

City Hall Internal Review



NYC



Letter from the Mayor

Dear Colleagues,

On October 8, 2024, I announced that City Hall would be undertaking a rapid review of personnel, programs, and policies under the leadership of Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack and newly appointed First Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer.

I am proud to have Maria and Camille in these critical roles during this time, providing the connective tissue across city government to advance our priorities and focus on delivering for New Yorkers. Together we are building housing, connecting New Yorkers in need to essential services, improving the way we teach our children, and making the city safer for all. Our north star is building a safer, more affordable city for working class New Yorkers, and we are accomplishing those goals every day.

I am grateful for all that you do every day to make that happen. I also know there are always ways we can improve and learn. We have seen tremendous success over our first three years in office reducing crime, increasing job opportunities, lowering unemployment, reducing the cost of childcare, and putting money back in the pockets of New Yorkers and we look forward to doing even more.

I got into public service because I saw that people were being left behind and wanted to make a difference. I know all of you have your own reason or your own service, but I hope that you have also found that government is not just a career but a calling.

The recommendations that came out of this process, once implemented, will help our team and city double down on our successes and continue to improve and grow to ensure we continue to deliver for New Yorkers.

Let's keep New York City the best city in the world to live in – and work for.

Mayor Eric Adams
City of New York

Letter from the First Deputy Mayor and Chief of Staff

Dear Colleagues,

In recent years, our great city has faced challenges that tested the resilience, ingenuity, and unity of its people. From navigating an unprecedented global pandemic to addressing an extraordinary influx of migrants and confronting fiscal pressures, New York City has risen to meet these tests with determination and strength. These times have reminded us of the vital role that public service plays in sustaining the promise of this city.

At the heart of New York City is its people—diverse, dynamic, and steadfast in their belief that their government must work as effectively and transparently as possible to serve them. This belief is our mandate, and we are proud to share with you the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive review designed to meet this expectation and support your hard work.

As the Mayor outlined in his message, this review was initiated to reflect the values and principles that guide our work: **efficiency, accountability, transparency, and innovation**. Conducted with these principles in mind, it sought to identify opportunities to streamline processes, enhance service delivery, and build a foundation of trust and excellence in governance.

This list of 20 subsequent recommendations represents the collaborative efforts of leaders and teams across city government, who brought forward insights, ideas, and expertise to help us ensure that the work we do every day meets the needs of every New Yorker. Through this review, we have reaffirmed our commitment to building a government that is responsive, proactive, and capable of tackling the challenges of today while preparing for the opportunities of tomorrow.

We are deeply grateful for your engagement, resilience, and partnership in ensuring New York City remains a beacon of hope, progress, and opportunity for everyone. Together, we will continue to strengthen the systems that support this city and deliver on our promise to get stuff done.

Thank you for your continued trust.



Maria Torres-Springer
First Deputy Mayor



Camille Joseph Varlack
Chief of Staff

Continuing Our Progress to Ensure Every New York City Resident Can Thrive

On October 8, 2024, Mayor Eric Adams announced that City Hall would undertake a thorough review of personnel, programs, and policies under the leadership of Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack and First Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer.

Over the past several weeks, through internal surveys, interviews, research and analysis, a dedicated team at City Hall has compiled recommendations for improved government efficiency to deliver the services New Yorkers need and deserve. While the Administration has and will continue to revisit its operations on an ongoing basis—pivoting and shifting as necessary to respond to current events and the evolving challenges facing the city—this review provides a comprehensive set of recommendations that will be implemented over the coming 60 days.

Since that first day of this Administration, our priorities have been clear—restore public safety, rebuild our economy from the scourges of the pandemic, and support families and the working class by building a more affordable city. Through unforeseen circumstances, such as the migrant humanitarian crisis and more recently the change in federal leadership, this administration has remained laser-focused on these priorities. In looking to the future of our great city, an inventory of key priorities as we head into the Adams administration's second term will also be shared in the coming month. This playbook for 2025 includes executing on specific and concrete initiatives that will continue to be key priorities for City Hall and its agencies, building on what we have collectively achieved since taking office on January 1, 2022.

The hard-working public servants at City Hall and our agencies will continue the steadfast work in the coming months, ensuring New York City remains a leading example of responsive municipal government.

Recommendations for Improved and Efficient Service Delivery

CITY HALL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

New York City is committed to ensuring that every resident can thrive by providing access to resources and creating critical support for health, housing, economic mobility, and social well-being. The following recommendations will support the delivery of these services across the five boroughs.

Immediate actions

1. Launch Whole-of-Government Sprint Effort to Address Cross-Agency Priority Issues
2. Continue War on Backlogs to Improve Service Delivery

Short-term actions within 30 days

3. Announce 2025 Operational Playbook
4. Speed Shelter Exits for Asylum Seekers

Long-term actions within 60 days

5. Increase Transparency through Public-facing Performance Management Metrics and Improved Customer Service
6. Release Citywide Space Savings Plan

CITY HALL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizational efficiency and effectiveness are both important for any organization's growth and to respond to the needs of constituents. The below actions will focus on clarifying policies and procedures to better implement City initiatives.

Immediate actions

7. Clarify and Streamline the Policy Prioritization Process
8. Improve Standard Operating Procedures and Staff Resources
9. Review Internal Reporting Mechanisms and Project Management Tools

Short-term actions within 30 days

10. Increase Opportunities to Make New Yorkers Aware of Administration Priorities, City Services, and Resources
11. Expand City Hall's Performance Management System to Establish a Performance Management Cabinet

Long-term actions within 60 days

- 12. Continue to Create Economic Opportunities for New Yorkers by Filling City Vacancies
- 13. Streamline and Improve Data Analysis

CITY HALL PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizational structure must continually be evaluated to reflect changing times and needs of New Yorkers. The below actions will focus on City Hall structures and increase support for employees to ensure service delivery is efficient and effective.

Immediate actions

- 14. Expand Professional Development Support and Staff Training
- 15. Bolster Workplace Community to Increase Productivity

Short-term action within 30 days

- 16. Streamline Processes and Reporting within the Mayor's Office
- 17. Revisit Flexible Work Policies for Hard-to-Recruit Positions
- 18. Reinforce Compliance and Ethics Support for all City Employees

Long-term action within 60 days

- 19. Strengthen Staff Goals through Performance Reviews
- 20. Consolidate Administrative Hiring Support to Reduce Onboarding Time

Detailed List of Recommendations

PROGRAMS

Immediate, Day 1 Actions:

1. **Launch Whole-of-Government Sprint Effort to Address Cross-Agency Priority Issues:** Announce first tranche of targeted sprints for 2025 to address priority issues requiring cross-agency attention, starting with early childhood education applications.
Owner: First Deputy Mayor
2. **Continue War on Backlogs to Improve Service Delivery:** Push continued effort to ensure more efficient government systems by quickly addressing internal backlogs, such as outstanding nonprofit contract payments, to speed up the pace of government responsiveness.
Owner: First Deputy Mayor

Short-term, 30-day actions:

3. **Announce 2025 Operational Playbook:** Release a list of priorities the administration will remain diligent on and critical milestones in the coming year. The work remains our focus.
Owner: First Deputy Mayor
4. **Speed Shelter Exits for Asylum Seekers:** To better address the changing needs of our newest New Yorkers and to reflect the reduction of both asylum seekers and costs associated with their care, the City will increase the speed of shelter exits, right-size the scope of work to meet those reduced needs, and finalize the permanent structure for asylum seeker support into the future.
Owner: Chief of Staff

Long-term, 60-day actions:

5. **Increase Transparency through Public-facing Performance Management Metrics and Improved Customer Service:** To ensure New Yorkers know what is happening in their City in real time and to drive better customer service, the administration will reassess and relaunch public facing data, reports, and other performance management indicators. These indicators will continue to be used in directing management performance.
Owner: Office of Technology and Innovation, Mayor's Office of Operations
6. **Release Citywide Space Savings Plan:** To reexamine internal policies and procedures without sacrificing City services, the administration will pursue space saving measures. This is part of a multiagency effort focused on cutting costs, finding efficiencies, and improving office conditions for City employees through space optimization, enhancing resources, and minimizing waste.
Owner: Chief of Staff, Department of Citywide Administrative Services

POLICIES

Immediate, Day 1 Actions:

- 7. Clarify and Streamline the Policy Prioritization Process:** Simultaneous to the release of recommendations, senior leadership will host an overview of decision-making processes, give clarity on what raises to the Mayoral level, and implement consistent execution requirements.
Owner: Chief of Staff
- 8. Improve Standard Operating Procedures and Staff Resources:** Provide resources and trainings about standard operating procedures at both the City Hall and individual team level to clarify internal role expectations, processes, and communication across teams from the time someone starts their role. Establish routine continuity practices for transitions, succession, and departures as a standard operating procedure. Reissue formal instructions on staff policies such as gifts, travel, etc., and create formal guidance as needed on all staff policies to be housed in one, easily accessible location.
Owner: First Deputy Mayor, Chief Counsel
- 9. Review Internal Reporting Mechanisms and Project Management Tools:** Review inventory of all trackers and reporting, including those through Executive Order or Local Law requirements, with a focus of reducing obsolete and burdensome tasks in place of more meaningful reporting and metrics to align with our transparency goals.
Owner: Mayor's Office of Operations

Short-term, 30-day actions:

- 10. Increase Opportunities to Make New Yorkers Aware of Administration Priorities, City Services, and Resources:** Launch a direct-to-consumer marketing campaign that highlights services being provided to New Yorkers. Further increase earned media communications to champion the good work of government.
Owner: Deputy Mayor for Communications
- 11. Expand City Hall's Performance Management System to Establish a Performance Management Cabinet:** Launch Performance Management Cabinet to be co-chaired by Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack and Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi. Consisting of agencies focused on performance—such as the Mayor's Office of Operations, Mayor's Office of Risk and Compliance, and the Chief Efficiency Officer among others—the cabinet will meet regularly to focus on improving government services based on key indicators.
Owner: Chief of Staff, First Deputy Mayor, Deputy Mayor for Operations

Long-term, 60-day actions:

- 12. Continue to Create Economic Opportunities for New Yorkers by Filling City Vacancies:** Source and incorporate additional City staffing recruitment tools, including the continuance of prioritizing critical hires and promotions efforts where appropriate to address backlogs, retain staff, and increase team productivity.
Owner: Chief of Staff, Office of Management and Budget

- 13. Streamline and Improve Data Analysis:** Evaluate criticality of data analytics support needs from policy offices to ensure that all number crunching is supportive of delivering policy results and driving performance management. Continue providing access to information and best practices across quarterly Analytics Exchanges and the Office of Data Analytics' office hours.

Owner: Office of Technology and Innovation, Mayor's Office of Operations

PERSONNEL

Immediate, Day 1 Actions:

- 14. Expand Professional Development Support and Staff Training:** Provide further opportunities for skill-building, mentorship, and event-based learning opportunities with senior staff as both speakers and participants to increase access and collaboration among City Hall.

Owner: Chief of Staff, First Deputy Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer

- 15. Bolster Workplace Community to Increase Productivity:** Foster greater connections, increase communication, and break down siloes by coordinating more staff outings, brown bag lunches with leadership or guest speakers, and other opportunities to connect. Continue enrichment events for culture-building in the workplace.

Owner: Chief of Staff

- 16. Streamline Processes and Reporting within the Mayor's Office:** Announce organizational and leadership amendments to ensure the structure of verticals supports our top priorities into term two and better align with policy goals.

Owner: First Deputy Mayor and Chief of Staff

Short-term, 30-day actions:

- 17. Evaluate Flexible Work Policies for Hard-to-Recruit City Hall Positions:** Evaluate current City Hall flexible work policies and explore opportunities for greater flexibility within the framework of the citywide work pilot as a recruitment tool to address critical staff vacancies in hard-to-recruit titles. Identify opportunities to improve flexible work policies as part of the ongoing evaluation of the citywide pilot.

Owner: Chief of Staff

- 18. Reinforce Compliance and Ethics Support for all City Employees:** To ensure all City employees meet their expected behavior for business activities, the Chief Counsel's office will continue with regular trainings for City Hall staff. Further, compliance and ethics teams across all City agencies will continue to liaise to the Chief Counsel's office and Law Department on a regular basis.

Owner: Chief Counsel

Long-term, 60-day actions:

19. Strengthen Staff Goals through Performance Reviews: Reassess the cadence and goals of staff evaluations to drive better performance aligned with policy execution, delivering project-driven results and supporting positive culture alignment.

Owner: Chief Administrative Officer

20. Consolidate Administrative Hiring Support to Reduce Onboarding Time: Bolster administrative support through a concierge-like service to assist with onboarding efforts. This includes creating, inputting, and tracking the hiring process for potential candidates from the first draft of the job description through the candidate's first week.

Owner: Chief of Staff

Get Stuff Done: Implementation Plan and Next Steps

As outlined herein, each of the recommendations herein will be executed by the Administration over the next 60 days. Taken together, they represent a renewed focus on delivering for the people of this city and providing clear direction and support for the dedicated public servants who serve at City Hall and our agencies. We will continue to evaluate our work and our operations on an ongoing basis and will remain steadfast in our efforts to build a safer, more prosperous New York City.

