



The voter engagement initiative of
the NYC Campaign Finance Board

2025 NYC Debates Media Partner Sponsor Application

Instructions

Please submit the following materials by 6 p.m. ET on Thursday, January 9, 2025, by email to:

Sarah Schreib
Events Coordinator
sschreib@nyccfb.info

Part I

Proposal Name (Lead Organization): WABC-TV

List of Co-Sponsors: TBD

Organizational Information & Verification:

Part II — Debate Program Proposal

For group applications, please submit one Debate Program Proposal that outlines all elements and initiatives proposed by all organizations in the group.

Each co-sponsoring organization in a group application should complete and sign "Part I — Organizational Information and Verification" for their own organization. These should be collected by the primary sponsor and submitted to the CFB in the application.

2025NYCDebates Media Partner Sponsor Application

Part I — Organization Information/Verification

Proposal Name (Lead Organization):

List Co-Sponsors:

Please list the following for your organization:

1. **Organization Name** - WABC-TV
2. **Address** 7 Hudson Square, New York, NY
3. **Website(s)** ABC7NY.com
4. **Contact:** Name, title, phone number and email address.



5. **Mission:** Describe the mission of your organization.

WABC-TV, Channel 7 is the ABC owned television station in New York City, serving 7.5 million households with nearly 3 million in the five boroughs. WABC is the most watched local television station in New York City and in the entire United States. Channel 7 is also the local news leader airing more than 48 hours of live, local news and weather each week. Eyewitness News attracts more viewers than any other local station. When news breaks, when weather turns, and when emergency situations arise, more New Yorkers turn to Channel 7 for the information. WABC-TV has been the market leader when it comes to diverse, topical public affairs and political programs highlighted by “Up Close”, “Here and Now” and “Tiempo”.

6. **Affiliations:** WABC-TV is not affiliated with political party, any holder of public office, or candidate for public office. WABC-TV is eligible to sponsor a CFB sanctioned debate.

7. **Endorsements:** WABC-TV will not endorse any candidate for New York City Offices in the 2025 elections.
8. **Contributions:** WABC-TV does not make contributions to any candidates, regardless of municipality or office.
9. **Budget and Resources:** WABC-TV and its partners will cover all the cost involved in producing the debates. We are not involved in any fundraising. The mayoral debates will run 60-minutes, commercial free.

Verification

I submit this form on behalf of the Applicant Organization in application to sponsor or co-sponsor one or more debates for the 2025 citywide elections for New York City.

I verify that WABC-TV is 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 2025 primary or general election for citywide office in New York City.

I further verify that the Applicant Organization will not endorse a candidate for a New York City citywide office in the 2025 elections prior to the broadcast of all debates sponsored or co-sponsored by the Applicant Organization in the pending primary or general elections.

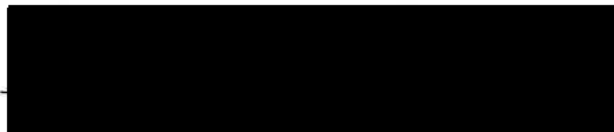
I further verify that, in the event the Applicant Organization is selected to sponsor or co-sponsor one or more debates for the 2025 elections, the staging, promotion, coverage of, and all other aspects of implementing the debate(s), will be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws (including the Americans with Disabilities Act).

I 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. See N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 3-709.5(5)(b)(i). I further verify that the Applicant Organization 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, have read, understand, and will comply with the provisions for determining who may participate in the primary and general election debates, including those for determining "leading contenders." See N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 3-709.5.

I understand that the Campaign Finance Board may request additional information from the Applicant Organization 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.

Sponsor signature _____



Organization W A B C - T V _____

Name [REDACTED] _____

Date 1/9/25 _____

Title - Executive Producer Special Projects _____

Part II — Debate Program Proposal

Debate Personnel, Format, & Venue

10. Moderators/Panelists:

WABC-TV Moderator – Bill Ritter

We are speaking with a Spanish-language TV station to possibly partner with

11. Format and Ground Rules: Describe the format and ground rules you would follow, addressing these topics and any others you feel pertinent:

- Determination of speaking order: Speaking order for the candidates will be determined by random drawing by the sponsors days before the debate.
- Speaking and response times: Candidates have 1 minute to respond to questions. They will have 30 seconds to respond to follow up questions posed by a panelist or moderator.
- Opening and/or closing statements: There will be no opening statement. Candidates will have 1 minute each for closing statement.
- Any restrictions for candidates, such as props or notes: No notes or props will be permitted on set. Each candidate will be provided with a blank pad and pens on set.

Note: The CFB may select a diversity of debate formats and may ask applicants to modify their proposals based on circumstances.

12. Venue Considerations: This will be broadcast from our new state of art facility in lower Manhattan. We are in the process of moving, but have options for different studios including a possible option for guests.

13. **Prior Debate Experience:** WABC-TV has sponsored Campaign Finance Board administered primary and general election debates in 1997, 2001, and 2021. In 2005, WABC-TV produced the Democratic primary and General election debates for mayor. In prior years, WABC-TV and our partners have sponsored a number of debates for statewide races, including the Senate campaigns involving Hillary Clinton, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Charles Schumer. The debates were all aired live or taped in WABC-TV studio. The live debates were also simulcast in Spanish on Univision WXTV-41. Thousands more watched on abc7ny and in Spanish on Univision. The complete debates also aired in Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean on respective foreign language stations. In 2009, nearly 460,000 viewers watched our live evening broadcast of the New York City Mayoral debate. In 2013, WABC-TV's 7pm August 13th Democratic primary debate drew more than 449 thousand viewers. WABC-TV and the League of Women Voters of New York City have sponsored debates for city and congressional offices with such outlets as Public Access TV, Channel 31 and radio debates on WABC, WCBS, WNYC and WLIB, as well as at school and community sites, frequently co-sponsored with other civic organizations. The League uses the LWVUS publication "Face to Face" as a guide to staging debates. The CFB purchased this guide to assist potential debate sponsors.

Public Engagement & Access

Please Note: The City Charter mandates that the CFB empowers communities who are underrepresented at the polls. The CFB is guided by this mission to engage these priority communities (young voters under 30; immigrant voters including limited English proficiency voters and new Americans; voters with disabilities; voters impacted by the criminal system) in the election process and make our democracy more equitable and transparent. Therefore, it is of high priority for the CFB to have the debates streamed on a variety of platforms, making the discussion between candidates accessible to the greatest number of NYC voters:

1. The City Charter requires that the debate be made available for simultaneous broadcast on NYC-TV.
 2. The CFB requires sponsors to live stream the debates, without a paywall, on their YouTube channel as well as the CFB YouTube channel, and Facebook/Instagram, along with their cable broadcast.
 3. Preference will be given to sponsors who broadcast all debates, both primary and general, on one channel.
 4. While the City mandates the debates be broadcast for 60 minutes, preference will be given to sponsors who broadcast each debate in full for 90 minutes continuously on one channel to allow for greater access for the public.
14. **Media Outlets:** Please list the outlet(s) New Yorkers would use to access each debate per platform. For each outlet, please provide audience metrics including demographic information including age, gender, ethnic background, and location. For broadcast, provide audience metrics for proposed debate timeslots.

- ◆ TV:

- Jeopardy/Wheel Audience M-F/7-8p

- ◆ 58% Female
- ◆ 97% A18+
- ◆ 89% A35+
- ◆ 12% Black
- ◆ 7% Asian
- ◆ 7% Hispanic

- Sun/11a Audience profile

- ◆ 59% Female
- ◆ 98% A18+
- ◆ 93% A35+
- ◆ 22% Black
- ◆ 4% Asian

- ◆ 10% Hispanic

- This is for the 5 Boroughs only:

- M-F/7-8p Audience profile

- ◆ Makes up 31% of DMA total viewers
- ◆ 61% Female
- ◆ 99% A18+
- ◆ 92% A35+
- ◆ 24% Black
- ◆ 11% Asian
- ◆ 11% Hispanic

- Sun/11a profile

- ◆ Makes up 40% of DMA total viewers
- ◆ 68% Female
- ◆ 100% A18+
- ◆ 96% A35+
- ◆ 23% Black
- ◆ 5% Asian
- ◆ 13% Hispanic

- ◆ Online:

2024 Key Metrics

- 66.6M unique visitors
- 993M minutes watched
- 3.1M 24/7 viewers
- 457,000 CTV visitors
- 518,000 mobile app visitors

According to Comscore, our digital audience is slightly more female than male (83.M women to 7M men in November). The highest core age group is 19-49 (10M)

75% of our mobile app audience is located in NYC with Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx accounting for the bulk of visitors.

- ◆ Social Media:

- YouTube 2.5M
- Facebook 2.1M
- X 775,000
- TikTok 700,000
- Instagram 625,000

◆ Confirm YouTube Streaming Capability: Confirmed

Underrepresented Voters: WABC has an extensive relationship with the League of Women Voters. The station produces content on the importance of voting along with coverage of issues at the ballot box, especially those that impact underrepresented communities. Additionally, station employees have volunteered at LWV events in underserved areas to encourage community members to vote.

15. Marketing & Audience Development: The Mayoral Debates will be broadcast live on Channel 7. WABC will launch a robust marketing campaign ahead of debates, which will include a slate of custom tune-in promos with a minimum one-week flight, newscast mentions in the days leading up to the debate, tune-in posts on all social media platforms, and push alerts. With the highest average household rating in the NY market, WABC's marketing campaign promoting the Mayoral Debates will be seen by far more voters than any other station's marketing campaign. (WABC holds a 27% ratings advantage over its next nearest competitor.)

- a. **Developing Questions:** WABC-TV produces a number of public service announcements, including one for the League of Women Voters. Our promotional department will work with CFB to produce a video component of the Voter Guide using our production resources and our on-air talents.

16. Language Access: Digital copies of complete debates will be available to all media outlets at their request. In the past, WABC-TV distributed assets to Chinese televisions New Tang Dynasty TV, Sino-TV, Sinovision, The Korean Channel (TKC), and Indian Channel ITV. The debates were translated by these stations in their own language. WABC-TV has also provided an ASL interpreter for previous debates and would do so again.

17. Ranked Choice Voting: WABC-TV produces a number of public service announcements, including one for the League of Women Voters. Our promotional department will work with CFB to produce a video component of the Voter Guide using our production resources and our on-air talents.

18. The Campaign Finance Program and the Voter Guide: The Debates Program is part of NYC's investment in campaigns that are funded by small contributions and public financing. How will you help inform New Yorkers about the matching funds program and other CFB resources like the Voter Guide?

Schedule

19. Schedule: WABC-TV, is prepared to sponsor primary and general election debates for all citywide races. Our preference is second "leading contender" debates for Mayoral and first debate for all other races.

Primary JUNE 24, 2025

- Democratic Mayoral (Leading Contenders) – LIVE JUNE 10, 2025 (live for 1 hour)
- Republican Mayoral (Leading Contenders) – ON TAPE AIRS JUNE 15, 2025 (pre-recorded)
- Democratic Comptroller (Leading Contenders) – ON TAPE AIRS JUNE 8, 2025 (pre-recorded)
- Democratic Public Advocate (Leading Contenders) – ON TAPE AIRS JUNE 1, 2025 (pre-recorded)

General NOVEMBER 4, 2025

- Mayoral (Leading Contenders) – LIVE OCTOBER 21, 2025 (live for 1 hour)

Comptroller (Leading Contenders) – ON TAPE AIRS OCTOBER 26, 2025 (pre-recorded, airs for 30 minutes)

- Public Advocate (Leading Contenders) – ON TAPE AIRS OCTOBER 19, 2025 (pre-recorded, airs for 30 minutes)

Please account for the following potential debates in your proposal (bolded events are expected to be held based on current candidate campaign finance reporting). Candidate debate eligibility depends on meeting specific campaign finance thresholds (see Debate Program background information on page 12). For the primary elections, debates may potentially be held among candidates for the nomination of each of the parties on the New York City ballot. Based on experience, it is unlikely that all debates listed below will be held because there will not be two or more candidates that satisfy the eligibility requirements. For reference, in 2013 there were **11 official CFB debates**; there were **6 official CFB debates** in 2017.

Primary Election – June 24, 2025:

- ◆ **Democratic Mayoral (1st)**
- ◆ **Democratic Mayoral (Leading Contenders)**
- ◆ Republican Mayoral (1st)
- ◆ Republican Mayoral (Leading Contenders)
- ◆ **Democratic Comptroller (1st)**
- ◆ **Democratic Comptroller (Leading Contenders)**
- ◆ Democratic Public Advocate (1st)
- ◆ Democratic Public Advocate (Leading Contenders)

General Election – November 4, 2025:

- ◆ **Mayoral (1st)**
- ◆ **Mayoral (Leading Contenders)**
- ◆ Comptroller (1st)
- ◆ Comptroller (Leading Contenders)
- ◆ Public Advocate (1st)
- ◆ Public Advocate (Leading Contender)

20. **Scheduling Changes** WABC-TV would work with NYCCF board to coordinate a new date should scheduling or programming changes come up.

Proposed Debate Schedule:

Date	Event
Monday 3/17/25	Disclosure Statement Filing Date
Week of 5/19/25	Democratic Comptroller (1st)
Week of 5/19/25	Democratic Public Advocate (1st)
Week of 5/19/25	Democratic Mayoral (1st)
Week of 5/19/25	Republican Mayoral (1st)
Friday 5/23/25	Disclosure Statement Filing Date
Monday 5/26/25	Memorial Day
Week of 5/26/25	Democratic Comptroller (Leading Contenders)
Week of 5/26/25	Public Advocate (Leading Contender)
Friday 6/6/2025	Eid al-Adha
Week of 6/9/25	Democratic Mayoral (Leading Contenders)
Week of 6/9/25	Republican Mayoral (Leading Contenders)
Saturday 6/14/25–Sunday 6/22/25	Primary Election Early Voting
Tuesday 6/24/25	Primary Election Day
Friday 10/3/25	Disclosure Statement Filing Date
Monday 10/13/25	Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
Week of 10/13/25	Comptroller (1st)
Week of 10/13/25	Public Advocate (1st)
Week of 10/13/25	Mayoral (1st)
Week of 10/13/25	Comptroller (Leading Contenders)
Week of 10/20/25	Public Advocate (Leading Contenders)
Week of 10/20/25	Mayoral (Leading Contenders)
Friday 10/24/25	Disclosure Statement Filing Date
Saturday 10/25/25–Sunday 11/2/25	General Election Early Voting
Tuesday 11/4/25	General Election Day

Candidate Criteria & Evaluation

21. **Candidate Eligibility Criteria** WABC would adhere to all campaign thresholds for candidates as outlined by the Campaign Finance Board.
24. **Post-Election Review:** WABC would provide the board with a full report with our analytics involving the debate including viewership, engagement on digital and social and all video views. WABC-TV's strength is rated as such daily and specific as to programming.
 - ◆ Broadcast viewership statistics (from Nielsen or other service)
 - ◆ Website and social media traffic
 - ◆ Video views
 - ◆ Attendance at in-person events

How would you propose measuring the success of the Debates you sponsor?

Will you provide these and other metrics to the CFB at the conclusion of the 2025 elections?

New York City Debate Program Background Information

Debate Guidelines

First debate criteria: For the first primary and general election debates, the law provides that a debate participant:

- ◆ Must be on the ballot.
- ◆ Must be a participating candidate. Note: 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).
- ◆ 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. For candidates for Mayor, this is \$198,300, and for candidates for Public Advocate and Comptroller, this is \$123,975. See Limits & Thresholds.

In addition, the law provides that non-partisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria may be used to determine eligibility.

Second debate/“leading contender” criteria: The law provides that the second primary and second general election debates will include only those candidates who the sponsor has determined are the “leading contenders” for the office on the basis of non-partisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria (these criteria will be set forth in an agreement between the sponsor and the Campaign Finance Board). For example, in 2021, the criteria for the “leading contenders” Democratic Primary debate included, among others, that candidates raised and spent \$2,250,000 or raised at least \$250,000 in matchable contributions, including at least 1,000 matchable contributions of \$10 or more.

A note on non-participating candidates: The law also permits sponsors to invite candidates not participating in the matching funds program to take part in any of these debates, as long as they have satisfied all the non-partisan, objective, and non-discriminatory criteria applicable to participating candidates, as discussed above. If a non-participating candidate declines an invitation, the debate shall go on as scheduled.

A note on CFB sponsorship: if only one participating candidate qualifies for any debate, the CFB will no longer sponsor the debate.

Application Addendum

In response to several questions from potential applicants, CFB staff has reviewed the policy on whether debates may be split into two parts if many candidates are eligible to participate.

Considering the city's new ranked choice voting system, we have determined that the law permits splitting debates into two parts under the following conditions:

- ◆ A debate may be divided into two parts if six or more candidates will participate. This includes:
 - participating candidates who are required to attend, and
 - non-participating candidates who have met the thresholds and accepted an invitation.
- ◆ If debates are split,
 - Each part must be at least one-hour,
 - Each part must be of equal length,
 - Eligible candidates must be assigned randomly to debate parts,
 - The assignment process must be broadcast and/or streamed to ensure transparency,
 - The format, moderators, and topics covered would be the same for each part.

Given these conditions, we ask that all prospective sponsors address the following questions in their applications.

A1. How many candidates would prompt you to split a debate in two (six or more)? Last election we accommodated no more than 12. As mentioned earlier – we are moving studios so will need to provide updates in the coming months.

A2. How much broadcast time would you provide for each half (minimum of one hour each)? **Would match the first half in terms of time**

A3. Please provide a schedule of when you would broadcast the second part of any debate that is split. Will work with NYCFB to coordinate with programming.

A4. What process would you use to randomly assign the eligible candidates? **Draw of names**

A5. How would you ensure candidates receive an equitable amount of airtime across each debate part? **Rules of the debate would prevail which would ensure fairness in time.**