

INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2019 DEBATE SPONSOR APPLICATIONS

Thank you for your interest in sponsoring the official NYC Debates in 2019! Our goal is to expand opportunities for New York City voters to watch and participate in their elections and we are excited by your commitment to helping us achieve that goal.

New Yorkers will choose a new Public Advocate in a special election in February 2019. The office will become vacant on January 1 and the date of the special election will be declared no later than January 5. The latest date that the special election can be held is February 26, 2019. In addition, a round of partisan primaries and a general election will be held in the fall to fill the remainder of the four-year term. This application will cover all three of these anticipated elections. City law calls for two debates to be held prior to each anticipated election, provided two or more candidates meet the thresholds required to participate in the debates.

The New York City Campaign Finance Board is pleased that your organization is willing to step forward and help New Yorkers learn about their candidates for this citywide office and welcomes group applications. In previous years, broadcasters and other organizations have worked together to co-sponsor debates. Past sponsors have included television and radio broadcasters, print and online media outlets, civic and issue advocacy organizations, and academic institutions.

Please submit one application listing all proposed partners. The application should include a cover

sheet containing the following information for each organization in your group:

- ◆ Name and Address of the lead organization
- ◆ Website of organization
- ◆ Name, phone, and email for primary contact

Please clearly indicate which question your answer applies to when compiling your responses. Feel free to attach any information not addressed in the application that you believe is relevant to your qualifications as a debate sponsor.

All applications must include a signed verification form signed by a member of the lead organization. Digital and/or scanned signatures will be accepted.

 **Completed applications are due by
Monday, January 7 (5:00 p.m. ET)**

Applications may be submitted via hand-delivery, mail or email. Please address applications to

William Fowler
New York City Campaign Finance Board
100 Church Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Electronic submissions should be emailed to wfowler@nycffb.info. If you have any questions about the Debate Program or the application, you may contact William Fowler at the email address above or at (212) 409-1785.





2019 DEBATE SPONSOR APPLICATION

New Yorkers will choose a new Public Advocate in a nonpartisan special election in February 2019. The office will become vacant on January 1 and the date of the special election will be declared no later than January 5. The latest date the special election can be held is February 26, 2019. In addition, a round of partisan primaries and a general election will be held in the fall to fill the remainder of the four-year term. This application will cover all three of these anticipated elections. City law calls for two debates to be held prior to each anticipated election, provided two or more candidates meet the thresholds required to participate in the debates.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

For group applications, please designate one organization as the lead organization for the group and a primary contact at that organization. This primary contact will be responsible for coordinating the debate application process **for the entire group**. Each co-sponsoring organization in an applicant group should provide responses to the “Organizational Information” questions. These responses from co-sponsors should be submitted as separate documents as part of the application.

1. **Organization Name**
2. **Address**
3. **Website(s)**
4. **Contact:** Name, title, phone number and email address. (For the lead organization in a group application, this person will be responsible for communicating with the CFB on behalf of the entire group.)
5. **Mission:** Describe the mission of your organization.
6. **Affiliations:** The debate law specifies that no organization affiliated with any political party, any holder of public office, or any candidate for public office may sponsor a debate. Please confirm that your organization is eligible to sponsor a CFB-sanctioned debate.

7. **Endorsements:** The debate law specifies that a debate sponsor cannot endorse a candidate in a pending special, primary, or general election until after the debate it sponsors is held. Will your organization be endorsing candidates for New York City offices? If the answer is yes, please explain when your organization plans to make endorsements.
8. **Contributions:** Does your organization make contributions to any candidates for New York City office? If the answer is yes, please explain your organization's policy for making contributions. Be aware that endorsements of or donations to a candidate, or to an organization that supports or opposes candidates involved in the election for Public Advocate, may disqualify your organization from eligibility to sponsor a debate.
9. **Experience:** Describe your experience in producing candidate debates. Include information regarding the election date, office sought, the number of participants, broadcast and media coverage, co-sponsors, and publicity. If your organization does not have any experience sponsoring debates, you may submit information regarding any experience you believe is relevant to your organization's ability to sponsor a debate.

SCHEDULE & LOCATION

10. **Schedule:** City law calls for two debates to be held prior to each anticipated election, provided two or more candidates meet the thresholds required to participate in the debates.

Please propose a debate schedule (two debates for each election) after consulting the following chart. We have tried to note potential holidays and other cultural events that should be taken into account when proposing your debate schedule. Describe how your organization would accommodate a scheduling change in the date or time of the debate(s), if such a change becomes necessary.

SPECIAL ELECTION DATE: **February 26, 2019** (anticipated)

Dates to consider: Lunar New Year – Tuesday, February 5
 President's Day – Monday, February 18

PRIMARY ELECTION: **September 10, 2019**

Dates to consider: Eid al-Adha – Sunday, August 11
 Labor Day – Monday, September 2

NOTE: POTENTIAL RUN-OFF ELECTION: If no candidate receives forty percent of the vote in a primary election, a run-off election is held to determine the nominee three weeks after the primary. If a run-off election is conducted one additional debate will be held between those two candidates and your group would need to broadcast the run-off debate between 9/17 and 9/29.

GENERAL ELECTION: **November 5, 2019**

Dates to consider: Yom Kippur – Wednesday, October 9
 Columbus Day – Monday, October 14
 Diwali – Sunday, October 27
 Hurricane Sandy Anniversary – Tuesday, October 29
 NYC Marathon – Sunday, November 3

11. **Location:** For each debate you wish to sponsor, supply a location. Have debates been held at this location before? If so, state the year and nature of the debates. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that debates may be broadcast from proposed locations.

DEBATE FORMAT

Format and ground rules: The law requires that each debate will be at least one hour in duration. Describe in detail the debate format and ground rules your organization proposes for each debate, addressing the issues outlined below and any other considerations. The CFB may select a diversity of debate formats, and may ask applicants to modify their proposals.

- ◆ Determination of speaking order
 - ◆ Speaking and response times
 - ◆ Opening and/or closing statements
 - ◆ Would questions be posed by moderators, panelists and/or members of the public?
 - ◆ Any restrictions for candidates, such as prohibiting props or notes
12. **Moderators/Panelists:** Provide the name and qualifications of the moderator(s) and/or panelist(s) who would conduct each debate, and their occupation(s). If you cannot provide the name(s) at this time, please describe the criteria and procedures your organization would use for selecting the moderator(s) and/or panelist(s).
13. **Diversity of Questions:** How will you ensure that the questions your moderators and panelists pose to the candidates reflect the interests and diversity of New York City's electorate?

PUBLIC ACCESS

14. **Audience:** Would an audience be invited to attend each debate? If so, explain how many audience members would be invited and the process your organization would use for selecting audience members, including a process for ticket distribution (if any).
15. A pillar of CFB's mission is to enhance the role of New Yorkers in elections. Please describe in the following sections steps your organization(s) would take to make the debates accessible to all New Yorkers.
- a) **Broadcast Access:** For official CFB Debates, New York City law requires the debate be made available, at no cost, to the city-owned or operated television channel serving the largest public audience for simultaneous broadcast (NYC TV).
- In addition, describe your plans for broadcast or other media coverage of each debate, including streaming platforms and broadcast via social media. The Board encourages potential sponsors to consider ways additional broadcast tools may help the debates reach the widest possible audience of New Yorkers.
- b) **Debate Promotion:** Describe in detail your advertising and publicity plans to let New Yorkers know about your debates.

- c) **Engagement:** Describe in detail your plans to engage the audience before, during and after the debate. Social media is now a crucial piece of the debate-watching experience for many people. For a growing number of New Yorkers, the Internet is now their primary means for watching live events. How do you plan to reach and engage New Yorkers, both online and in-person?
- d) **Language:** The CFB performs outreach to the diverse communities of New York City. Past CFB debates were broadcast simultaneously in Spanish and included sign-language interpretation. The debates have been rebroadcast in Korean, Russian, Punjabi, Hindi, Greek, Mandarin, Cantonese, and other languages.

Please describe your plans to reach viewers with limited English proficiency. Will you provide a simultaneous Spanish broadcast? Sign language interpretation? How will you facilitate rebroadcast in other languages of the debates?

- 16. **Fundraising:** Describe any fundraising plans you would implement, if necessary, to underwrite the cost of the debate(s). In your discussion, list potential sources for financial support from outside your organization, including the amount(s) you would anticipate raising, and any in-kind donations you could expect to receive.

Be aware that donations from any political party organization, political action committee, independent spender, holder of public office, or candidate for public office may disqualify your organization from eligibility to sponsor a debate.

- 17. **Evaluating the Debates:** The Campaign Finance Board is required to evaluate the Debate Program following each election cycle. Describe how you would assist the Board in evaluating the Debates, such as providing viewership statistics or other indications of voter engagement.

DEBATE PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

The following sections describe the nonpartisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria candidates must satisfy to be eligible to participate in the debates. City law requires that all candidates who participate in the public matching funds program and satisfy these criteria to be invited by the sponsors and to participate in the debate. No debate will be held if two or more candidates do not meet these thresholds. The law permits sponsors, at their discretion, to invite non-participating candidates who have satisfied these criteria to participate in the debate. If a non-participating candidate declines an invitation, the debate shall go on as scheduled provided two or more participating candidates have qualified.

- 18. **First debate criteria:** For the first special, primary, and general election debates, the law provides that:

- a) Any participating candidate who meets the criteria in (b), and any additional criteria as agreed to by the CFB and the debate Sponsor, must participate in the debates¹
- b) Candidate must have raised and spent an amount equal to 2.5% of the spending limit for the office sought by the last filing date prior to the debate:

- ◆ Public Advocate: \$113,875

¹ All references to participating candidates (i.e., candidates who join the Campaign Finance Program) include “limited participating” candidates (i.e., self-funded candidates who agree to join the Program and limit their spending).

- c) Any non-participating candidate who meets the criteria in (b), and any additional criteria as agreed to by the CFB and the debate Sponsor, may be invited to participate by the debate sponsor.

In addition, the law provides that nonpartisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria may be used to determine eligibility. Please describe what, if any, additional criteria you would propose to determine the eligibility of candidates to participate in the first-round debates for a special, primary, and general election?

19. **Second debate/“leading contender” criteria:** The law provides that the second primary and second general election debates will include only those candidates that the sponsor has determined to be the “leading contenders” for the office on the basis of nonpartisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria.

If your organization is applying to sponsor a leading contender special, primary, or general election debate, explain in detail the criteria your organization will propose for selecting “leading contenders” (e.g., funds raised, number of contributors, polls, etc.). If one of the criteria would require candidates to reach a financial or polling threshold, describe in detail what the threshold would be, and how and when you would determine whether the candidates had met that threshold. When proposing criteria, consider the possibility that reliable public polling may not be readily available for all candidates who appear on the ballot.

VERIFICATION

I submit this form on behalf of the Applicant Organization(s) in application to sponsor or co-sponsor one or more debates for the 2019 elections for New York City Public Advocate.

I verify that _____ [“Applicant Organization(s)”] _____ is/are not affiliated with any political party or with any holder of or candidate for public office and has not endorsed any candidate in a pending special, primary, or general election for the office of Public Advocate in New York City.

I further verify that the Applicant Organization(s) will not endorse a candidate for a New York City citywide office in the 2019 elections prior to the broadcast of all debates sponsored or co-sponsored by the Applicant Organization in the pending primary or general elections.

I further verify that, in the event the Applicant Organization(s) is/are selected to sponsor or co-sponsor one or more debates for the 2019 elections, the staging, promotion, coverage of, and all other aspects of implementing the debate(s), will be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws (including the Americans with Disabilities Act).

I further verify that, in the event the Applicant Organization(s) is/are selected to sponsor or co-sponsor one or more debates for the 2019 elections, the cost of staging, promotion, coverage of, and all other aspects of implementing the debate(s), will be solely the responsibility of the sponsor(s).

I understand that the City of New York shall indemnify each sponsor for any liability of such sponsor arising out of the acts or omissions of the City of New York in connection with the selection of candidates for participation in any of these debates based on the financial eligibility requirements as set forth in section 3-709.5(5)(b)(i) of the NYC Administrative Act.

I further verify that the Applicant Organization(s) will indemnify and hold harmless the City of New York for any liability arising from the acts or omissions of the Applicant Organization in the staging, promotion, coverage of, and all other aspects of implementing these debates.

I further verify that I, on behalf of the Applicant Organization(s), have read, understand, and will comply with the provisions for determining who may participate in the special, primary, and general election debates, including those for determining “leading contenders” **and the provision requiring the debate be made available at no cost to NYCTV for simultaneous broadcast**, as set forth in the NYC Administrative Code §3-709.5.

I understand that the Campaign Finance Board may request additional information from the Applicant Organization(s) before it evaluates this application. I further understand that this application is a public record that, by law, may be made available for inspection and comment.

Lead sponsor signature:

Organization:

Date:

Name:

Title:
