures have kept residents experiencing poverty ensnared in the criminal justice system rather than address poverty's underlying problems. The next mayor should target the structures that leave the many New Yorkers who are experiencing poverty over-policed yet underserved in the areas of education, health care, and economic supports. A new administration can build upon the work of the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative by establishing and funding policies that address the criminalization of poverty and racialized policing in New York City. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

1. **Address the criminalization of poverty through budget justice**, allocating the necessary funds to provide trauma-informed, streamlined services in low-income communities that have been disproportionately affected by over-policing.
2. **End racial disparities in police stops** through routine, independent audits of stop data and corresponding footage and an overall reduction in unnecessary police encounters.

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3. **Remove police from New York City schools** and invest in students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs through a supportive, holistic, and trauma-informed public health approach to school safety and crisis intervention.
  4. **Ensure accountability for racialized and biased policing** through the administration of fair and independent oversight that is centered on addressing the harm caused to the community.
  5. **Address violence through community-centered interventions** that focus on interrupting cycles of violence and supporting those most at risk for involvement with gun violence through a combination of short- and long-term strategies.

### **Strengthening New York City's Nonprofit Human Services Sector**

Millions of New Yorkers rely on nonprofit human services organizations to provide essential, lifesaving, and stabilizing supports every day. During the pandemic, these organizations were New York City's safety net and their workers served on the frontlines in low-income communities that were hit hardest by COVID-19. The next mayor must prioritize ensuring that these organizations, who rely largely on government contracts for funding, have sufficient resources to continue to serve New Yorkers in need. These recommendations track those of the Human Services Recovery Task Force, which was convened by Human Services Council (HSC) and conducted in collaboration with more than sixty-five leading nonprofits. **Specifically, the next mayor should:**

1. **Ensure strong systems are in place for human services to support equitable disaster response and community recovery** by including nonprofits in disaster planning so that the sector can respond to community needs swiftly, with accurate information and sufficient resources, and without threatening their own financial futures.
2. **Pay equitable wages to all contracted nonprofit human services workers**, with appropriate cost-of-living adjustments and a wage floor.
3. **Ensure city government pays in full and on time for essential services for New Yorkers**, with contracts covering indirect expenses, reflecting market rates, and without delayed reimbursement.
4. **Transform the human services procurement system to prioritize meaningful outcomes for New Yorkers**, rather than race-to-the-bottom cost-cutting, starting with a Procurement Reform Commission.