

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

1. **Proposal Name (Lead Organization):** This will be the lead organization for any group proposals. This organization will be the primary contact with the Campaign Finance Board (the “CFB”) throughout the Debates Program and will be responsible for coordinating the memorandum of understanding for the group and ensuring that all elements of the proposal are completed.
2. **List of Co-Sponsors:** Please list all media organizations or individuals joining this application. Please note: Applications will be evaluated based on the qualifications of the media organizations; community-based organizations wishing to support the Debates Program should direct all inquiries to Gauree Patel at partnerships@nyccfb.info.
3. **Organizational Information & Verification:**
 - a. Each co-sponsoring media organization in an applicant group must provide a separate document with responses to the “Organizational Information” section and the verification. These should be submitted as attachments to the group’s application.
 - b. The primary contact designated by the lead organization will be the primary contact with the CFB **for the entire group** throughout the debates.

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.


2025 NYC Debates Media Partner Sponsor Application

Part I – Organization Information/Verification

Proposal Name (Lead Organization): NBC New York/WNBC

List Co-Sponsors: Telemundo 47/WNJU, POLITICO, Citizens Budget Commission,
New York Urban League, Hispanic Federation

Please list the following for your organization:

4. **Organization Name** NBC New York (WNBC-TV)
5. **Address** 30 Rockefeller Plaza 7th Floor, New York, NY 10112
6. **Website(s)** nbcnewyork.com
7. 
8. **Mission: Describe the mission of your organization.**

About NBC 4 New York / WNBC

NBC 4 New York / WNBC is the flagship station of the NBCUniversal Local division of NBCUniversal, serving the New York Tri-State area for more than 80 years and featuring Alfred I. duPont-Columbia, Edward R. Murrow, and Emmy® Award-winning journalists who are among the most accomplished in their field. The station includes the NBC 4 *I-Team*, New York’s largest televised investigative reporting unit, *Better Get Baquero* which

has recovered more than \$15 million for Tri-State consumers and *Storm Team 4*, certified by *WeatheRate* for delivering the Tri-State's most accurate local weather forecast using cutting-edge technology such as Storm Tracker 4, a high-frequency S-Band dual polarization fixed Doppler weather radar. NBC 4 New York's digital platforms are also among the most read and watched in the New York market and include the NBC 4 App, dedicated Peacock, Roku, Apple TV, Pluto, and Amazon FireTV channels along with unique, out-of-home viewing in local taxis.

About Telemundo 47 New York / WNJU

Telemundo 47 / WNJU is NBCUniversal Local's Telemundo station with nearly 60 years of service to the Spanish-speaking communities of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Featuring Emmy® Award-winning journalists and offering more than 27 hours of locally produced programming each week, the station includes the New York market's only team of bilingual meteorologists, *La Autoridad en El Tiempo* who are certified by *WeatheRate* for delivering the Tri-State's most accurate Spanish-language television forecast. Their *Telemundo Responde* investigative unit has recovered more than \$5 million to date, with Telemundo 47's public affairs program *Enfoque Nueva York* shining a weekly spotlight on the policy issues and local concerns most important to viewers. Telemundo 47 provides news and information across all platforms, including the Telemundo 47 App, dedicated Roku, Apple TV and Amazon FireTV channels, and across social media. The Tri-State's Spanish-language broadcasting channel for soccer, Telemundo 47 will offer exclusive Spanish-language coverage of the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup™ tournament.

9. **Affiliations: The debate law prohibits organizations affiliated with any political party, any holder of public office, or any candidate for public office from sponsoring a debate. Given this restriction, please confirm that your organization is eligible to sponsor a CFB-sanctioned debate.**

NBC New York is eligible to sponsor a CFB-sanctioned debate.

10. **Endorsements: The debate law prohibits a debate sponsor or co-sponsor from endorsing any candidate in a pending primary or general election until after the debate that it sponsors for that election is held. Will your organization be endorsing candidates for New York City offices in the 2025 elections? If the answer is yes, please outline the timing and process you will follow for making endorsements and how your organization will meet the legal requirement.**

NBC New York will not be making endorsements.

11. **Contributions: Does your organization make contributions to any candidates for New York City office? If yes, please explain your policy for making contributions.**

NBC New York does not make contributions to political candidates.

12. **Budget and Resources: Describe any fundraising plans you would implement, if necessary, to underwrite the cost of the debate(s). Donations from any political party organization, holder of public office, or candidate for public office may disqualify your organization from eligibility to sponsor a debate. Please 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. Please describe the intended production budget for the debates, both primary and general, and the extent of the resources available to your organization for production.**

NBC New York is not fundraising to underwrite the costs of the debates.

Verification

****COMPLETED FORMS ATTACHED TO APPLICATION****

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 _____ 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 _____

Name _____

Date _____

Title _____

Part II – Debate Program Proposal

Debate Personnel, Format, & Venue

13. **Moderators/Panelists: How will you determine the personnel who appear on-camera during the debate? Please describe the criteria and procedures your organization would use for selecting the moderator(s) or panelist(s). If you can at this time, please also provide the name(s) and qualifications of the intended moderator(s) and/or panelist(s).**

The debates will be co-hosted by Melissa Russo, NBC New York’s veteran political and government affairs reporter, and David Ushery, anchor of NBC New York’s 4pm, 6pm and 11pm newscasts. Joining them as panelists will be POLITICO New York’s Editor Sally Goldenberg and Telemundo 47 reporter Rosarina Breton. *Biographies can be found at the end of this application.*

14. **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 and response times:**
- ◆ **Opening and/or closing statements:**
- ◆ **Any restrictions for candidates, such as props or notes:**

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

Our debate format will provide a focused, structured, and lively discussion of key issues facing New York City. We believe the format should be somewhat varied to include the following components:

Traditional Q&A: Moderators/panelists pose a question. Each candidate has one minute to answer the same question. Candidates may be granted thirty seconds to rebut accusations at the discretion of moderators. Moderators also have the right to follow up when answers are vague or incomplete.

Candidate-Specific Q&A: Moderators/panelists pose separate questions to each candidate. This enables us to address any recent controversies or candidate-specific issues. Efforts will be made to have candidates on the individual hotseat for equal amounts of time.

Speaking/Response times: Each candidate will have one minute to respond to a question posed by a moderator. If the candidate directly targets an opponent in their answer, that

opponent will have the option of a 30-second rebuttal. An additional 30 seconds could be granted to either person at the discretion of the moderators. A timekeeper will be assigned to monitor time, and a countdown clock will be visible to candidates. When candidates violate the time and speaking order – or decorum – rules the moderators will have the right to have their microphone temporarily shut off.

Lightning Round: We would consider the use of lightning round questions, which can elicit sharp responses on challenging issues. Used correctly and judiciously, they introduce a lively element into the debate that can humanize a candidate.

Speaking Order: When necessary, speaking order will be determined by drawing names to avoid one candidate always getting the first or last word. Drawings will be held virtually (Zoom or FaceTime) so campaigns can witness live.

Podium Position: Podium positions will be determined by drawing names. Drawings will be held virtually (Zoom or FaceTime) so campaigns can witness live.

Opening/Closing Statements: We do not believe these are necessary since the candidates will have sufficient time throughout the debates to make their appeals to voters. We believe the time spent on statements would be best used to focus on advancing the discussion.

Debate Restrictions: Candidates will not be allowed to bring notes or props. A notepad and pen will be provided for candidates to use during the debates.

15. **Venue Considerations: The CFB may hold preference for sponsors that will broadcast debates from a public venue, granting greater accessibility and transparency for the public. Please indicate whether each debate will be held in a broadcast studio or a public venue. Would your organization be open to hosting the broadcast at a public venue that has expressed interest in holding the debates? If you select a public venue, please describe any previous debates that have been held there. Please list accessibility accommodations/ features of the space. How will you maintain public safety at any public venue selected? How will you invite and vet audience members to ensure civility and mitigate partisanship? Please note that sponsors are responsible for making all arrangements to broadcast debates from proposed locations.**

All debates will be held in a studio at 30 Rockefeller Center. We do not plan to include a live studio audience.

16. **Prior Debate Experience: Describe your organizations' experience in sponsoring election 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.

NBC New York, Telemundo 47, and POLITICO have proven track records of hosting many successful live debates. In 2021, we hosted three debates in partnership with the NYC Campaign Finance Board – the Mayoral General, Mayoral Democratic Primary, and the Comptroller Democratic Primary. Despite unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic and a large field of candidates, we produced three debates that were incredibly informative and appropriately entertaining – and reached an audience of more than 1.3 million people. While the ratings were tremendous, voter education was our number-one goal. That’s why we felt particularly good about the *New York Times* calling our Mayoral Democratic Primary debate “one of the most substantive of the primary season.”

**Our report to the CFB on the successful 2021 debates is attached to this application*

In 2022, NBC New York and Telemundo 47 hosted a NY Democratic Gubernatorial debate in partnership with the *Albany Times Union*. The debate at 30 Rockefeller Center was described by the *New York Times* as “more substantive and confrontational than the Democrats’ first debate.” In 2013, NBC New York and Telemundo 47 partnered with the *Wall Street Journal* to host three mayoral debates. It was an exciting and extraordinary debate season that featured a lively final Democratic primary debate between five candidates. In the same cycle, NBC New York and its partners also had the privilege of hosting a Republican primary debate for mayor and Democratic primary debate for public advocate. In 2017, POLITICO participated in the general election mayoral debates with partners including NY1 and WNYC.

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.
17. **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:** NBC New York / WNBC: 106,000 viewers 7-8pm weekdays, 94,000 viewers 930-1030am Sunday – Telemundo 47 / 230,000 viewers 7-8pm weekdays, 54,000 viewers 930-1030am Sunday
 - ◆ **ONLINE:** NBC New York & Telemundo 47 reaches 5.3 million visitors/month on station websites and apps. The streaming channels generate 9.1 million monthly views. POLITICO reaches approximately 50 million readers via its website and app.
 - ◆ **RADIO:** We are seeking a radio partner to simulcast the debates. (WNYC simulcasts our debates in 2021.)
 - ◆ **SOCIAL MEDIA:** NBC New York & Telemundo 47 have 4.1 million followers on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube. POLITICO reaches approximately 6.5 million people on Facebook and X.
 - ◆ **Confirm YouTube Streaming Capability:** Yes, we can stream on YouTube.
18. **Underrepresented Voters: As noted above, the City Charter mandates that the**

CFB empower voters who are underrepresented at the polls to engage in the political process. How would you ensure the Debates attract and help inform these underrepresented voting groups?

NBC New York, Telemundo 47, and POLITICO will engage community partners selected by the CFB to reach underrepresented voting groups. These groups could include the New York Urban League, Hispanic Federation, and Youth INC, which have expressed interest in working with us. Additionally, we hope the CFB would approve these projects/partners:

GOVOTENYC / VOTER ENGAGEMENT

This non-partisan civic engagement initiative funds nonprofits that are trusted community messengers to engage low-propensity voters. GoVoteNYC has expressed a willingness to collaborate with us on two fronts. GoVoteNYC partners could solicit voter input on key issues and question development. GoVoteNYC would also consider tapping its network of CBOs to host debate watch parties. They would encourage groups to develop creative, community-led engagement plans. One example we have discussed involves El Puente (a GoVoteNYC partner) which is already planning to launch a new campaign-related curriculum in its two high schools. Students will develop questions for Mayoral candidates as part of this curriculum at MS 50 which has an award-winning debate team. (GoVoteNYC has data suggesting they reached 2 million NYC voters in 2021.)

ROCK THE VOTE

This year, the iconic voter engagement group wants to focus more closely on local elections. They are interested in collaborating with News 4 to engage New Yorkers under-30, which is their primary mission. They have a range of tools - from social media influencers - to civic tech that can find unregistered Gen-Z-ers and remind young voters to watch a debate. Rock the Vote is willing to use its social media presence, corporate and sports industry partnerships and 5-million-subscriber email / SMS list to help us engage young people about the debates and local issues that matter.

THE MOBILE VOTING PROJECT

The MVP is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing voter engagement by advocating for secure *mobile* voting. Their technology can tap into NYC voter registration rolls, with permission. Using facial recognition, it can create a sample of verified registered voters who have downloaded their app. Central to MVP's advocacy are the accessibility issues, tech malfunctions and privacy issues confronting voters with disabilities at the polls. The MVP partners with the National Federation of the Blind and groups representing voters of color who feel most susceptible to voting barriers. They also believe that turnout would surge if Gen Z could vote on devices. The MVP proposes using its app to let New Yorkers "vote" on which issues they want covered in the debates - or to rate candidates' performances during a debate.



BCID: BROOKLYN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED

BCID has expressed interest in working with us on developing questions for the debate and advising us on using plain language when publicizing the debates. BCID can also guide us in connecting with key social media influencers and helping us develop stories about why it's still so hard for New Yorkers with disabilities to vote.

EL PUENTE

El Puente is a youth-centered human rights organization, focusing on education, the arts, environmental justice and wellness to inspire leadership for social justice. They are planning to host a mayoral candidates forum and are developing a curriculum for high school students to craft questions for candidates. El Puente has expressed interest in working with us on connecting with younger voters.

- 19. Marketing & Audience Development: In order to reach a large-scale viewership and the CFB's priority communities, marketing the debates in advance will be a fundamental piece of the media sponsor's role. How will New Yorkers find out about the debates? Describe your marketing, owned and earned media coverage plans to ensure the debates reach the widest possible audience.**

TV PROMOTION

The debates will be widely advertised on NBC New York and Telemundo 47 with a promotional campaign in all dayparts that will reach a diverse audience. (Gina Oliva-Pinto, VP Marketing & Creative Services, will coordinate)

STREAMING PROMOTION

The promotional campaign will also be aired in all dayparts on the streaming channels of NBC New York and Telemundo 47. (Gina Oliva-Pinto, VP Marketing & Creative Services, will coordinate)

TV NEWS COVERAGE

In the week before the debates, NBC New York and Telemundo 47 will do preview reports in newscasts that will increase interest and drive viewership.

STREAMING DEBATE PREVIEW

Prior to the debates, NBC New York and Telemundo 47 will produce 15-minute debate preview shows (English and Spanish) that will air multiple times on the streaming channels, and on-demand. The show will include conversations with the moderators, a representative of the Campaign Finance Board, and key community partners. (WNBC News Director Dave Manney and Telemundo 47 News Director Alexa Rodriguez will coordinate)

DIGITAL PROMOTION

The digital teams for NBC New York and Telemundo 47 will develop an innovative video

promotional campaign (in English and Spanish) for the debates. The campaign will appear on nbcnewyork.com, telemundo47.com, and the Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok feeds for the stations. Digital reporters Kay Angrum, Jen Vasquez, and Ashley Chaparro could lead the campaign. (Brad Luck, Director of Multi-Platform, will coordinate)

POLITICO PROMOTION

POLITICO will promote the debates to tens of thousands of New Yorkers through its New York Playbook and policy newsletters. It will also promote with ads on its website.

MEDIA MARKETING

The debates will be supported by an aggressive public relations campaign that will result in coverage in community newspapers, neighborhood news websites, radio stations and blogs throughout the city. (John Durso, VP of Community & Communications, will coordinate)

GOVOTENYC / VOTER ENGAGEMENT

This non-profit, non-partisan civic engagement program aimed at engaging low-propensity voters would promote the debates through its social media channels if its involvement with us was approved by the CFB.

ROCK THE VOTE

The iconic group with a mission to engage voters under 30 would promote the debates through digital outreach and social media influencers if its involvement with us was approved by the CFB.

THE MOBILE VOTING PROJECT

This non-profit organization dedicated to increasing voter engagement would promote the debates through digital channels if its involvement with us was approved by the CFB.

20. **Developing Questions: In order to ensure that the questions posed during the debates reflect the broad interests and diversity of our priority communities, the CFB intends to play a role in determining the topics for questions in partnership with select community groups. Please describe your process for drafting the debate questions to uphold the goal of reflecting the interests of the city's electorate. Would you be open to broadcasting questions posed by community partners on behalf of their priority communities?**

Our questions will be formulated to advance the discussion and identify distinctions between the candidates on the issues of utmost importance to voters. Our multi-layered approach will include:

1. NBC New York/Marist Poll to gauge the top priorities of NYC residents.



2. Consulting the People's Pulse poll for the 2025 elections. This citywide poll backed by Brooklyn Org, the 5 Boro Institute, the NY Community Trust, the Altman Foundation, the Staten Island Foundation, and the Bronx Community Foundation, seeks to identify key issues for voters.
3. Soliciting questions through community engagement events and social media outreach – with a focus on voters under 30, immigrant voters, voters with disabilities, and voters impacted by the criminal justice system. While we have identified numerous organizations that work with these groups, we would seek guidance from the CFB on the best groups to engage. Outreach through the groups could include:
 - a. Virtual town hall meetings
 - b. Social media outreach
 - c. Moderator interviews with voters
4. Consulting with the Citizens Budget Commission on city finance & tax issues.

We would consider broadcasting questions from community partners, but we've found moderators asking questions suggested/shaped by the community is more effective.

21. **Language Access: The CFB performs outreach to the linguistically diverse communities of New York City. Past CFB debates were broadcast simultaneously in Spanish and included American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation. The debates have been rebroadcast in Korean, Russian, Punjabi, Hindi, Greek, Mandarin, Cantonese, and other languages. Please describe your plans to make the debates accessible to voters who speak languages other than English and/or would benefit from closed captioning, audio descriptions, or ASL interpretation. Do you have experience and/or technical and personnel capacity for these accessibility measures? If so, describe the event, language(s), tools, and platform(s) used (i.e., YouTube, Facebook Live, etc.).**

The debates will air on Telemundo 47 with translation. We plan to include sign language interpretation for the debates and are open to partnering with radio stations that can broadcast and/or re-broadcast the debates in additional languages.

22. **Ranked Choice Voting: New Yorkers will vote in the 2025 primaries with ranked choice voting. How will you help New Yorkers understand and feel comfortable with this new voting system? Describe your plans to engage your audience on this topic before, during and after the debate.**

NBC New York, Telemundo 47, and POLITICO are committed to helping New Yorkers understand and feel comfortable with ranked choice voting through multiple news

reports and interviews, both on-air and online. We will also build an interactive digital tool to simulate the experience of ranked choice voting ahead of the election.

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?

NBC New York, Telemundo 47, and POLITICO will employ our various digital and social media platforms to help inform New Yorkers about CFB resources like the Voter Guide. We will also include mention of these resources in our election/debate coverage where relevant.

Schedule

23. **Schedule: Propose potential debate dates for each debate required by law. The CFB prefers that debates are held no more than 30 days before the primary or general election date. Consult the proposed chart as a template on Page 9 outlining campaign finance disclosure deadlines, major holidays, and cultural events when developing your schedule, and consider scheduling debates at least three business days after each filing deadline.**

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.

NBC New York, Telemundo 47 and POLITICO are willing to discuss a variety of combinations provided that we host at least one general election mayoral debate and one Democratic primary mayoral debate. Our preferences along with proposed dates/times are as follows:

Primary Election – June 24, 2025:

- ◆ **Democratic Mayoral (1st)** June 3-5 @ 7pm (60 min) Live
- ◆ **Democratic Mayoral (Leading Contenders)** June 11-12 @ 7pm (60 min) Live
- ◆ Republican Mayoral (1st)
- ◆ Republican Mayoral (Leading Contenders)
- ◆ **Democratic Comptroller (1st)** June 8 @ 9:30 am (taped June 3-5) (60 min)
- ◆ **Democratic Comptroller (Leading)** June 15 @ 9:30 am (taped June 11-12) (60 min)
- ◆ Democratic Public Advocate (1st)
- ◆ Democratic Public Advocate (Leading Contenders)

General Election – November 4, 2025:

- ◆ **Mayoral (1st)** October 14-16 @ 7pm (60 min) Live
- ◆ **Mayoral (Leading Contenders)** October 21-23 @ 7pm (60 min) Live
- ◆ Comptroller (1st)
- ◆ Comptroller (Leading Contenders)
- ◆ Public Advocate (1st)
- ◆ Public Advocate (Leading Contender)

NOTE: We are open to extending debates past 60 minutes with additional time on streaming/digital platforms.

24. **Scheduling Changes: Describe how your organization would accommodate a scheduling change in the date or time of the debate(s), if such a change becomes necessary. Describe the specific circumstances under which your organization might seek to change the date(s) of the debate(s).**

If a scheduling change is needed, we will be flexible and work with candidates, partners, and the CFB to reach mutually agreeable date and time.



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

25. **Candidate Eligibility Criteria: The City’s Campaign Finance Act establishes minimum, specific, nonpartisan, and objective campaign finance thresholds for candidates to participate in the Debates. Any candidate who participates in the matching funds program and meets the eligibility requirements must participate in the debates. The media sponsor should propose additional financial criteria in their application (if desired) and if chosen, the CFB will work with the sponsor to finalize these criteria.**

First Debate Criteria: We believe a vibrant democracy thrives on diverse voices. In addition to the financial criteria set by the law, we would also look to other measures of a viable candidate. We expect to utilize the results of public, nonpartisan, scientific polling that uses live interviewers and cell phones in English and Spanish. We believe it is too early to establish cut-off percentages and reliable polling may not be available for some primary races. We would consult with the Campaign Finance Board to determine appropriate and fair cut-off points when sufficient data is available.

Second Debate “Leading Contender” Criteria: In setting leading contender criteria, we would look to potentially more stringent financial thresholds and results in polls, where available. Our intention is to set thresholds that encourage as many serious candidates as possible without distracting from the important issues facing the City. We expect to be flexible and look forward to further discussion with the CFB on criteria.

26. **Post-Election Review: The Campaign Finance Board is required to evaluate the Debate Program in its post-election report (to be published in 2026) to the Mayor and City Council. The Board asks that you provide a report demonstrating how many New Yorkers engaged with the debates in 2025. The report should include the following statistics about the debates and any related events as well as other metrics as specified by the Board:**

- ◆ **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?

The above-mentioned metrics – plus the number of participants in virtual town halls – are the ideal measurements of success. NBC New York and its partners have access to all the data.

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

We will be able to provide all the above-mentioned metrics for the CFB's report.

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)?

We would split the debate if more than 8 candidates.

A2. How much broadcast time would you provide for each half (minimum of one hour each)?

We would provide one hour -- and consider additional time on digital/streaming platforms.

A3. Please provide a schedule of when you would broadcast the second part of any debate that is split.

We would broadcast the split debate on consecutive evenings/days during the same

time slot.

A4. What process would you use to randomly assign the eligible candidates?

We would draw names to guarantee the assignments are random.

A5. How would you ensure candidates receive an equitable amount of airtime across each debate part?

The same rules -- including for speaking and response time -- would be used for each debate.

DEBATE CO-HOSTS/PANELISTS

David Ushery

One of the region's most respected and accomplished television journalists, David Ushery is the anchor for NBC 4 New York's 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. weekday newscasts. He is a member of the New York State Broadcasters Hall of Fame and a member of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, New York Chapter's Silver Circle, recognizing more than 25 years of journalistic excellence and service to the Tri-State.

Ushery has offered WNBC viewers a front row seat to the biggest news stories of the day for more than 20 years. He has moderated televised debates for New York City Mayor, New York City Comptroller and New York State Governor. During periods of civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd, Ushery took a closer look at the relationships between law enforcement and communities of color, which included exclusive interviews with top NYPD administration.

He has also travelled around the world for WNBC, reporting live from sites of terrorist attacks in Paris, France, Manchester, England, the front lines in Gaza and the West Bank, and the opening of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem. Ushery has also made multiple visits to St. Peter's Square in Rome where he covered the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, the 2013 papal conclave electing Pope Francis and the canonizations of Pope Saint John Paul II and Pope Saint John XXIII.

Melissa Russo

Melissa Russo is NBC 4 New York's award-winning Political and Government Affairs Reporter and a member of the NBC 4 I-Team, the station's investigative unit. An expert in local policy and politics with unmatched sources, Melissa is often the first to break major stories on her beat.

Known for delivering thoughtful, in-depth coverage of issues not ordinarily tackled on local television news, Russo has achieved unprecedented, extended access inside New York's homeless shelter system, juvenile jails and family courts. Her work has generated significant government policy changes and has been recognized with 8 Emmys including in coveted categories including journalistic enterprise and societal concerns reporting.

Throughout her career, Russo has closely covered five NYC mayors, dozens of local and national elections and moderated numerous live, prime-time televised debates in races for Mayor and Governor. During the 2020 presidential election, she won the New York Emmy for her political reporting from the NY-Pennsylvania border. On the national campaign trail, Russo has covered numerous caucuses, primaries, conventions, and the failed bids by NYC Mayors Giuliani, Bloomberg and de Blasio.

Sally Goldenberg

Sally Goldenberg is the Senior New York Editor at POLITICO. She joined the team in October 2013 to cover New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration, with a focus on budget and labor contracts. She also spent three years covering the city's housing and economic development agenda.

Previously, Sally covered the New York City Council and former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration for the New York Post. She also reported for the Staten Island Advance (July 2005 to May 2008), and covered municipal government for the New Jersey Star-Ledger (December 2002 to June 2005) and the Hillsborough Beacon (June through December 2002).

A native of Elizabeth, New Jersey, Sally now lives in Brooklyn. She has a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Rutgers University.

Rosarina Bretón

Rosarina Breton is a prominent journalist and news anchor for Noticiero 47 Telemundo since November 2018. Born in San Francisco de Macorís, Dominican Republic, she arrived in New York City with her parents at the age of 10. She earned a bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from John Jay College, a solid educational foundation that complements her background in journalism.

In her role as a reporter and anchor for Noticiero 47 at 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, Rosarina has left a significant mark. Her work on Telemundo 47 has been recognized with several Emmy awards. She has covered a wide range of topics, from local and international elections and politics to major events in New York City.

Before Telemundo 47, Rosarina was a reporter and anchor at Spectrum News NY1.