

Centering Youth Voices at New York City's Polls: 2021 Voter Issue Guide



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Over a year and a half into the pandemic, the deeply-rooted racial, ethnic and economic inequities COVID-19 exacerbated continue to afflict New York's most vulnerable children, youth and families – and especially our Black and Brown communities. It is thereby more important than ever that we center the whole child in both our short-and long-term recovery efforts and seize this opportunity to improve the trajectories of young people in New York. **As New Yorkers cast their ballots this Fall, supporting policies and platforms that prioritize child, youth and family wellbeing is critical.**



#VoteBecause the needs of the youngest New Yorkers and their families *must* be centered on Election Day – and every day – with special attention to the following issue areas.

RACIAL EQUITY. New York's pervasive racial and ethnic disparities must be addressed through systemic change – beginning with no longer passing legislation or adopting rules without first examining whether these policies will eliminate, perpetuate or create racial and ethnic disparities. **#VoteBecause to stop racial inequities from growing, our leaders must support requiring the [creation of racial and ethnic impact statements](#) during the legislative and rule-making processes.**





HEALTH. New York is suffering a troubling childhood lead poisoning crisis,



with more known cases of children with elevated blood lead levels than any other state. Black and Brown children are most

affected by the irreversible harm of childhood lead poisoning in New York. We must act to prevent childhood lead exposure and poisoning. New York City can make strides towards eliminating childhood lead exposure by adopting the proposals in Mayor de Blasio's [Roadmap to Eliminating Childhood Lead Exposure](#) and CDF-NY's [recommendations](#) for building upon these proposals. **#VoteBecause our elected leaders must take urgent action to protect New York's children from lead exposure and poisoning. A//New York children deserve to be #LeadFreeKidsNY!**

AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES

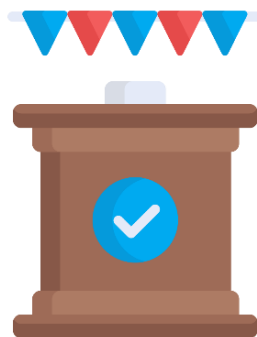
"I vote because voting is one way I can make a difference in my community - it is one way we can ensure our voices are heard."


Elian V.
CDF-NY Beat the Odds® Scholar & Advocate

CHILD WELFARE. Every year, hundreds of young people age-out of foster care in New York City. They age into increased risk for housing instability, face barriers to steady jobs and many struggle to find the resources for school. Since the onset of COVID-19, many older youth with history in foster care have also experienced extreme isolation, shrinking support networks, hunger and food insecurity. **#VoteBecause we need**



leaders who will prioritize transition age youth in the City's recovery. We need bolder plans for economic supports and pathways for self-determination.





YOUTH JUSTICE. Each night, on average over 120 teenagers go to sleep in detention facilities in New York City and over 400 college-age youth (ages 18-21) are on Rikers Island. We cannot incarcerate our way out of community violence. New York City communities – particularly our Black and Latinx communities that are hardest hit by gun violence – have also been the hardest hit by COVID-19. We need leaders who will support effective solutions and resources that aid us in healing from COVID and will act to remedy the racial and economic inequities that the pandemic exposed and exacerbated. We need to stay the course to Close Rikers, and we need a public health response to gun violence that connects young people with resources in their communities. **#VoteBecause we need bigger and more sustained investments in these kinds of public health responses to gun violence, along with strategies to link youth and families to meaningful supports in addition to pathways for housing and economic security.**

AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES

“ Voting is powerful to me because it is one of the ways I can exercise my power and privilege as a citizen. I get to elect someone to office that will prioritize my community’s needs. ”

Khushayah M.
CDF-NY Beat the Odds® Scholar & Advocate
2021 First-Time Voter

EDUCATION JUSTICE. Our vision for education justice in New York City includes safe, restorative, and healing environments where all students can learn and grow. For this to be possible, we must implement policies that respect, support and value the dignity of the student, caregiver and the communities which they represent. This requires providing schools equitable resources, adopting a culturally responsive curriculum, preventing trauma, repairing harm and promoting restorative practices. **#VoteBecause our children deserve an administration that understands how crucial it is that we invest in our schools, the whole child, their families and communities.**



VOTING 101: A GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME NYC VOTERS

Q: How can I register to vote?

A: You can register to vote in three ways: online, in-person, or by mail! In order to register to vote online, you will need:

- ✓ (1) New York State Driver License, Permit, or Non-Driver ID;
- ✓ (2) ZIP Code on record with the DMV; and
- ✓ (3) Social Security Number



Note: To be eligible to vote in New York City, you must: **(1)** be a United States citizen; **(2)** be a New York City resident for at least 30 days prior to the election in which you are voting; and **(3)** be 18 years old by the date of the election.

Q: I am a student in New York City but have a residence in another state. Can I vote in an NYC election?

A: If you are a student in New York City, but hold a residence in another state and wish to register to vote in New York, you must fill out a registration form indicating your New York City residency. **Note:** The new registration will cancel out a registration you may have in another state!



Q: Where do I cast my ballot on Election Day?



A: Poll sites provide voters with ballots and scanners to record your vote. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to locate your Early Voting or Election Day poll site, view a sample ballot and learn more about your Election District!

Q: How can I keep my voter registration current?

A: By voting consistently! A voter in inactive status who does not vote in two consecutive Federal Elections is in the fifth year, removed from the list of registered voters. The voter must then re-register in order to vote.



Q: How can I enroll in a political party?

A: If you wish to enroll in a political party, you can do so in the following two ways: (1) by indicating your party preference on the voter registration form when you register to vote or (2) by re-registering.

Q: What are the important remaining dates for this election cycle?

A:



Monday, November 1st	Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot. (Absentee ballots must be postmarked or brought to a County Board of Elections office in-person by November 2 nd , or received via mail by November 9 th .)
Saturday, October 23rd – Sunday, October 31st	Early voting
Tuesday, November 2nd	Election Day! (Polls open 6am – 9 pm)



For more information, visit <https://vote.nyc/>.

The Children’s Defense Fund-New York (CDF-NY) Leave No Child Behind ® is the New York office of the Children’s Defense Fund, an organization which grew out of the Civil Rights Movement. CDF-NY serves as an independent voice for New York’s children and strives to ensure every New York child *a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start* in life and a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. We envision a nation where marginalized children flourish, leaders prioritize their well-being and communities wield the power to assure they thrive.