



**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE
FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



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My fellow New Yorkers,

There are so many stories intertwined in the past year. It has been a year of heartbreak, then of hope. Of recovery, and sadly, of regression. Of the promise of renewal, and the challenge of moving forward. The compounding crises that have struck our city's streets and our state government in the last year have raised both the degree of challenges the city government faces, and the imperative of successfully meeting those challenges. I believe that in the last year our office has met those challenges, and continues to work through them on behalf of the people of New York.

Our work can be seen in the communities across the city, in the policies we pushed, in the laws we enacted, and in the people we helped. With the help of our tech and data team, we have been able to serve constituents while working remotely, protecting one another's safety and meeting critical needs. Our community engagement unit has been meeting people where they are, online and on the ground, to provide support and help mobilize around key issues and within neighborhoods. Our policy team has developed and advanced bold approaches for renewal and long recovery of our city in the wake of the pandemic. And our legislative team has helped to enact crucial measures that both addressed the urgent emergencies we face and helped correct entrenched inequities and injustices.

As we explored new ways to serve New York in virtual space, we hosted a fully virtual State of the People conference, laying out a vision to renew New York and inviting New Yorkers to join us in that effort through a series of workshops. This conference was a platform for collaboration to create change, and it laid out the work that must continue between our office, other elected leaders, advocates, and the New York community in order to achieve that change.

We are, thankfully, on the road to recovery from this pandemic. But we cannot be complacent about the present, or forget the loss and the lessons of the last year and half, if we are to renew New York. As this annual report outlines, our office remains committed to this work, and to the people of New York City who are relying on us to advocate for and deliver justice, equity, and progress.

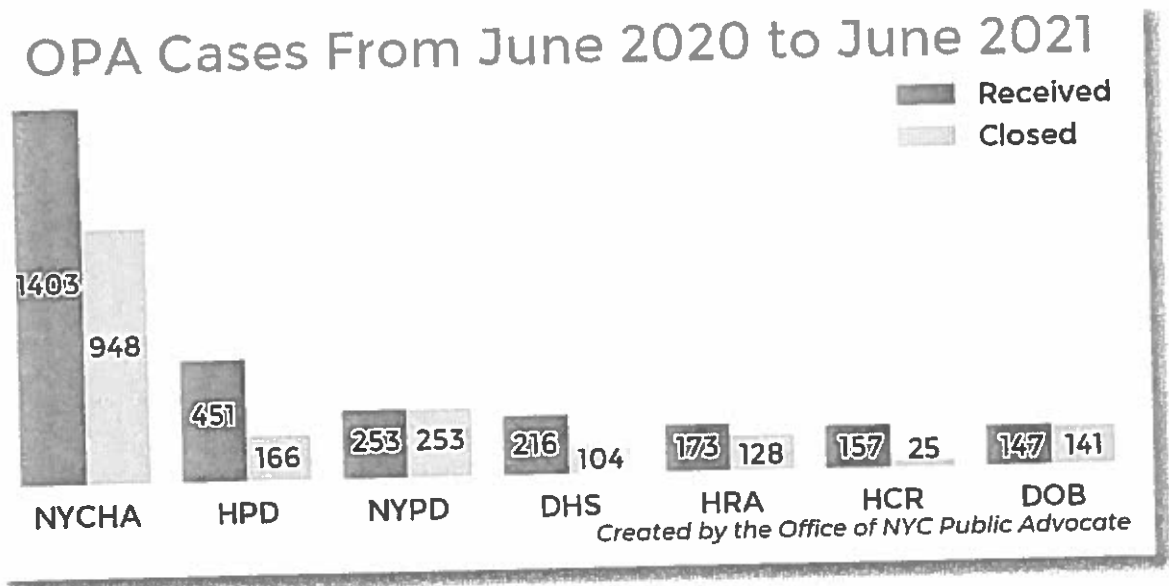
In advocacy,

Jumaane

Constituent Services

Our Office continued to receive and respond to calls and messages from New Yorkers during the pandemic. From housing to transportation, we made sure constituents received the best information we could provide on government services and regulations. Thousands of New Yorkers get assistance each year to ensure the City government is accountable to the people. Constituents can call, email, fax, text, or visit OPA's office for help. The pandemic highlighted the challenges constituents experienced with agencies across all levels, from federal to local. Most of the Office's work focuses on housing-related complaints.

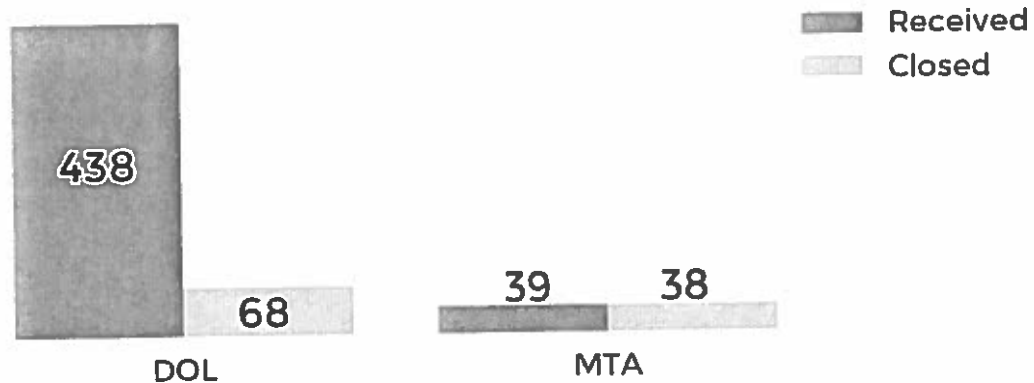
From June 2020 to June 2021, the Office of the Public Advocate received 3,570 cases. Constituent Services closed 2,350, or 65.8 percent, of those cases. For some agencies we saw very few cases, such as the Department of Small Business Services. For others, hundreds of constituents brought cases during the year. The Office of the Public Advocate received the most cases regarding the New York City Housing Authority at 1,403. Below shows cases for the top seven agencies that the Office received and closed:¹



The Office also managed cases involving non-City agencies. There were two agencies that constituents experienced issues with during the pandemic: the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York State Department of Labor. The total constituents cases are visualized below:

¹ The Office managed cases related to 36 agencies in total. However, only cases exceeding 100 are listed above for clarity.

OPA Cases From June 2020 to June 2021



Created by the Office of NYC Public Advocate

The Office of the Public Advocate closed 15 percent, or 68 cases, of the 438 cases it received related to the Department of Labor. It also closed 97.4 percent, or 38 cases, of the 39 cases related to the MTA. In total, the Office received 477 cases among these two agencies. The Office closed 106, or 22.2 percent, of cases from June 2020 to June 2021. Because of the slower closure and response rate from the Department of Labor, a NYS, not municipal agency, the Office of the Public Advocate sent a letter inquiring into the timeliness of response, and the review and appeal process for DOL cases for the period included in this report, in September of 2021.

The Office of the Public Advocate's Constituent Services department tirelessly worked to address issues of New Yorkers and engage agencies to ensure they are accountable to their constituents. We anticipate helping more New Yorkers as the City begins to recover from the worst of the pandemic.

Legislation

This past year the Public Advocate introduced and co-sponsored several pieces of legislation in alignment with the office's priorities and meeting the on-going needs of communities. With the passage of the following bill, the Public Advocate has passed fourteen pieces of legislation since taking office.

Bills Enacted

Local Law 78 of 2021 - Requiring Racial Equity Reports for Land Use Applications

In June, the City Council passed [Int. No. 1752-B](#), the Racial Impact Study bill, which makes significant changes to the City's land use process by providing community members, elected officials, and all key stakeholders with vital information of certain pending land use applications. The bill requires the City to annually produce and maintain a citywide equitable development data tool of statistically reliable data at borough, neighborhood, and community district levels. The data will be used by applicants of certain land use applications, including rezonings, to assess how the proposed project may affect the existing characteristics of the project site, including their demographic conditions, household economic security, neighborhood quality of life and access to opportunity, housing security, affordability and quality, housing production, and risk of displacement. Applicants will also be required to provide the projected number of jobs to be created as a result of the project. While the substance of these racial equity reports will vary by type, all will be required to include a statement of how the proposed project relates to the goals and strategies to affirmatively further fair housing and promote equitable access to opportunities.

When Int. 1572-B goes into effect in June of 2022, communities and all stakeholders will have access to information that better equips them to advocate for land use projects that meet the community's needs. The Office of the Public Advocate thanks Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH) and the Racial Impact Study Coalition for their partnership and work in developing and advancing this legislation.

Bills Introduced

Black Maternal Health / Birth Equity

- [Res. 1717-2021](#) - Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass and President Joseph Biden to sign the Black Maternal Health Mornnibus Act of 2021.
- [Int. 2370-2021](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to education about city standards for respectful care at birth, health care proxy forms and patients' rights.
- [Int. No. 2369-2021](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring employers to hold an onboarding meeting to discuss an employee's reintegration back into the workplace after parental leave.

Criminal Justice

- [Res. 1738-2021](#) - Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1553B/A.6399A, the Clean Slate Act.
- [Int. No. 2392-2021](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to dyslexia screening and treatment in city jails.
- [Int. No. 2391-20201](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring a report on voter registration in city jails.

Education

- [Int. No. 2371-2021](#) - A Local Law in relation to the department of education reporting on school reopening plans to the commissioner of health and mental hygiene.

Health / Mental Health

- [Int. 2222-2021](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to creating a three-digit mental health emergency hotline.

Housing

- [Int. No. 2278-2021](#) - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York and the New York city building code, in relation to the licensing of general contractors.

Immigration

- [Res. No. 1648-2021](#) - Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the New York for All Act (A.2328 / S.3076), which would prohibit and regulate the discovery and disclosure of immigration status by New York state and local government entities.

Policy Reports & White Papers

The Office of the Public Advocate published the following policy reports and white papers:

- [Int. 1572-2019: Why New York City Needs A Racial Disparity Report to Be Part of the Land Rezoning Process \(June 2021\)](#)
- [A Renewed Deal For New York City \(March 2021\)](#)
- [White Paper: On Reimagining School Safety \(March 2021\)](#)

Housing Equity

The Office of the Public Advocate sees housing as an essential human right. Over the past year, the Office has engaged in a number of advocacy efforts in collaboration with community partners to safeguard that right. The Office of the Public Advocate has fought for affordable housing and community preservation. Community leaders, elected officials, and residents have come to us on several occasions for our support to ensure the needs of the community, residents, and small commercial businesses are considered in land use decisions. Land use is one of the most crucial components of the work of the Housing Equity team, which has provided expertise and assistance to groups in SoHo/NoHo, Gowanus, Sunset Park, East Flatbush, and parts of Queens and the Bronx.

August 2020

- During the fiscal year, the Office of the Public Advocate continued to hold meetings with NYCHA Resident Association Leaders on issues of concern for NYCHA residents, including health and COVID safety. We hosted public forums, including NYCHA and Health with community leaders and medical experts on the effects of lead and mold in children.

September 2020

- Housing Equity Education Series: Homeless in New York Part 1: Falling Through the Cracks. OPA Housing Equity team began a series of meetings on homelessness, based on feedback and concern from shelter residents, organizations who serve them, as well as advocates who serve people who are unsheltered and living on the street. We developed a virtual series homelessness to elevate the issue and give voice to New Yorkers who are impacted. The first in the series highlighted who and how New Yorkers become homeless.
- The Public Advocate and OPA staff partnered with Upper West Side Open Hearts, Goddard Riverside and the Legal Aid Society in an effort to support the shelter residents, and push back on community opposition to hotels in the neighborhood.
- OPA joined the Attorney General's office in opposition to the planned 2020 Lien Sale to protect homeowners and small property owners from losing their property, and participated in a press conference and rally to demand cancellation of the sale at City Hall.

October 2020

- The Public Advocate and Housing Equity team joined UWS Open Hearts organizations' rally and press conference at Gracie Mansion to call for the men's right to remain in Lucerne Hotel for protection of residents during the COVID epidemic in a continuation of our work in support of housing insecure New Yorkers.
- Homeless in New York Part II: The Children. With the number of New York City school children in shelter, including 40 percent of public school children in Harlem living in shelter, we continued our educational series on homelessness with presentations and a virtual panel of experts and adults who experienced shelter as children, to elevate the issue and potential solutions.
- Joined a Rally and Press conference at the Lucerne Hotel with Upper West Side Open Hearts, Goddard Riverside and elected officials during the Advocates' declared "October is Homeless

Awareness Month” in a continuation of our support for use of empty hotels as a safe space for homeless single adults rather than returning them to the unsafe congregate shelters.

November 2020

- The OPA continued its support of the opposition to returning single adults to congregate shelters where their health and safety would be at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Public Advocate and OPA staff spoke at a press conference at the Lucerne Hotel to support the right of homeless men to remain in their current housing.
- Homeless in New York Part III: The Business of Homelessness - OPA staff hosted a panel, in a continuation of an educational series to elevate the need to examine the effectiveness of the current system, and begin to reimagine how New York City government can become more efficient, preventative, and fiscally responsible while supporting and caring for people in need of housing.
- Brooklyn Community Board 17 Neighborhood Walkthrough - The Office of the Public Advocate Housing Equity portfolio supports community driven rezonings, and joined members on a neighborhood rezoning walk through to hear their concerns, and support their efforts for a successful, community-driven solution.

December 2020

- Homelessness in New York Part 4: Evicted - In a continuation of the Housing Equity Series on homelessness, and as the NYS eviction moratorium was nearing the time for an extension, the OPA hosted a panel discussion. The presentation and discussion was a .
- 2020 Worst Landlords Watchlist: The Public advocate and OPA staff . published the annual top 100 Worst Landlords Watchlist, which included a virtual press conference with tenants from the Top 10 worst landlords including NYCHA, and owners of mostly affordable housing in the 5 boroughs.

January 2021

- The Public Advocate and OPA staff continued our outreach and meetings with NYCHA CCOP and Resident Association presidents for feedback and elevation of the most urgent needs and long term solutions for current NYCHA residents. Over the course of the year, we held conversations with NYCHA Chair Gregg Russ, and other members of the NYCHA management team.

February 2021

- The Housing Equity team convened the Committee to End Homelessness 2026 which includes leaders from housing and homeless services organizations, legal services, technology and analysts, and impacted New Yorkers. The mission of the Committee to End Homelessness by the Year 2026, “CTEH26,” is to create a realistic, pragmatic vision and budgetary roadmap to end systemic homelessness in New York City by the year 2026, transitioning to permanent housing for all. The objective of this task force will include reimagining the New York City Budget with the aim of transforming the current housing and shelter administrative agencies into a system that provides housing for all.

March 2021

- Mask Up Challenge - OPA staff joined with NYPD, Health & Hospitals, Test & Trace for distributing masks and PPE to NYCHA residents across the five boroughs. This effort included identifying NYCHA tenant leaders who led the effort in their developments to urge compliance and distribute PPE and information to residents. The OPA presented a proclamation to a leader in each borough. This effort coordinated by the OPA resulted in the distribution of PPE to 230 buildings with 13,964 units, reaching 36,104 residents. The Public Advocate and staff attend a "Stand with Shams" press conference with residents at the Lucerne Hotel.

April 2021

- Undesign the Redline Teach-In - OPA staff hosted a presentation and panel discussion on the History of redlining and racism in housing in New York City. The program highlighted systemic support structures perpetuated over time in communities of color including lack of funding for housing, education, schools, and environmental issues.
- NYCHA Council of Presidents and Resident Association Leaders - - The OPA held a press conference with NYCHA CCOP to continue to elevate NYCHA resident issues on health, maintenance, and safety in public housing across the city. Leaders from Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens participated and shared information on the status of their buildings, including solutions for systemic issues and frustration for not being heard.

May 2021

- Housing Equity Education Series: Black and Brown Homeownership - The OPA staff hosted a virtual presentation including filmed testimonies from Black homeowners, and panel discussion focusing on the "theft" of black wealth by using tools of real estate appraisals and redlining to devalue homes and properties of Black homeowners.

June 2021

- Marsha's House Tour - The Public Advocate and Housing Equity team visited the only NYC shelter for young LGBTQ New Yorkers who are between the ages of 18 and 30, after receiving numerous complaints from advocates regarding the conditions of the shelter, including misgendering, poor conditions, lack of information and hostility among some of the staff. OPA sent a letter to DHS regarding residents' complaints. DHS staff, shelter management and the shelter services provider met with the OPA team at the location. DHS and the shelter services provider presented an update, improvements, and programs implemented to address the needs of the shelter residents.
- The Public Advocate's Top Worst Landlords List Mid-Year Update-The Housing Equity team, in conjunction with the Technology, Development, & Data department, issued a mid-year report to update New York City residents about their landlords. The report analyzed the changes in open HPD violations of the top 10 landlords on the list.
- New York City Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing - The Public Advocate gave testimony in support of minimal rent increases for rent stabilized and loft tenants.
- NYCHA's Chelsea Working Group - The OPA, working closely with tenants, elected officials, housing advocates and NYCHA administration to ensure the best outcome for the residents of

the four NYCHA developments in the Chelsea neighborhood, completing recommendations for a proposed PACT conversion. The 1+ year-long planning process resulted in recommendations for a path forward that would protect, and increase NYCHA tenants rights under the City's PACT conversion program.

- NYCHA Resident Association Leadership Support - Crafted an outreach program to Resident Association leaders in partnership with the OPA Borough Advocacy Team to support Resident Associations on all issues including maintenance and potential PACT/RAD conversions to kick-off in the fall of 2021.

Education & Opportunity

This past year the Education & Opportunity portfolio has supported a deep and diverse number of community members, coalitions, and advocates, from adults to young people. We have supported community organizing, actions, public conversation, greater resources, accountability, and benefits that support more equitable, safe, just public schools and universities to bolstering our early childhood community based organizations to strengthening unions and union organizing to small business owners and entrepreneurs including woman and minority owned businesses to improved and safer worker standards and rights to supporting those unemployed through a global pandemic and growing greater pathways to employment and dignified work. As we examine the threats to the working class, working poor, underemployed, and unemployed; the realities of school segregation; disparities in school discipline; and the bridge between education and career, we will continue to seek tangible, proactive, and responsive solutions to ensure all New Yorkers and their families thrive with economic stability, great educational opportunities, and fully realize their strengths to build back better.

June 2020

- We Will Rise - Recovery & Resiliency for Immigrant Entrepreneurs & Small Businesses (June -2020) - The Office of the Public Advocate hosted We Will Rise: Recovery and Resiliency for Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses.
- Youth & Pride - Investing in New York's Youth (June 2020) - The Office of the Public Advocate hosted a discussion with youth highlighting the importance of investing in the Summer Youth Employment Program, Unity Works,, and Invest in New York's Youth.

July 2020

- Youth: Uninterrupted Webinar Series by Exhalt with Public Advocate as Guest - A conversation on how youth can be inspired and engaged effectively to face the challenges of a post-pandemic world.
- Roundtable: Foster Care / Homeless TGNC Youth Issue-Area - hosted by the Office of the Public Advocate

August 2020

- Public Forum on a Just School Reopening - In partnership with Education Council Consortium, Citywide Council on Special Education, IntegrateNYC, MORE Caucus of UFT, Alliance for Quality Education, the Office of the Public Advocate and Public Advocate hosted this important event amplifying needs for a just school reopening for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Summer Advocacy Institute with Teens Take Charge - The Public Advocate joined as a guest to hear the projects developed during the Summer Youth Employment Program hosted by youth organizing group Teens Take Charge.

September 2020

- OPA hosted a School Reopening Forum.

October 2020

- Rikers Debate Project - First Deputy Public Advocate Nick E. Smith joined and participated as a judge for a virtual debate with New York University hosted by the Rikers Debate Project.
- 2020 Virtual Protecting New York Summit - The Public Advocate joined as a panelist to speak about redefining public safety. Community and safety leaders address these issues and talk solutions and systems to keep everyone safe and healthy including: Samar Khurshid, City Government Reporter, Gotham Gazette (moderator), Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair, Public Safety, Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate of NYC, Elizabeth Glazer, Director, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Craig Longley, Executive Director, Catholic Guardian Services, Renee Autumn Ray, Strategy and Innovation Leader, Conduent Transportation Solutions, and Tom Smith, President, Wrap Technologies.

November 2020

- The OPA joined a GOTV Session with Public Advocate, hosted by the Department of Education.
- CUNY Black Male Initiative: Where Do We Go from Here; Looking Back, Moving Forward hosted by CUNY - The Public Advocate joined CUNY for a featured Town Hall Discussion, "Where Do We Go From Here; Looking Back Moving Forward", a post election analysis. It was an opportunity to critically and candidly articulate insights, assessments, concerns, fears, points of view, and perspectives regarding what's about to unfold before us in real time.

January 2021

- Black Lives Matter at NYC Schools Virtual Rally - The Office of the Public Advocate joined the rally to share words.

February 2021

- Public Advocate William's first Office of the Public Advocate Hearing on New York City Public Schools - On Wednesday, February 24, 2021, Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams and the Office of the New York City Public Advocate held its first ever citywide hearing on the State of NYC Public Schools. [Watch the hearing in English or Spanish here.](#)
- Hunter High School & Electeds Press Conference - The Public Advocate joined Hunter High School youth organizers, educators, and parents for their press conference about school admissions and needs to improve equity, integration, and diversity.

March 2021

- Docs for Hope & Healing Screening of Softie - PBS Point of View (POV) & Office of the NYC Public Advocate partnered to host a 2-hour documentary screening of Softie, interactive healing rooms and activities, and follow-up discussion about the film.

April 2021

- OPA #BanTheScan Youth Forum - the NYC Office of the Public Advocate convened youth and young adult leaders for a #BanTheScan Youth Forum to build awareness of digital surveillance and police accountability.

May 2021

- May Day Event with City Workers - The Public Advocate joined city workers looking for greater needs met with their return to in-person work.
- New Yorkers with Disabilities: Disability Rights Within NYC Schools and Beyond - the OPA hosted a citywide event that was the third part of a 5-part New Yorkers with Disability Series. The series is hosted by the Office of the Public Advocate and moderated by First Deputy Public Advocate Nick E Smith.

June 2021

- Healing Centered Schools Task Force Press Conference with Advocates -The Public Advocate joined advocates that announced the launch of the Healing Centered Schools Task Force
- Healing Centered Schools Task Force - In June 2021, the Healing-Centered Schools Task Force launched in response to decades of educational inequity and childhood trauma impacting New York City's students—injustices exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force was co-chaired by the Office of the Public Advocate and the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group, a coalition of community members fighting for educational equity in the Bronx and citywide. The Task Force convened an independent group of students, educators, parents, community groups, mental health providers, elected officials as represented by Councilmember Kevin Riley, and NYC Department of Education leadership to study how the City can implement healing-centered educational practices during the 2021-22 school year. [Click here to learn more about the Task Force.](#)
- Healing Centered Schools Listening Session #1 - The Office of the Public Advocate joined this virtual event occurring simultaneously in all five boroughs.
- Healing Centered Schools Listening Session #2 - The Office of the Public Advocate joined this virtual event occurring simultaneously in all five boroughs.
- Healing Centered Schools Listening Session #3 - The Office of the Public Advocate joined this virtual event occurring simultaneously in all five boroughs.
- Coalition for Educational Justice + Advocates Juneteenth in-person event - The Office of the Public Advocate joined advocates for this celebration of Juneteenth.
- New York Immigration Coalition's Education Collaborative Rally for Immigrant Students and English Language Learners - The Office of the Public Advocate joined advocates for this rally.
- No Cuts to CUNY Rally - The Public Advocate joined 100+ students, public education advocates, and coalition partners to reject the Mayor's \$77 million proposed cuts to the people's university.
- AQE Educational Equity in the Budget Rally - The Office of the Public Advocate joined advocates for this rally.

Infrastructure & Environmental Justice

The Infrastructure and Environmental Justice Unit is responsible for assessing the state of our infrastructure within New York City, as well as the impacts of local policy on the environment in the city and beyond. This year, the unit has worked to improve safety, efficiency, affordability, and sustainability across a broad swath of sectors. These include transportation, utilities, City planning, and extreme weather protection. The unit is committed to transforming the City's infrastructure efforts into a vehicle for job creation, economic mobility, racial justice, and climate change resilience and mitigation.

August 2020

- The Office of the Public Advocate advocated for taking public ownership of New York City's electric grid at press conference in front of the Con Edison Building on August 7, 2020 celebrating the release of the corresponding OPA Policy Report: Municipalizing New York City's Electric Grid.

September 2020

- Helped coordinate a rally on application withdrawal for Industry City rezoning, which would have lacked adequate climate adaptation or mitigation and threatened to exacerbate issues of gentrification and loss of social cohesion on September 14, 2020. The Office of the Public Advocate worked in coalition with community groups including UPROSE and elected officials including Council Member Menchaca.
- The Office of the Public Advocate along with partners, including Senator Schumer, successfully called on the State to award the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal a contract to serve as a mass wind turbine assembly site. This project will create over 1,000 jobs and help facilitate the City and State's transition away from fossil fuels.
- OPA staff spoke to the American Institute of Architects in a keynote address on September 22, 2020, to highlight how planning and design can advance social justice and health equity.
- OPA staff explored more effective bus design options at Better Buses Advisory Group Meeting on September 24, 2020 with a diverse group of stakeholders.
- The office of the Public Advocate called for DOT to implement citywide bike storage infrastructure, including options such as Oonepod storage solutions.
- OPA staff engaged with stakeholders to improve safety, accessibility, and understanding of alternative transportation modes including mo-peds and e-scooters.

October 2020

- Held a joint Press Conference with Senator Schumer on offshore wind project- October 28, 2020.
- The OPA called for a halt to the construction of the North Brooklyn Pipeline, which would further New York City's reliance on fossil fuels and endanger the neighborhoods of more color through which it would run, at a No North Brooklyn Pipeline campaign march on October 24, 2020.

November 2020

- The Public Advocate and staff joined at the Faith Leader Forum on Epidemic of Traffic Fatalities for Safe Streets Training on November 9, 2020.

December 2020

- Continuing work on the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, the Office of Public Advocate held a Press Conference on offshore wind project- December 28, 2020.
- The Public Advocate testified against fare hikes at MTA Hearing on December 9, 2020.

January 2021

- The Public Advocate recommended two members to the NYC Transit Riders Council via the Governor's Office of Appointees, after an extensive search and interview process.
- The Public Advocate and staff joined Assembly Member Frontus at Press Conference in Coney Island on January 11, 2021 to address racial profiling in subway fare evasion and disproportionate enforcement.

February 2021

- The Public Advocate nominated Alhagi Ebou Chamto the Livery / Black Car Drivers Task Force after extensive search and interview process.
- OPA staff advocated for an improved debt forgiveness plan for taxi medallion holders and encouraged the TLC to implement favorable policy changes for taxi drivers to increase competitiveness in the crowded marketplace.

March 2021

- The OPA engaged with experts including NYCOSH to discuss best practices for building safety in the midst of the COVID-19. The conversation included DOE, UFT, teachers, and parents to ensure these practices are being utilized in school buildings including a Murray Bergtraum High School campus walkthrough on March 15, 2021.
- The Public Advocate argued against cuts in State funding to the MTA at a rally with Riders Alliance on March 3, 2021.

April 2021

- Continuing this project, the Public Advocate and staff toured the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal- April 19, 2021.

June 2021

- The Office of the Public Advocate hosted a State of Food Access in Recovery & Sustainable Solutions Roundtable on June 30, 2021 with Hunter College Food Policy Center in effort to generate new, sustainable solutions, partnerships and opportunities for reducing food insecurity and hunger and improving access to nutritious food, which must include increasing halal and kosher food options in food distribution efforts to increase cultural competence and program effectiveness.

- OPA staff facilitated conversations between NYC Registered Architects & Professional Engineers with NYC DOB to explore how to streamline and improve the pro-cert process.
- OPA staff engaged with communities on issues related to wastewater management and flooding, including a series of talks with local agencies to collaborate.
- OPA staff worked with DEP to set up a string of community wastewater cleanup days to inform communities and provide direct support for the frontline communities most impacted by flooding caused by rainfall, with the first events planned to take place in Queens and the Bronx.

Health Equity & Safety

The impacts of COVID-19 shifted the focus of our city to explore the ways in which we prioritize public health. The physical and mental wellness of community members were addressed with culturally specific educational experiences and urgent support with service delivery. Our rapid response to COVID-19 included support with distribution of PPE, food and other essential hygiene supplies. In addition to this direct service, we also provided vital public information concerning the urgency to support vulnerable populations with accessible treatment and testing. During the emergence of vaccine solutions, we worked to create opportunities for communities to make the most well informed choices regarding safety and access to vaccines. In all of these efforts, we've strived to center the most directly impacted individuals in our communities. In this way we've aimed to highlight the state of Black Maternal Health, and examine the ways the current structures within city agencies work to disproportionately harm Black women.

July 2020

- The Public Advocate released recommendations for needed police reform.
- The Public Advocate appointed inaugural Public Advocate appointee to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, Esmeralda Simmons.
- The Public Advocate lifted up critical state legislative reforms including the successful repeal of 50-a, which made police discipline records publicly accessible.
- The Public Advocate and staff hosted a Mindfulness Monday series, which featured conversations with mental health experts and provided viewers with practical skills and connections to resources.
- The OPA staff conducted community engagement sessions through this period in all five boroughs in effort to combat misinformation on statewide bail reform.

August 2020

Black Maternal Health

- OPA staff hosted a Black Mothers Matter virtual town hall, which convened leading issue experts and lifted up policy solutions to the Black maternal health crisis.

September 2020

- The Office of the Public Advocate launched a ten-point Redefining Public Safety campaign, which presents community-oriented solutions to solutions that are outside the needed scope of policing.

October 2020

- The Public Advocate convened a virtual town hall on the Fair Chance Act to increase awareness of job applicants' rights under the law and call for the law to be expanded to include more categories of justice-involved New Yorkers.

November 2020

- The Public Advocate has called for and supported necessary reforms to cash bail systems with a series of policy recommendations, educational experiences and direct advocacy actions supporting directly-impacted individuals, who provided key policy recommendations from their personal experiences.

January 2021

- The Public Advocate supported statewide Less Is More parole reform campaign through organizing efforts including a virtual town hall that highlighted how reforms would create more opportunities for formerly incarcerated and justice involved individuals.

March 2021

- The Public Advocate and staff worked with community leaders to encourage mask-wearing, COVID-19 testing, and vaccination through community initiatives such as Mask Up NYC and consistent information dissemination.

April 2021

- Supported state reforms that would end unnecessary and discriminatory involvement with the justice system including legalizing marijuana and decriminalizing sex work.

May 2021

- The Public Advocate continued to champion a Crisis Management System as a community-oriented solution to gun violence through Safe Summer initiative, virtual town hall on gun violence in May 2021, and on-site events with elected leaders and advocates.

June 2021

- The Office of the Public Advocate and staff conducted Black trans womyn roundtable series, which informed Office legislation, initiatives, and priorities.
- Throughout the pandemic the Public Advocate cautioned against premature re-openings through evidence based proposals, events with leading epidemiologists, and maintaining remote Office operations.
- The Public Advocate called for accountability for the deaths of Layleen Polanco and Nicholas Feliciano in DOC custody.

Civic & Community Empowerment

The Civic and Community Empowerment team advocates on behalf of immigrant communities, and monitors the infrastructure of electoral processes and democratic participation. Over the course of Fiscal Year '21, the Civic and Community Empowerment team focused efforts on addressing issues surrounding immigration, ranked choice voting and elections, the census count, and maternal health. The team held rallies, panels, webinars, marches, round tables and interviews on the issue areas in their portfolio.

June 2020

- We Will Rise - Recovery & Resiliency for Immigrant Entrepreneurs & Small Businesses. This event was a forum for immigrant business owners on financing opportunities and other resources. There was also discussion around the needs of street vendors, restaurants, and calls to action for rent relief.

July 2020

- The OPA hosted a Post-Election Fireside Chat.
- NAACP Youth and College IG Live. The OPA participated in an IG live conversation about the importance of the 2020 Census and the impact the Census has on the Black community with a focus on Generation Z and Millennials. This was a powerful conversation between Public Advocate Williams and NY Youth & College State President Destiny Hamilton. This event was in "talk show" format with a moderator and a few questions that led to a general conversation around the importance of the decennial Census and the hard to count community for 45 minutes on Instagram live.
- Elections Have Consequences: Representation Matters. This was a webinar featuring Rank the Vote, Jumaane D Williams, and the mayor of Minneapolis.

August 2020

- United We Vote NYC Launch Party. This event encompassed a panel with OPA staff and a concert.
- Get Your Knee off our Necks: March on Washington with NAN. Public Advocate Williams gave a speech and marched in Washington, DC.
- Brooklyn Census Caravan. This caravan event was done with Council Member Carlos Menchaca, Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, Senator Zellnoe Myrie and several community-based organizations.
- Bronx Census Drive and Food Distribution. The purpose was to increase Census enrollment in HTC's (Hard to Count Communities). OPA staff also distributed PPE.
- Black Women's Racial Justice Event. The DPA Xamayla Rose spoke at the Protect Black Womxn March at Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza.
- Boys & Girls Club - Voting Discussion. OPA staff partnered on a forum with the Boys and Girls Club of New York about voting and getting out the Youth Vote.

September 2021

- Voter Registration with City Harvest Launch. OPA staff joined as a part of United We Vote Project All City Harvest emergency pantries began voter registration drives and voter information onsite.
- NY Immigration Coalition Census Press Conference. Public Advocate Williams attended a press conference with immigrant advocates for a complete count.
- Empowered Women for the Census Caravan & Food Distribution. OPA led a Census Drive and Caravan with various women elected officials. There were 500 people served.
- Save NYC's Smallest Businesses + Get NYPD OUT of Street Vending. Public Advocate Williams attended a rally with the Street Vendors Project. On Thursday, September 24th, street vendors alongside elected officials, immigrant and workers rights organizations held a rally calling on the New York City Council to save our smallest businesses by passing Intro 1116, lifting the decades-old cap on street vendor permits and creating a civilian Office of Street Vendor Enforcement.
- City Harvest Panel. DPA Xamayla Rose spoke with food advocates about food insecurity and its intersection with voting and civic engagement and the role of advocates within the food justice space to promote civic engagement.
- United We Vote Forum. DPA Xamayla Rose spoke at the United We Vote forum with Dawell Consulting for Madison Square Boys and Girls in partnership with headcount, NYCLU and local performing artists.

October 2020

- Unlock the Vote: Race, Power and Democracy. - OPA staff participated on a panel discussion with impacted persons and policymakers to demand voting rights restoration for citizens on parole.
- A Call for Change: Inspiring the Next Generation of Voters - The Public Advocate joined a panel discussion and call to action for youth voters and community activists leading the Black Lives Matter Movement.
- NAACP State Conference Panel: Civic Engagement looking ahead to 2021. DPA Xamayla Rose spoke at the first virtual NAACP New York State Conference Convention. The topic was Ranked Choice Voting.
- AIANY CLP Power of Design in Voting Spaces. The DPA spoke on a panel hosted by American Institute of Architects NY with leading national experts in design of voting spaces and civic engagement.
- Emergency Absentee Ballot Town Hall. The OPA partnered on this event to inform the public about the solutions available to fix the recent absentee ballot error.
- GOTV Concert. First Deputy Public Advocate Nick E. Smith spoke at the Virtual Get Out The Vote Concert about the importance of voting in this year's election and civic engagement.
- LatinX Round Table - The OPA hosted a round table with a cross section of community leaders to identify the needs, challenges and opportunities to move forward.
- African Leadership Round Table - The OPA convened leadership from various nations and African led community based organizations to identify needs, opportunities and challenges of this diverse constituency

- South Asian Round Table - The OPA convened leadership from various nations and South Asian led community based organizations to identify needs, opportunities and challenges of this diverse constituency.
- Common Cause Election Protection Presser. Public Advocate Williams spoke at a press conference to kick off Common Cause's election protection program, a statewide effort with hundreds of volunteers who will help New Yorkers navigate the voting process and cast their votes without obstruction, confusion, or intimidation.

February 2021

- Queens Ranked Choice Voter Education: OPA staff conducted several voter education events in Queens to prepare residents for the Special elections and new ballots.

March 2021

- Bronx Ranked Choice Voter Education: OPA staff conducted voter education in the Bronx to prepare residents for the Special elections.
- Asian Hate Crime Rapid Response: OPA staff held meetings with several Asian led organizations to provide assistance and ongoing support to address hate crimes. The Public Advocate sent a letter to President Biden's administration, the Governor and the Mayor of New York city with specific requests including funding.

April 2021

- Ranked Choice Voting Voter Outreach: Created a curriculum to more than 700 youth voters and members of youth led organizations on Ranked Choice Voting. OPA staff conducted several virtual and in school trainings.
- Unlock The Vote III: Rights Restoration: The Public Advocate joined a virtual rally with advocates to educate the community on how we build power to restore the vote to people on parole.
- Los Deliveristas Unidos March: The Public Advocate joined the Workers Justice Project (WJP) to march with Los Deliveristas Unidos on Wednesday April 21.
- Black Maternal Health Week: The Office of the Public Advocate released a PSA to bring awareness to the Black Maternal health crisis. The PSA included stories from impacted families and legislative priorities to address anti-blackness in the healthcare system and support birthing parents.
- Hunger Strike for Excluded Workers: The Public Advocate joined excluded workers in the hunger strike and provided humanitarian support. The strikers called for the State legislature to pass a 2.3 billion dollar fund to support workers who do not qualify for federal covid relief.

May 2021

- New Yorkers with Disabilities: Democracy and Voting Accessibility For ALL - OPA staff hosted an informative discussion with disabilities advocates about voting rights in NYS.

June 2021

- Black Maternal Health Round Table: OPA staff led a discussion with leading advocates across New York City to identify policy needs and challenges.

- Westside Community Forum: OPA staff co-hosted a Ranked Choice voter education forum in collaboration with the HighLine.
- Healthy Men & the Future of NYC: The OPA hosted a forum to address vaccine Hesitancy among Black men in NYC, in partnership with Fraternal organizations and the NYC DOHMH.
- NYC Redistricting Round Table: The OPA convened several organizations to discuss redistricting education plans and upcoming Ehtnic Media Roundtable on NYS Redistricting.
- Juneteenth in Prospect Park: A collaboration co-hosted with several youth led and civil rights groups to celebrate Juneteenth and a day of action for Ranked Choice Voting education. Sponsors include Freedom March NYC, Until Freedom Justice League, Headcount and many others. The event was attended by more than one thousand people.
- National Alliance for Domestic Workers March: OPA staff marched with NYC domestic workers to demand fair and to pass intro [Int. 339](#) had.
- Street Vendors Project Rally: OPA staff attended the rally to demand a moratorium on street vendors' fines for one year.
- New York 4 All Rally: OPA staff joined with Councilmembers Carlos Menchaca and Keith Powers, The Bronx Defenders, UnLocal, Immigrant Defense Project, Brooklyn Defender Services, Legal Aid Society, New York Immigration Coalition, and the New York American Civil Liberties Union to call for further limiting the circumstances under which the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and Department of Correction (DOC) will honor an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer or otherwise cooperate with ICE enforcement and mass deportation programs.

Technology, Development & Data

Throughout Fiscal Year '21, the Technology, Development & Data department worked on providing data related to COVID-19 to the public, launched the Office's annual Worst Landlord Watchlist for 2020, developed the #BanTheScan campaign to eliminate the use of facial recognition technology, participated in Open Data Week, and crafted an equitable innovation initiative that launched at the annual State of the People.

- Covid-19 Data and Resource Center | <https://advocate.nyc.gov/covid-19/>
As New York City faced the many struggles resulting from Covid-19, our office created a web-based resource center to centralize the many important groups and tools available to those in need. An additional component of the resource center was a collection of data-based visualizations that allowed New Yorkers to track the impact of Covid-19 across neighborhoods, in comparison to a variety of demographics.
- Landlord Watchlist: 2020 Edition | <https://landlordwatchlist.com/>
The office of the Public Advocate released its annual Landlord Watchlist at the end of 2020 virtually as the city continued to struggle with the pandemic. The 2020 version of the watchlist looked different than it did in years past as we were unable to gather together physically to organize for tenants rights and accountability for the worst acting landlords. For the launch of the 2020 watchlist, a "virtual" rally experience was built and held in place of the usual citywide tour. The stories of those tenants impacted by the landlords/buildings featured on the list, along with updated features allowing for New Yorkers to easily use the watchlist, created as a powerful data driven tool to give voice to all New Yorkers for equitable and maintained housing.
- #BanTheScan | <https://advocate.nyc.gov/ban-the-scan/#0>
The office of the Public Advocate partnered with local and international organizations in a concerted campaign to ban the use of facial recognition technology by the New York City government. As a leader in the #BanTheScan coalition, our office has engaged and equipped a wide range of New Yorkers on the real harm and violations of civil liberties that facial recognition brings, from our launch town hall, to our youth workshops, and engaging community members we continue our push to realize a comprehensive ban on the use of facial recognition technology.
- Open Data Week
The office of the Public Advocate participated in this year's Open Data Week powered by BetaNYC and the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics to support the necessary infrastructure and transparency that open data fosters for New York City. Our specific event during the open data week shed light on how the Public Advocates' office utilizes open data across a variety of projects, notably the Landlord Watchlist.

- State of the People: Peoples' Tech and Innovation |

<https://advocate.nyc.gov/peoples-tech-assemblies/>

As a part of the annual Public Advocate's State of the People, the Technology, Development, and Data team hosted a session on the importance of government technology and data use being centered around the communities they aim to serve. The session engaged New Yorkers and has led to the launch of the offices "Peoples' Tech Assemblies" which aims to centralize the voice in the people and bring those voices to the forefront as New York City strives to recover from the pandemic.



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