

NYC Ballot Proposals and Manhattan Judicial Elections

A PLAIN LANGUAGE VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE

Understand the choices. Make your own decision.



Education only. No RESET ratings, endorsements, or Yes or No recommendations.

[VIEW YOUR OFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT](#)

findmypollsite.vote.nyc • Enter your home address and choose View Sample Ballot.

November 3, 2026 election | Information checked October 23, 2026

Prepared by Pastor Reginald Lee Bachus | RESET

Cover illustration depicts fictional people. Real candidate photographs appear in the judicial section.

Your choices start with understanding

A sidewalk you use. A program your family relies on. A street you cross. A court you may one day enter. The choices in this guide reach into ordinary life.

You do not need to know every government term to begin. Start with one question. Picture what happens today. Then ask what a Yes vote would change and what a No vote would keep.

The purpose of this guide

RESET helps people become the author of their next decision instead of the product of their last experience. My purpose here is to make the choices easier to understand so you can decide for yourself.

What you will find

First come five ballot proposals that apply across New York City. Each asks whether to change part of the city's basic rulebook. Next come the twenty-four candidates in the eight listed Manhattan judicial contests. Your home address determines which district contests appear on your ballot.

Education only

RESET and Pastor Reginald Lee Bachus do not endorse candidates, give them scores, or recommend Yes or No votes in this guide. We identify outside opinions and link their sources. The same approach applies to every candidate and every proposal.

See the ballot for your own address

[NYC BOARD OF ELECTIONS SAMPLE BALLOT FINDER](#)

Go to findmypollsite.vote.nyc. Enter your home address. Choose the November 3, 2026 election and open View Sample Ballot. Match the proposal numbers and candidate names to this guide. Read the instructions printed on your ballot.

This is a guide to the five city proposals and Manhattan judicial elections. Other offices on your ballot are outside its scope. The official wording and voting instructions are linked so you can check them directly.

Prepared by Pastor Reginald Lee Bachus

Questions, workshops and community conversations: reggie@reggiebachus.com

Find the part you need

You can work through one proposal at a time. Each has the same three parts: understand the choice, compare best and worst cases for Yes and No, and think it through with RESET.

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A manageable place to start

Read the first page of a proposal. Say the choice in your own words. Then use the picture and questions if you want more detail. You can return to the original sources at any time.

A Yes vote on one proposal does not require a Yes vote on another. You can consider each separately. Within a single proposal, your vote covers all of its parts.

Check the sources: [View your official sample ballot](#)

A RESET before your decision

Before choosing, give yourself room to understand. This process helps you connect the facts to your own values. It does not point you toward a party, candidate, or Yes or No vote.



Five principles to carry with you

RESET principle	Put it into practice
Respect	Hear how the choice may affect different people.
Educate	Learn what the proposal or office actually does.
Serve	Consider the people who rely on the result.
Efficiency	Ask about time, cost and how well the process works.
Transparency	Look for clear reasons, records and source links.

You will see four short RESET questions at the end of every proposal. There is space to write your own reason for your choice.

What is a ballot proposal

Usually, voting means choosing a person. A ballot proposal asks you to choose a rule. These five proposals would change the New York City Charter—the rulebook that sets out how city government works.

Why this part of the ballot matters

Rules decide who must review an application, who may approve it, how neighbors can respond, and how the city plans to save money. You may never fill out a café application yourself. You may still use the sidewalk, live nearby, work there, or care how decisions are made.

Your vote	What it means
Yes	Adopt the changes written into that proposal. You are approving the whole package in that question.
No	Keep the rules that this proposal would change. A No vote does not create a different reform or erase a program that already exists.

Five questions you can consider separately

Proposal	An everyday question
1 Public space	How should the city review permission for cafés, ramps and other sidewalk uses?
2 City contracts	How should businesses and nonprofits apply to do city work?
3 Streets land and offices	How should three kinds of city projects be reviewed?
4 Building permits	Where should construction applications go, and who can approve them?
5 City savings	What rules should guide saving for a difficult financial year?

A hearing is a meeting where people can speak. Notice means being told about a proposal or application. Comment means giving a view. Approval means having the power to authorize something. These are different roles; each proposal may change some of them.

Each case study tests a best and worst case under Yes and under No. Honest leaders can use review powers to protect people; dishonest leaders can use them for favoritism. Faster decisions can serve people well or hide problems if checks fail. These are fictional possibilities, not predictions or allegations. Neither outcome permits corruption or other unlawful conduct. Sources [25–31,51,65] explain the actual rules.

Check the sources: [Official NYC Votes proposal guide](#) | [Full proposed legal changes](#)

Who reviews uses of public space

Should the city remove some required steps for permission to put things on sidewalks and streets?

Picture a café adding outdoor tables or a building adding an entrance ramp. The sidewalk belongs to the public. The owner needs city permission to use part of it. That process affects the applicant, nearby residents, and people passing by.

Words to know Revocable consent means permission the city can take back. It is used for some ramps, benches, utility structures and cafés. It is not ownership of the sidewalk. The City Record is the city's official publication for public notices.

What happens now The applicant goes to the responsible city agency. A public hearing is required, and the applicant pays for newspaper notices. Local officials and the community board receive notice. For sidewalk cafés, the City Council can reject the permission even after the transportation agency approves it.

If you vote Yes

The hearing The agency could choose whether to hold one. A hearing would no longer be required for every application.

Notice and local input Paid newspaper notices would end. City Record notices and notice to local officials and the community board would remain, with an opportunity for those bodies to comment.

The final decision For sidewalk cafés, the Council would lose its separate power to reject the permission. The city would still decide whether to approve each application.

If you vote No

The required hearing and newspaper notices would stay. The Council would keep its separate power to reject sidewalk café permission. An owner could still apply for a café, ramp or other allowed use through the existing process.

Plain-language explanation of the proposed rules. Sources [25,65]. Further details and dates follow the example.

Check the sources: [Read the official explanation](#)

A café owner, a neighbor and a person using a walker



FICTIONAL EXAMPLES • POSSIBILITIES, NOT FORECASTS • AI ILLUSTRATION

The owner wants six café tables. A neighbor asks about noise. A person using a walker needs clear passage. Consider four possible outcomes for this fictional application.

YES best case The agency checks access and listens to local comments. A clear, workable layout gets permission without an unnecessary hearing. The owner saves time and expense; people can still pass safely.

YES worst case The agency overlooks an access problem and skips a hearing. Neighbors can comment, but the Council no longer has its separate power to reject the sidewalk café permission. A poor layout gets approved.

NO best case The required hearing reveals a blocked path. Local review helps secure a better layout; the Council can reject the sidewalk café permission if concerns remain. The business and sidewalk users both benefit.

NO worst case A suitable café plan stalls because an official uses the Council review process to help a favored competitor. Hearings add delay without solving a real problem. The applicant keeps paying and waiting.

For your community conversation Which checks would protect access and fair treatment under either process? Who responds when they fail?

Check the sources: [Check the proposal behind these examples](#)

Think through your choice

Different views to consider

Why some support it NYC Votes summarizes support for reducing costs and delays. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest points to the difficulty of getting accessibility ramps through the existing process. [25]

Why some question it NYC Votes reports that the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York and D9 Harlem Votes favor keeping stronger formal opportunities for local review. Their concerns include access to participation and the Council's role. [25]

These are outside views. RESET does not recommend a Yes or No vote.

Who is D9 Harlem Votes NYC Votes identifies it as a Harlem-based, nonpartisan civic engagement coalition. Its own profile describes members of historically Black fraternities and sororities. We cite its views as a community coalition, not as an official Council or community-board statement. It also supports Proposal 5, according to NYC Votes. [25,29]

Check the sources: [D9 Harlem Votes own profile](#)

Details that help explain the choice

What stays City permission would still be required. The city could still take the permission back. Notice and comment are ways to give views; they are different from the power to reject an application.

Another notice change The proposed legal text shortens City Record publication for a hearing notice from 15 days to 6. It also changes newspaper notice rules for franchises—city authorizations for certain public uses. [65]

When changes would begin The revised process would begin March 1, 2027. Applications already submitted before that date would use the earlier rules. [25,65]

Walk through your decision

Grounded What matters to me about sharing public space?

Aligned Which needs should I weigh: access, local participation, time, cost, or others?

Aware Can I explain which hearing, notice and Council powers would change?

Intentional After weighing both processes, which one do I choose, and why?

My choice and reason: _____

Check the sources: [Official explanation and submitted views](#) | [Proposed legal text](#)

How organizations apply for city contracts

Should the city change contractor paperwork and several approval and public review steps?

A neighborhood group wants to run a city-funded tutoring program. Before the city can hire it, the group must complete paperwork and get approvals. Those steps affect the group, the families it serves, and everyone whose tax money helps pay the bill.

Words to know A contract is an agreement to buy goods or services. Procurement means the process of buying them. The Procurement Policy Board, or PPB, sets many city contracting rules.

What happens now The Mayor's contracting office and the Comptroller maintain a detailed questionnaire for contractors. The same required questions apply across contract sizes. Agencies must hold a hearing on their yearly plan for direct-service contracts, such as youth services. The PPB has no required quarterly meeting schedule.

If you vote Yes

Paperwork The PPB could write questionnaire rules that vary by contract size, industry, small-business status or other factors. A separate committee would do this for franchises and concessions.

Approval and review The annual service-contract plan would still be published, but its draft hearing would end. The Mayor could delegate approval of certain contracts over \$5 million, with agency commissioner approval.

Meetings and public comments The PPB would meet at least every three months. A later change would make a public-comment route permanent in city law and let the PPB set which contract values require it.

If you vote No

The existing questionnaire rules and the Mayor and Comptroller's roles would stay. The draft annual service-plan hearing would remain required. Current limits on delegated approvals would stay, and this proposal would not require quarterly PPB meetings or make its later public-comment changes.

Plain-language explanation of the proposed rules. Sources [26,65]. Further details and dates follow the example.

Check the sources: [Read the official explanation](#)

A small nonprofit and a large contractor



FICTIONAL EXAMPLES • POSSIBILITIES, NOT FORECASTS • AI ILLUSTRATION

The picture shows a fictional tutoring program applying for city work. Also imagine a large company seeking a city contract. The same process must serve families and protect public money.

YES best case The board fits forms to contract size while keeping useful ownership and conflict disclosures. Staff check those answers and prices. The small program can compete without needless paperwork; large firms still face meaningful review.

YES worst case If rewritten rules omit important ownership details, a large company's link to an official's relative could go unnoticed. Weak checking lets an inflated price pass. Favoritism and fraud would still be unlawful.

NO best case Fuller disclosures help reviewers identify who owns the large company and spot a possible conflict. They check prices and question the deal before awarding money. Public review also informs the agency's service plan.

NO worst case The large company can afford staff to handle detailed forms while the small program gives up. Reviewers file answers without checking them. A connected contractor still wins; paperwork alone has not protected the public.

For your community conversation What ownership facts, price checks and public records would expose favoritism under either set of rules?

Check the sources: [Check the proposal behind these examples](#)

Think through your choice

Different views to consider

Why some support it NYC Votes summarizes support for forms that better fit small businesses and nonprofits. Citizens Union supports the proposal as a way to simplify city contracting. [26,30]

Why some question it NYC Votes reports that D9 Harlem Votes questions reducing public review. Citizens Union supports the proposal while also calling for care in keeping disclosure questions that help prevent corruption. [26,30]

These are outside views. RESET does not recommend a Yes or No vote.

Details that help explain the choice

Why the form matters The questions help the city learn about a contractor. The proposal gives rulemaking bodies authority over required information; it does not itself print a final, shorter questionnaire.

A separate public comment change From October 2030, the PPB could set the contract-value threshold for required public comments. The legal text requires notice and a comment period of at least seven days for covered contracts. Exceptions also apply. [65]

When changes would begin Quarterly PPB meetings would begin January 1, 2027. The contract public-comment changes would begin October 1, 2030. Other changes would begin when voter approval is officially certified; new questionnaire rules would then need to be adopted. [26,65]

Walk through your decision

Grounded What do I want public contracting to accomplish?

Aligned Which needs matter most here: service, useful disclosure, manageable forms, public participation, or others?

Aware Can I explain both the paperwork changes and the review changes?

Intentional Do I support this package of changes? What is my reason?

My choice and reason: _____

Check the sources: [Official explanation and submitted views](#) | [Proposed legal text](#)

Street projects city land and office space

Should the city change three different approval systems in one proposal?

Think about three places: a crossing that may need safety work, a small city-owned lot, and a building where city employees might work. This question changes rules for all three. Your vote covers the whole package.

Words to know City land means property the city owns. Development rights are permission to build a certain amount of floor space. A landmark may have unused rights that can be sold for use elsewhere under city rules.

What happens now Major street projects have notice and consultation steps. Many city land sales or leases go through a longer public review, including a Council role. City office acquisitions have a separate hearing and approval process involving the Planning Commission and Council.

If you vote Yes

Street projects Clarify when urgent safety work can begin before local notice. Missed agency consultations would not invalidate a project. The transportation agency would still have duties to notify or present the work.

Certain city property Allow shorter review for qualifying small lots and landmark development rights, with the Planning Commission making the final decision instead of the Council. Make a program for selling undevelopable lots to adjacent owners permanent.

City offices Remove the Planning Commission and Council hearing and approval steps. The city's administrative agency would certify the acquisition and provide required notices.

If you vote No

The existing street consultation rules would stay. Existing land-review requirements would stay for the property categories this proposal addresses. The separate hearing and approval process for city office space would remain. A No vote would keep these processes; it would not prohibit street work, land transactions or office leases.

Plain-language explanation of the proposed rules. Sources [27,65]. Further details and dates follow the example.

Check the sources: [Read the official explanation](#)

Three places and one ballot question



FICTIONAL EXAMPLES • POSSIBILITIES, NOT FORECASTS • AI ILLUSTRATION

The crossing, qualifying city lot and office space are fictional. One vote covers all three subjects. Here is how the changed or existing processes could serve people—or fail them.

YES best case Reliable safety data supports quicker crossing work. Remaining reviews help secure fair value for a qualifying lot. Staff compare office rents and choose a sound lease. Fewer steps save time while officials explain their decisions.

YES worst case If remaining checks fail, officials overlook an access problem at the crossing, steer a qualifying lot deal toward an ally, or choose an overpriced office lease. The removed Council approval powers offer no extra stop for those property deals.

NO best case Street consultation catches an access problem. Public land review exposes an unfavorable deal, and Council review challenges an overpriced office lease. Officials use their existing powers to seek better terms for the community.

NO worst case Procedural disputes delay a needed crossing. Elsewhere, an official uses a property approval role to favor an ally or obstruct a sound office lease for political leverage. The formal steps remain, but do not ensure fair decisions.

For your community conversation Which review step adds useful protection, which can be abused, and what check remains if that power is removed?

Check the sources: [Check the proposal behind these examples](#)

Think through your choice

Different views to consider

Why some support it Citizens Union supports the package as a way to simplify approvals. NYC Votes reports support for faster street work and putting qualifying city property to use. [27,30]

Why some question it Citizens Union also objects to grouping different subjects into one vote. NYC Votes summarizes concerns about the reduced local review in parts of the package. [27,30]

These are outside views. RESET does not recommend a Yes or No vote.

Details that help explain the choice

Which land qualifies The proposed small-lot category is no more than 10,000 square feet and excludes individual landmarks. Landmark development rights are a separate category. The shorter review cannot be used if the project requires an environmental impact statement—a detailed environmental study. [65]

What review remains For qualifying land transactions, the community board and Borough President would review at the same time. The Planning Commission would make the final decision. For city offices, advance local notices and later notice to the Council and Comptroller would remain. A separate hearing after a property approval is more than two years old would end. [65]

When changes would begin Most changes would begin when approval is certified. Permanent authority for selling qualifying undevelopable lots to adjacent owners without an auction would begin December 31, 2030. [27,65]

Walk through your decision

Grounded What matters to me about safety, public property and public spending?

Aligned Which goals apply to each of the three parts?

Aware Have I considered who decides and who can respond in each part?

Intentional Taking all three parts together, what is my choice, and why?

My choice and reason: _____

Check the sources: [Official explanation and submitted views](#) | [Proposed legal text](#)

Where building applications go

Should building applications use one citywide system, with more authorized reviewers and a change in waterfront permitting?

Imagine renovating a building. The owner may need to send plans to several city agencies. The people doing the work need clear instructions. People living nearby need the work to follow the rules. This question changes parts of that application system.

Words to know A permit is official permission to do particular work. The Department of Buildings, or DOB, reviews and enforces many construction rules. Some waterfront structures, such as piers, have a separate permitting arrangement.

What happens now Applicants submit documents through separate agency systems. The Charter limits which Buildings officials can exercise certain approval powers. Small Business Services handles construction permits for certain waterfront structures.

If you vote Yes

One application system Require Buildings to develop a shared permit system by 2030. All city agencies would have to use it for construction permit applications and approvals.

Who can approve Allow additional qualified Buildings officials to exercise approval powers. The proposal also updates borough officials' titles in the Charter.

Waterfront structures Move responsibility for certain waterfront construction permits from Small Business Services to Buildings. Existing permits and approvals would stay in place.

If you vote No

Separate agency systems would remain under the present Charter arrangements. Existing limits on approval authority would stay. Small Business Services would keep the waterfront construction responsibilities covered by this proposal. This question would not require the shared system or those transfers of authority.

Plain-language explanation of the proposed rules. Sources [28,65]. Further details and dates follow the example.

Check the sources: [Read the official explanation](#)

A renovation application with several stops



FICTIONAL EXAMPLES • POSSIBILITIES, NOT FORECASTS • AI ILLUSTRATION

A fictional owner, contractor, reviewers and neighbor discuss building plans. The waterfront recalls a separate permitting change. Consider both good administration and poor administration under each choice.

YES best case One system shows who has each application. Qualified reviewers coordinate, keep records and apply safety rules. The owner repeats less paperwork, the project moves sooner, and the neighbor can get a clear answer.

YES worst case If supervision and records are weak, a connected builder receives rushed approvals while incomplete plans get little scrutiny. Staff blame the new system when neighbors ask questions. Centralizing forms has not ensured accountable decisions.

NO best case Separate agency reviewers catch a problem others missed. Staff with waterfront experience identify a hazard in covered pier work. The applicant corrects the plans before receiving the required permission.

NO worst case Separate offices lose documents or pass responsibility back and forth. A needed repair stalls. Connected firms find their way through while an ordinary owner cannot get an answer. Multiple review points have not ensured equal treatment.

For your community conversation Can an applicant or neighbor trace each approval and challenge unequal treatment, with one system or several?

Check the sources: [Check the proposal behind these examples](#)

Think through your choice

Different views to consider

Why some support it Citizens Union supports the proposal as a way to make construction permitting easier to navigate. NYC Votes summarizes support for coordinating applications across agencies. [28,30]

Why some question it NYC Votes reports that opponents, including D9 Harlem Votes, want clearer arrangements for public information, oversight and responsibility under the proposed system. [28]

These are outside views. RESET does not recommend a Yes or No vote.

Details that help explain the choice

A system built over time The hub would have to be developed by 2030. It would not appear on Election Day. The proposal directs a change in the system, while its practical design and rollout would come later.

The waterfront provision The transfer concerns covered waterfront structures and construction responsibilities. It does not transfer every waterfront government function. Existing permits and approvals would remain valid. [65]

When changes would begin Most provisions would begin when approval is certified. The waterfront transfer would begin December 31, 2030, or when a new waterfront-structure code takes effect, whichever comes first. [28,65]

Walk through your decision

Grounded What matters to me about construction and the places people live or work?

Aligned What do I want from a permit process: clear steps, safety, timely answers, public information, or other needs?

Aware Can I explain the hub, approval authority and waterfront changes separately?

Intentional Do I support these changes together? What is my reason?

My choice and reason: _____

Check the sources: [Official explanation and submitted views](#) | [Proposed legal text](#)

How the city plans savings for hard times

Should the city adopt a reserve target and a published method for deciding deposits?

In a difficult year, the city may collect less tax money while people still need services. Saving beforehand can help. But money saved today is also money that cannot be spent today. This proposal asks what rules should guide that planning.

Words to know A reserve is money set aside for later. The Rainy Day Fund already exists. Tax revenue means money the city receives from taxes. A target is the amount the city aims to hold; a deposit is money added to the fund.

What happens now The city has a Rainy Day Fund but no reserve target or deposit method required by this proposal. Officials decide deposits through the budget. State law already limits how much may be withdrawn without a special mayoral certification.

If you vote Yes

A savings target Set a goal of holding at least 12% of the previous year's tax revenue in the Rainy Day Fund and other reserves identified in the city's method.

A deposit method Require a published method for calculating deposits when reserves are below target. Deposits would depend on that method and an approved budget; the rules allow flexibility, including years with no deposit.

Withdrawals Put the existing state withdrawal limit into city law permanently: no more than half the fund in a year unless the Mayor certifies a compelling financial need.

If you vote No

The Rainy Day Fund would remain. Officials could still add money through approved budgets. This proposal's 12% target, required deposit method and permanent city-law withdrawal provision would not be added. Existing law, including applicable state withdrawal rules, would continue.

Plain-language explanation of the proposed rules. Sources [29,65]. Further details and dates follow the example.

Check the sources: [Read the official explanation](#)

A savings target is different from a yearly deposit



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The panels show stronger and weaker financial years. If last year's tax income were \$100, a 12% target means \$12 in qualifying reserves, not a \$12 yearly deposit.

YES best case Officials publish a clear deposit method, identify reserves that can meet needs, and budget savings in stronger years. The target guides preparation while budgets also fund current services. Residents can follow the amounts.

YES worst case Officials promote the 12% target but count reserves committed to other purposes and repeatedly make no deposit. Residents expect more usable savings than are available. A target on paper gives false confidence.

NO best case The existing fund remains. Responsible leaders save through the budget and pursue a stronger savings policy through later action. They explain how they balance current services and future needs. A No vote itself would not create that stronger policy.

NO worst case Leaders repeatedly postpone saving under current rules. When tax income falls, usable reserves are too small to cushion the gap, and services face cuts. Keeping flexibility has not produced preparation.

For your community conversation What money would really be available in a downturn, and how would residents check both saving and current needs?

Check the sources: [Check the proposal behind these examples](#)

Think through your choice

Different views to consider

Why some support it Citizens Union supports the proposal as a step toward clearer savings rules, while noting that annual deposits would not be guaranteed and other reserves could count. [30]

Why some question it The Citizens Budget Commission opposes it. The group prefers a 16% target and stronger deposit requirements, and questions counting reserves that serve other purposes. These are the group's preferred policies, not RESET recommendations. [31]

These are outside views. RESET does not recommend a Yes or No vote.

Details that help explain the choice

How the method would be made The budget office would prepare it with the Comptroller. There would be public notice, comments and a hearing before the final method. The first final method is due May 1, 2027, with an update by May 1, 2030 and at least every four years after that. [65]

What the number means 12% describes the proposed minimum target relative to last year's tax income. It is not a new tax rate or a rule to add 12% every year. Other qualifying reserves may count. The withdrawal exception would require the Mayor to certify a compelling financial need. [65]

When changes would begin The Charter changes would begin when voter approval is officially certified. The first published final deposit method would be due May 1, 2027. [29,65]

Walk through your decision

Grounded What matters to me about services today and preparation for difficult years?

Aligned How do I weigh present needs, future protection and flexibility?

Aware Can I explain the difference between a target, a deposit and a withdrawal?

Intentional Do I support these rules as written? What is my reason?

My choice and reason: _____

Check the sources: [Official explanation and submitted views](#) | [Proposed legal text](#)

Check the sources: [Citizens Union support](#) | [Citizens Budget Commission opposition](#)

Now meet the people seeking the bench

The proposals ask you to choose rules. Judicial elections ask you to choose people who will apply the law. This section explains the offices and introduces every person on the posted Manhattan judicial list.

Why a judge's work may matter to you

Imagine receiving court papers about a bill you believe you already paid. You would want time to explain, clear rules and a decision based on the evidence. Judges also hear disputes about families, businesses, homes and criminal charges.

Start with your own address

Manhattan is called New York County in court and election records. Its boroughwide contests include Surrogate's Court, Supreme Court and Civil Court. Civil Court district contests depend on where you live. This edition covers twenty-four people across eight contests. [52]

[VIEW YOUR OFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT](#)

The same approach for every candidate

Every person has a real photograph, party line, law school, New York admission year, career background and linked sources. Candidate and employer biographies describe their own accounts. Outside assessments identify the organization, date and office.

RESET does not score candidates or recommend a vote. The amount of published information varies by person and is not a measure of ability.

A question for every candidate

What experience prepares you for this court, and how would you give a fair hearing to someone who does not have a lawyer?

Know the court before the candidate

Office	What it does	An everyday example
Surrogate's Court judge	Handles wills, estates, adoptions and certain guardianship matters.	A family needs to settle the estate of a person who died, including bills and inheritance.
Supreme Court justice	A state trial judge with broad civil authority and, in NYC criminal terms, felony cases.	A divorce, foreclosure, major injury lawsuit or felony prosecution.
Civil Court judge	The court handles money claims up to \$50,000, with small claims and housing parts. Elected judges may serve in other courts.	A disputed debt or a claim that paid repairs were not completed.

Manhattan Surrogates and Supreme Court justices serve 14-year elected terms. Elected Civil Court judges serve 10-year terms. New York's highest state court is the Court of Appeals. Housing Court judges are selected through a separate appointment process. [2–4,157]

An elected title and a court assignment can differ

A Civil Court judge may be assigned to Family Court, Criminal Court or an acting Supreme Court position. An acting assignment is different from election to a full Supreme Court term. Some incumbent Supreme Court candidates currently review appeals. [2]

A court attorney helps the judge

Law clerks and court attorneys research law, help prepare proposed decisions and manage cases. A referee may conduct hearings or decide assigned matters under the authority of that position. Lawyers in practice represent clients. These are different kinds of experience.

Manhattan contests at a glance

“Up to six” means you may choose as many as six different people in that contest. It does not mean you must choose six. Follow the instructions printed on your official ballot. [52]

Contest	Who votes	Maximum choices
Surrogate — New York County	All Manhattan voters	1
Supreme Court — 1st Judicial District	All Manhattan voters	Up to 6
Civil Court — countywide	All Manhattan voters	Up to 3
Civil Court — District 1	Voters in District 1	1
Civil Court — District 3	Voters in District 3	1
Civil Court — District 4	Voters in District 4	1
Civil Court — District 7	Voters in District 7	Up to 4
Civil Court — District 9	Voters in District 9	Up to 2

District 7 fills four seats, and District 9 fills two, on the posted list. Districts 1, 3 and 4 each fill one. Vote only in the district contest printed on your ballot. A neighborhood or ZIP code alone may not identify your court district.

[FIND YOUR ADDRESS AND VIEW SAMPLE BALLOT](#)

Roster source: the Board of Elections list printed September 11, 2026, marked tentative and subject to change. Check the current sample ballot for updates. [52]

Match names to your ballot

Surrogate — New York County

1 choice • Rita Mella

Supreme Court — 1st Judicial District

Up to 6 choices • Shlomo S. Hagler; Manuel J. Mendez; Saliann Scarpulla; Hasa A. Kingo; Kathleen Waterman-Marshall; Christopher Chin; Amy S. Taylor; Joshua E. Goldfein; Sienna M. Fontaine; Bob Cohen; Jeffrey W. Rizzo

Civil Court — countywide

Up to 3 choices • Josh E. Hanshaft; Emily Morales-Minerva; Vlad Frants

Civil Court — District 1

1 choice • Eric Flores

Civil Court — District 3

1 choice • Steven Benathen

Civil Court — District 4

1 choice • Faith Bondy

Civil Court — District 7

Up to 4 choices • Keshia Espinal; Karen Cortes-Tower; Matthew Levy; Aija Tingling

Civil Court — District 9

Up to 2 choices • Jennifer Frankola-Crawford; Brian J. Krist

Democratic nominees appear on that party's line. The five Supreme Court nominees Amy Taylor, Joshua Goldfein, Sienna Fontaine, Bob Cohen and Jeffrey Rizzo appear on the Working Families line. Aija Tingling appears on the Fair Courts line. There are no Republican or Conservative judicial nominees on this posted Manhattan list. [52]

Surrogate's Court

Find this person's contest on the official ballot. Outside assessments appear together after all candidate profiles.



Rita Mella

Democratic | Surrogate

Law school: CUNY | New York admission: 1992 [33]

Background New York County Surrogate since 2013. Before that, she served six years as a Civil Court judge with Criminal Court assignments.

Work in practice Her court handles wills, estates, adoptions and related guardianship matters. Her candidate statement describes helping families settle estate disputes and expanding the court's Help Center.

Public information She also teaches administrative law at CUNY. A court record example later in this guide concerns an executor's management of estate property.

Sources [103,141]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

What is an executor?

An executor is the person responsible for carrying out a will. The work may include collecting property, paying valid bills and distributing what remains. Surrogate's Court can resolve disagreements and review the executor's accounting of money and property. [157]

Supreme Court candidates



Shlomo S. Hagler

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: CUNY | New York admission: 1992 [33]

Background An incumbent Supreme Court justice. His judicial background includes Housing Court, Civil Court, Supreme Court and appellate service.

Work in practice He became a Supreme Court justice in 2012. amNewYork reports that he served as presiding justice of the Appellate Term before joining the Appellate Division in 2025.

Public information Appellate judges work on panels that review lower court rulings. His current court role and the elected Supreme Court seat are related but different positions.

Sources [102,104]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Manuel J. Mendez

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: Universidad Central del Este | New York admission: 1990 [33]

Background An incumbent Supreme Court justice serving on the Appellate Division, First Department, since 2020. He began as an elected Civil Court judge in 2003.

Work in practice His earlier practice included Legal Aid criminal defense and private work in criminal, real estate and workers' compensation matters. He later handled civil cases and coordinated New York City asbestos litigation.

Public information His official biography describes legal education in the Dominican Republic and Fordham's foreign law graduate program. He was elected to Supreme Court in 2012.

Sources [105]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Supreme Court candidates



Saliann Scarpulla

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: Brooklyn | New York admission: 1987 [33]

Background An incumbent Supreme Court justice and Appellate Division justice since 2020. She was elected to Civil Court in 2001 and Supreme Court in 2012.

Work in practice Her earlier work included private litigation, senior legal work at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and service as a judge's principal court attorney.

Public information She served in Supreme Court's Commercial Division from 2014 to 2020, hearing business disputes. Her current appellate work involves reviewing rulings with other judges.

Sources [106]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Hasa A. Kingo

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: Georgetown | New York admission: 2011 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge elected in 2021, now serving as an acting Supreme Court justice in Manhattan. His earlier judicial assignments included Family Court.

Work in practice His legal background includes the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, consumer fraud work in the state Attorney General's Office and service as a judge's law clerk.

Public information An acting Supreme Court assignment is different from election to a full Supreme Court term. The court record section includes an appeal involving his Family Court work.

Sources [102,117,142]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Supreme Court candidates



Kathleen Waterman-Marshall

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: Cardozo | New York admission: 1999 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge since 2019, serving as an acting Supreme Court justice since late 2021. Her official biography describes earlier Family Court assignments.

Work in practice Her work includes divorce, family financial disputes and general civil cases. She has taught legal writing at Cardozo and provided law instruction for high school students.

Public information The records section explains two appeals involving her rulings: a public employee's union-related dispute and a divorce involving family trusts.

Sources [107,143,144]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Christopher Chin

Democratic | Supreme Court

Law school: Brooklyn | New York admission: 1995 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge elected in 2021, with service beginning in 2022. He spent three years in Bronx Criminal Court before an acting Supreme Court assignment in Manhattan in 2025.

Work in practice His professional biography describes more than twenty years in private practice before the bench. His civil assignments include vehicle accidents, construction injury claims and other trials.

Public information An appellate example later in the guide shows how some parts of a traffic accident ruling were kept and others changed.

Sources [108,145]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Supreme Court candidates



Amy S. Taylor

Working Families | Supreme Court

Law school: CUNY | New York admission: 2007 [33]

Background An immigrant rights and civil rights lawyer. Columbia Law School lists her as a lecturer in law for fall 2026.

Work in practice Her background includes leadership at the International Refugee Assistance Project, co-leading Make the Road New York's legal team, and language access and equal rights work at Legal Services NYC.

Public information These roles involve legal services, litigation and managing nonprofit programs. The shared nomination note explains the Working Families Party's account of this year's Supreme Court nominations.

Sources [109,110,150]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Joshua E. Goldfein

Working Families | Supreme Court

Law school: NYU | New York admission: 1994 [33]

Background A Legal Aid Society lawyer whose work includes the Homeless Rights Project. His professional work concerns access to shelter and services in New York City.

Work in practice Legal Aid identifies him in its work on Callahan v Carey, the long-running right-to-shelter case. Related work addresses access to shelter for people with disabilities.

Public information He works as an advocate for clients. The nomination note explains the party's account of his ballot placement; the directory page provides a separate dated source snapshot.

Sources [111,132,154]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Supreme Court candidates



Sienna M. Fontaine

Working Families | Supreme Court

Law school: NYU | New York admission: 2008 [33]

Background A co-executive director of Make the Road New York. Her earlier legal work includes helping low-income families obtain public benefits and address health-related legal problems.

Work in practice An NYU Law profile describes a fellowship connecting legal help with medical care in the Bronx, followed by public benefits work and leadership of Make the Road's legal services.

Public information Her present role includes leading a nonprofit organization. The shared nomination note explains the party's account of this year's Supreme Court ballot placements.

Sources [112,113]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Bob Cohen

Working Families | Supreme Court

Law school: Rutgers | New York admission: 1989 [33]

Background A lawyer and policy advocate with Citizen Action of New York. His published legislative testimony identifies him as its policy and research director.

Work in practice His work includes proposals concerning climate, energy affordability and public spending. He has also discussed health insurance access and assistance for people enrolling in coverage.

Public information Legislative advocacy means presenting evidence and proposed policy to lawmakers. The nomination note and directory snapshot supply additional context about this ballot entry.

Sources [114,134,151]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Supreme Court candidates

Find this person's contest on the official ballot. Outside assessments appear together after all candidate profiles.



Jeffrey W. Rizzo

Working Families | Supreme Court

Law school: Pace | New York admission: 2004 [33]

Background A private-practice lawyer whose firm describes work in criminal defense, civil litigation and appeals. He also provides information about New York criminal record sealing.

Work in practice His professional biography describes representing clients in criminal cases and handling appeals, including work involving the New York Court of Appeals.

Public information A lawyer represents a client's interests; a judge decides cases under the law. The shared nomination note explains the party's account of this year's Supreme Court ballot placements.

Sources [115,133]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Why are five nominees not actively campaigning?

amNewYork reported October 21, 2026 that a Working Families Party spokesperson described its five Manhattan Supreme Court nominees as procedural placeholders. Moving nominees to a judicial ballot can allow a party to replace their nominations for other offices. The spokesperson said these five are not actively campaigning. They remain on the posted judicial ballot. [52,102]

This describes the party's nomination process, not a RESET assessment of the people or a recommendation about your vote. The same background and photo format is used for all eleven Supreme Court candidates.

Civil Court countywide



Josh E. Hanshaft

Democratic | Civil Court countywide

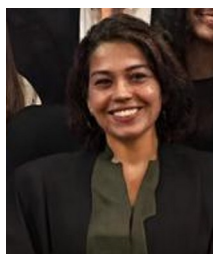
Law school: CUNY | New York admission: 1995 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge since 2017 whose assignments have included Family Court and Criminal Court. State registration lists his work in New York Criminal Court.

Work in practice His professional biography describes twenty-one years as a Brooklyn prosecutor before the bench. He also develops educational material to help people prepare for the bar examination.

Public information A court record example explains an appeal from a jury trial he presided over, including questions about evidence and instructions to the jury.

Sources [116,146]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Emily Morales-Minerva

Democratic | Civil Court countywide

Law school: Cornell | New York admission: 2002 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge elected in 2016, now assigned to Manhattan Supreme Court's civil Part 42. Her earlier judicial work included Bronx Family Court.

Work in practice Trellis describes prior service as a Court of Appeals staff attorney and law clerk, followed by legal and administrative roles in Civil Court and the state court system.

Public information Her current assignment involves civil disputes. The records section gives both an example of an appellate change and an example of a ruling that was upheld.

Sources [117,118,147,148]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court countywide

Find this person's contest on the official ballot. Outside assessments appear together after all candidate profiles.



Vlad Frants

Democratic | Civil Court countywide

Law school: Brooklyn | New York admission: 2010 [33]

Background A government lawyer whose campaign describes tax litigation and administrative judging. State registration lists the city Office of Administrative Tax Appeals as his employer.

Work in practice His campaign describes hearing evidence, reviewing records and writing administrative decisions. This role resolves disputes within an agency system rather than an elected court.

Public information He reports additional graduate education at Georgetown and Fordham and experience teaching law. His stated priorities include clear decisions and access for people without lawyers.

Sources [119]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court districts 1 and 3



Eric Flores

Democratic | Civil Court District 1

Law school: Thomas M. Cooley | New York admission: 2011 [33]

Background A civil litigation lawyer. His candidate materials describe leading Scahill Law Group's Manhattan department and handling lawsuits from the initial complaint through trial.

Work in practice He describes work on injury and medical malpractice matters, preparing witnesses and trying cases. His professional background also includes helping train newer lawyers.

Public information His materials identify Community Board 1 service in Lower Manhattan and an undergraduate background in journalism. These are the candidate's account of his experience.

Sources [120]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Steven Benathen

Democratic | Civil Court District 3

Law school: University of Illinois | New York admission: 2014 [33]

Background A court attorney whose candidate materials describe serving as principal court attorney to Bronx Supreme Court Justice Audrey Stone since 2023.

Work in practice His earlier work includes criminal defense at The Bronx Defenders, appeals at the Center for Appellate Litigation, and law clerk roles for Justices Lizbeth González and Ellen Gesmer.

Public information He describes researching law, drafting proposed decisions and jury instructions, and helping manage cases involving felony domestic violence charges. The judge issues the court's rulings.

Sources [121]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court districts 4 and 7



Faith Bondy

Democratic | Civil Court District 4

Law school: Cardozo | New York admission: 1999 [33]

Background A private-practice lawyer also known professionally as Faith Alison Friedman and publicly as Faith Friedman Bondy. Her work includes complex civil litigation and criminal defense.

Work in practice Her professional biography describes representing individuals and businesses in state and federal investigations, trials and appeals, including financial and white-collar criminal matters.

Public information She has worked with Gerald B. Lefcourt since 2006. Her earlier City Council candidacy is a separate election; this guide concerns her current Civil Court candidacy.

Sources [122,153]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Keshia Espinal

Democratic | Civil Court District 7

Law school: Western New England | New York admission: 2001 [33]

Background A Criminal Court judge first appointed in 2017 and reappointed in 2021. Current court leadership records list her as supervising judge of Kings County Criminal Court.

Work in practice Her official biography describes sixteen years in the Queens District Attorney's Office, including domestic violence work, before her judicial appointment.

Public information The records section explains a published decision about the facts needed to support criminal charges and the prosecution's deadline to be ready for trial. Her present candidacy is for an elected Civil Court seat.

Sources [123,149,159]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court district 7



Karen Cortes-Tower

Democratic | Civil Court District 7

Law school: Brooklyn | New York admission: 2004 [33]

Background A Bronx Family Court judge, professionally listed as Karen M.C. Cortes. She was first appointed in January 2019.

Work in practice An Asian American Bar Association notice describes prior family law practice, service as a Bronx Family Court attorney referee and work for the Administration for Children's Services.

Public information Her background includes handling family proceedings and court hearings. The record example later in this guide concerns the timing of a hearing after children were temporarily removed from a home.

Sources [124,156]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Matthew Levy

Democratic | Civil Court District 7

Law school: Widener Delaware | New York admission: 2014 [33]

Background A lawyer working in the state court system. An Ohio Wesleyan University profile describes him as a senior court attorney in Manhattan Supreme Court in 2023.

Work in practice The university profile describes earlier service as counsel and legislative director to state Senator Robert Jackson. That work involves researching law and supporting the lawmaking process.

Public information State registration continues to list the Unified Court System as his employer. His background combines court legal work with legislative service; these roles differ from presiding as the judge.

Sources [126]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court districts 7 and 9



Aija Tingling

Fair Courts | Civil Court District 7

Law school: North Carolina Central | New York admission: 2006 [33]

Background A Civil Court judge serving since 2017, now assigned as an acting Supreme Court justice in Manhattan. Her earlier judicial assignments included Bronx Family Court.

Work in practice Current court records list her in Matrimonial Part 28, which handles divorce-related matters. Earlier assignments included guardianship and other civil work.

Public information Fair Courts is the ballot line on the posted November list. Earlier Democratic affiliation or primary listings describe a different stage of the election.

Sources [117,125,155]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.



Jennifer Frankola-Crawford

Democratic | Civil Court District 9

Law school: CUNY | New York admission: 2010 [33]

Background An attorney and arbitrator whose professional background includes education law. She previously worked as a public school teacher.

Work in practice The Irish American Bar Association lists her undergraduate degree from Manhattan College, a master's degree from NYU and her CUNY law degree. She has served as president of the Brehon Law Society.

Public information Arbitrators hear disputes outside the ordinary court trial process under the rules governing the case. Her professional background offers experience in legal practice and resolving disputes.

Sources [127]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

Civil Court district 9

Find this person's contest on the official ballot. Outside assessments appear together after all candidate profiles.



Brian J. Krist

Democratic | Civil Court District 9

Law school: New York Law School | New York admission: 2009 [33]

Background A principal court attorney and member of the New York State Board of Regents, elected to that education body in March 2025. He also teaches at Montclair State University.

Work in practice His official biography describes earlier work at the NYC Law Department, Civilian Complaint Review Board, Administration for Children's Services and Department of Investigation.

Public information His court and agency work includes legal research and public service. Service as a Regent concerns education policy; his current candidacy is for a Civil Court judgeship.

Sources [128,129]; school and admission [33]. Outside assessments follow the profiles.

An outside assessment is a source

The New York Women’s Bar Association, or NYWBA, published its assessment notice in the New York Law Journal on October 22, 2026. The next two tables cover all twenty-four candidates. [101]

How to read the tables

A = NYWBA Approved.

P = NYWBA Not Rated—Did not participate.

P records participation status; it is distinct from an assessment of qualifications. These are NYWBA labels, not RESET ratings.

Surrogate and Supreme Court

Candidate	Office	NYWBA
Rita Mella	Surrogate	A
Shlomo S. Hagler	Supreme Court	A
Manuel J. Mendez	Supreme Court	A
Saliann Scarpulla	Supreme Court	A
Hasa A. Kingo	Supreme Court	A
Kathleen Waterman-Marshall	Supreme Court	A
Christopher Chin	Supreme Court	A
Amy S. Taylor	Supreme Court	P
Joshua E. Goldfein	Supreme Court	P
Sienna M. Fontaine	Supreme Court	P
Bob Cohen	Supreme Court	P
Jeffrey W. Rizzo	Supreme Court	P

NYWBA uses the same criteria for members and nonmembers. Its notice says judges, court employees and judicial candidates on its board did not participate in reviewing or voting on candidates. [101]

Outside assessments continued

Legend: A = Approved. P = Not Rated—Did not participate. Read the original notice for the organization’s exact language and notes. [101]

Candidate	Civil Court contest	NYWBA
Josh E. Hanshaft	Countywide	A
Emily Morales-Minerva	Countywide	P
Vlad Frants	Countywide	A
Eric Flores	District 1	A
Steven Benathen	District 3	A
Faith Bondy	District 4	A
Keshia Espinal	District 7	A
Karen Cortes-Tower	District 7	A
Matthew Levy	District 7	A
Aija Tingling	District 7	A
Jennifer Frankola-Crawford	District 9	A
Brian J. Krist	District 9	P

A separate source: party screening panels

The Manhattan Democratic Party published the results of its Civil Court and Surrogate screening panel on February 4, 2026. It reported out Mella, Hanshaft, Morales-Minerva, Tingling, Benathen, Cortes, Espinal, Flores, Frants and Friedman Bondy, among others. This is a party-related screening process. [131]

Its July 2026 Supreme Court notice reported Hagler, Mendez and Scarpulla as most highly qualified, and said Chin, Kingo and Waterman-Marshall had been reported out by earlier panels. Espinal and Tingling also appear in the Supreme Court screening results, although their November candidacies here are for Civil Court. Match an assessment to its office. [130]

Check the sources: [NYWBA notice \[101\]](#)

Read a court record in plain language

These are selected examples of the work done in court. They are not a complete case review or a scorecard. The selection illustrates different court duties and outcomes. A ruling that is upheld or changed describes that case, not a candidate's whole career.

Rita Mella — handling estate property

Matter of Gerlach (Marino), April 21, 2026. A family member argued that an executor had mishandled property and paid herself too much. Mella declined to decide those objections without a trial. The appeals court upheld that ruling because disputed facts remained about the investment strategy, losses and fees. It did not declare that every estate management decision was correct. [141]

Hasa Kingo — a young person's probation

Matter of Kal-El A., January 16, 2025. After a young person admitted an attempted assault, Kingo ordered eighteen months of probation. The appeals court upheld it, finding probation the least restrictive option needed for this case, given the young person's needs and harm to the victim. The ruling shows how judges apply rules about rehabilitation and community safety. [142]

Josh Hanshaft — trial evidence and jury instructions

People v Elias, December 22, 2025. A defendant appealed a jury conviction, disputing identification evidence and limits on proposed delivery records. The appeals court upheld the conviction. It found the business records were not properly authenticated and the jury instructions kept the burden of proof on prosecutors. The jury decided the facts; Hanshaft managed the trial and legal rulings. [146]

Two useful terms

Affirmed: the appeals court kept the ruling.

Reversed or modified: it changed some or all of the ruling.

A motion is a request for the court to decide a particular question.

One case can involve several candidates

Christopher Chin — the trial court ruling

Nicolai v Daisak, May 12, 2026. A scooter rider sued after colliding with a car. The parties gave different accounts, including whether a pedestrian suddenly stepped into the street. Chin declined to decide fault before trial and declined to remove several defenses raised by the driver. [145]

Scarpulla, Mendez and Hagler — the appellate panel

The appeals panel included Saliann Scarpulla, Manuel Mendez and Shlomo Hagler, along with Martin Shulman and Marissa Rodriguez. All five agreed that disputed facts about fault still needed to be resolved. They changed the order to remove two defenses: assumption of risk and failure to wear a helmet. [145]

The panel explained that assumption of risk did not apply to this traffic accident, and the scooter rider's testimony that he wore a helmet was not contradicted by evidence. The panel kept the other parts of the ruling. [145]

What this helps you see

A trial judge decides the request in the first instance. Appellate judges review the legal ruling together. Here, part of the ruling stayed and part changed. The panel's decision belongs to the panel; it should not be attributed to only one member.

A separate example from Hagler's trial work

S.M. v Mullman, February 6, 2025. Hagler required employment-related claims to proceed in arbitration under a signed agreement and paused the lawsuit. The appeals court upheld that order. It explained that the federal law limiting forced arbitration of sexual assault and harassment claims did not apply because these claims arose before that law's effective date. The appeal concerned where the claims could be heard, not whether the underlying allegations were true. [158]

Civil decisions and appeals

Waterman-Marshall — public employment

Matter of City of New York v Board of Collective Bargaining, December 18, 2025. The city challenged a labor board finding that an employee had been disciplined for union activity. Waterman-Marshall left the board's decision in place. The appeals court upheld her ruling, finding the board had a rational basis supported by testimony and records. [143]

Waterman-Marshall — divorce and family trusts

C.S. v R.H., October 8, 2026. After a financial trial, her order included trust assets in the property divided in a divorce. The appeals court changed that part because the valid trusts placed those assets outside the spouses' ownership. It sent the property calculation back to the trial court, while keeping the child support and fee awards. One appellate judge disagreed with sending the calculation back. [144]

Morales-Minerva — a refundable payment

Gong Ming Chen v Phillips, February 14, 2024. A person sought the return of a refundable \$5,000 payment. Morales-Minerva dismissed the claim after a hearing without the defendants. The appeals court reversed, finding the testimony and documents established the loss. It entered a \$5,000 judgment for the person seeking repayment. [147]

Morales-Minerva — protecting apartment shares

Buchman v 117 E. 72nd St. Corp., May 7, 2026. She temporarily blocked a nonjudicial sale of a cooperative apartment owner's shares and paused the related cases while a nonpayment proceeding was resolved. The appeals court upheld that order. This was interim relief concerning the sale, not a final decision on every underlying claim. [148]

Criminal and family court examples

Espinal — the legal basis for charges

People v Marvel B., July 8, 2024. The charges involved intimate images and alleged coercion. Espinal found that the charging papers did not state all the facts required for those offenses. She also found prosecutors had used 104 chargeable days when the deadline was 90. She dismissed and sealed the case on both grounds. The decision addressed the legal requirements for prosecution. [149]

Cortes-Tower — the timing of a family hearing

Matter of Emmanuel C.F., September 19, 2024. Cortes denied a parent's request to speed up a hearing about children temporarily removed from home. The appeals court reversed. Although the hearing had started on time, it had continued in short sessions over months. The panel required a prompt hearing, allowing further delays only for good cause. It expressly did not decide the merits of the child protection allegations. [156]

Tingling — resolving a marriage record

Camacho v Office of the City Clerk, March 23, 2026. A woman's new marriage certificate was held up by an earlier ceremony whose officiant had not registered with the City Clerk. On the facts presented, and without opposition from the city, Tingling declared the earlier marriage void from the start and directed recognition of the later marriage. This illustrates a court's work resolving a person's legal status. [155]

Keep the question narrow

What issue was the judge deciding at this stage? A request about timing, evidence or a temporary order is different from deciding every fact in a case. Use the source link to read the full ruling.

Can we read reviews of lawyers and judges?

Yes. Avvo and other legal directories publish professional profiles and sometimes client comments. The Robing Room offers courtroom reviews and describes a focus on federal courts. Scrutinize provides New York judge records and methods based on public data. These sources answer different questions. [38,135]

Examples of matched directory entries

Person	What the matched Avvo page displayed
Faith Bondy / Faith Alison Friedman	Not yet reviewed; professional biography and experience. [122]
Joshua E. Goldfein	Not yet reviewed; New York admission and professional entry. [132]
Bob Cohen	Not yet reviewed; Rutgers education, 1989 New York admission and Citizen Action affiliation. [134]
Jeffrey W. Rizzo	Not yet reviewed; Pace education and 2004 New York admission. [133]

“Not yet reviewed” describes the page’s client-comment coverage. Client comments are not a sample of every person served. A directory’s calculated rating, client star score and bar association assessment are different things. This guide does not turn them into a RESET score.

How to check a judge’s record

Start with the judge’s official biography and assignment. Use the Law Reporting Bureau for published decisions and follow any appeal. Scrutinize links underlying records and explains what its measures include. Publication rates count publicly available decisions, not every case a judge handled. [135]

For public judicial discipline, use the Commission on Judicial Conduct’s own determinations. Official attorney registration helps match names and admission dates. Neither a directory profile nor this guide certifies a complete disciplinary history. [33,37]

[SEARCH PUBLIC JUDICIAL DETERMINATIONS](#)

Make your own decision

You can use this page for a proposal or a judicial contest. Use the questions to work toward a choice and a reason you can explain in your own words.

Step	Your response
Grounded	What values or responsibilities matter to me? _____ _____
Aligned	Which priorities apply to this particular choice? _____ _____
Aware	What does each option do? What do I still want to learn? _____ _____
Intentional	What is my choice, and what is my reason? _____ _____

Check your understanding

For a proposal, explain what Yes changes and what No keeps. For a judicial contest, explain what the court does and what experience you learned about the candidates. Then look back at the original source for any detail you want to confirm.

Make a plan to vote

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Early voting runs October 24 through November 1. Early voting hours vary, and your early voting site may differ from your Election Day site. Check the official site before leaving home. [64]

CHECK YOUR POLL SITE AND SAMPLE BALLOT

My voting day and time: _____

My correct voting location: _____

A conversation worth having

Try asking: What does this choice do? What matters to you about it? What helped you reach your decision? You can learn from someone's reasons even when your choices differ.

Questions or a community workshop: Pastor Reginald Lee Bachus
reggie@reggiebachus.com

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[2] [New York City Bar judicial election guide](#)

Court structure, selection and terms. May 12, 2025.

[3] [New York Courts Civil Court overview](#)

Current court authority, including \$50,000 civil claims.

[4] [New York Courts Civil Court judges](#)

Judicial assignments and Civil Court roster.

[25] [NYC Votes proposal 1](#)

Official explanation and summaries of submitted arguments.

[26] [NYC Votes proposal 2](#)

Official explanation and summaries of submitted arguments.

[27] [NYC Votes proposal 3](#)

Official explanation and summaries of submitted arguments.

[28] [NYC Votes proposal 4](#)

Official explanation and summaries of submitted arguments.

[29] [NYC Votes proposal 5](#)

Official explanation and summaries of submitted arguments.

[30] [Citizens Union positions](#)

October 1, 2026. Supports all five proposals with stated reservations.

[31] [Citizens Budget Commission position](#)

October 21, 2026. Opposes proposal 5 and explains preferred savings rules.

[33] [New York State attorney registration dataset](#)

Official school and New York admission data. Queried by name; does not certify case experience or disciplinary history.

[37] [Commission on Judicial Conduct](#)

Official public determinations; confidential matters are not public findings.

[38] [Robing Room About page](#)

Explains its courtroom review service and federal focus.

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[51] [Commission on Government Efficiency final report](#)

July 23, 2026. The proposing commission's explanation and rationale; it supports the changes it proposed.

[52] [NYC Board of Elections contest list](#)

November 3, 2026 list printed September 11, marked tentative. Manhattan judicial entries on PDF pages 3, 4, 8 and 9.

[64] [NYC Votes 2026 general election guide](#)

Official election dates and voting information.

[65] [Full proposed Charter amendments](#)

Adopted July 23, 2026. Proposed legal changes for all five questions, including effective dates.

[101] [New York Women's Bar Association notice](#)

Published October 22, 2026, New York Law Journal PDF page 10. Current results and participation labels for all 24 candidates.

[102] [amNewYork Manhattan Supreme Court report](#)

October 21, 2026. Nomination context, Working Families spokesperson's explanation and photo collage.

[103] [Rita Mella candidate materials](#)

Candidate statement and photograph hosted by Downtown Independent Democrats.

[104] [Appellate Division First Department roster](#)

Official current court roster.

[105] [Justice Manuel Mendez official biography](#)

Career, education and photograph.

[106] [Justice Saliann Scarpulla official biography](#)

Court career, prior legal work and photograph.

[107] [Kathleen Waterman-Marshall official biography](#)

Judicial assignments, teaching and photograph.

[108] [AABANY Christopher Chin biography](#)

2026 professional conference biography and photograph.

[109] [IRAP leadership announcement](#)

March 5, 2020. Historical roles and prior nonprofit legal work.

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[110] [Columbia Law Amy Taylor faculty page](#)

Current lecturer listing; fall 2026 course information.

[111] [Legal Aid Society Callahan v Carey page](#)

Homeless Rights Project work and named attorneys.

[112] [NYU Law Sienna Fontaine profile](#)

February 2020 professional background and photograph; earlier job titles.

[113] [Make the Road New York staff](#)

Current co-executive director title is on the linked staff page.

[114] [Bob Cohen legislative testimony](#)

January 28, 2025. Public policy and research director's statement to lawmakers.

[115] [Jeffrey Rizzo firm biography](#)

Self-reported legal practice, appeals and photograph.

[116] [Josh Hanshaft professional biography](#)

Self-reported prosecutorial, judicial and educational work; photograph.

[117] [Manhattan Supreme Court assignments](#)

Current official civil term assignments.

[118] [Trellis Emily Morales-Minerva biography](#)

Professional directory account of education and earlier legal roles; current assignments checked separately.

[119] [Vlad Frants campaign](#)

Candidate statements about tax work, administrative judging, education and photograph.

[120] [Eric Flores candidate materials](#)

Candidate account of civil practice and community service; photograph.

[121] [Steven Benathen candidate materials](#)

Candidate account of defense, appellate and court attorney work; photograph.

[122] [Avvo Faith Alison Friedman](#)

Matched name, Cardozo and 1999 New York admission. Self-reported practice and client review snapshot.

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[123] [Mayor's Advisory Committee Criminal Court roster](#)

Official appointment biography for Keshia Espinal; current supervising assignment on the court leadership page.

[124] [AABANY 2019 judicial appointments notice](#)

Karen Cortes biography, appointment, education and earlier family law roles.

[125] [MOCDC Harlem candidate event gallery](#)

Captioned candidate event; Aija Tingling photograph cropped from her speaking appearance.

[126] [Ohio Wesleyan Matthew Levy profile](#)

Fall 2023. Court and legislative work. Photograph Dwight Hiscano.

[127] [Irish American Bar Jennifer Frankola biography](#)

Professional biography, education and photograph.

[128] [Brian Krist Board of Regents biography](#)

Official government service, education and current court attorney title.

[129] [Montclair State Brian Krist faculty page](#)

Academic biography and photograph.

[130] [Manhattan Democratic Supreme Court screening](#)

July 2026. Party-related panel results and earlier reported-out candidates.

[131] [Manhattan Democratic Civil Court screening](#)

February 4, 2026. Party-related panel result announcement.

[132] [Avvo Joshua Evan Goldfein](#)

Matched education and 1994 New York admission; client review snapshot.

[133] [Avvo Jeffrey William Rizzo](#)

Matched Pace education and 2004 New York admission; client review snapshot.

[134] [Avvo Bob Cohen](#)

Matched Rutgers education, 1989 admission and Citizen Action; client review snapshot.

[135] [Scrutinize New York court records](#)

Nonprofit's judge record pages, source links and methods; not a RESET rating.

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[141] [Matter of Gerlach \(Marino\)](#)

April 21, 2026. Estate accounting appeal.

[142] [Matter of Kal-El A.](#)

January 16, 2025. Kingo Family Court disposition affirmed.

[143] [Matter of City of New York v Board of Collective Bargaining](#)

December 18, 2025. Public employment appeal.

[144] [C.S. v R.H.](#)

October 8, 2026. Divorce property ruling modified; support and fee awards affirmed.

[145] [Nicolai v Daisak](#)

May 12, 2026. Chin ruling modified by a panel including Scarpulla, Mendez and Hagler.

[146] [People v Elias](#)

December 22, 2025. Appeal from Hanshaft jury trial.

[147] [Gong Ming Chen v Phillips](#)

February 14, 2024. \$5,000 repayment claim.

[148] [Buchman v 117 E. 72nd St. Corp.](#)

May 7, 2026. Cooperative apartment share sale restrained; order affirmed.

[149] [People v Marvel B.](#)

July 8, 2024. Espinal dismissal; corrected published caption.

[150] [Frontiers of Prevention 2024 participants](#)

Amy Taylor professional biography and photograph.

[151] [Citizen Action Bob Cohen testimony video](#)

Public video identifies the speaker; cropped still of January 19, 2023 Senate testimony.

[152] [Emily Morales-Minerva event photograph](#)

Image reproduced by NY News Press, February 2026; caption identifies her seated in front. Used for identification only.

[153] [Patch Faith Bondy interview](#)

June 2025 Council candidacy. Used for photograph, not a judicial assessment.

Sources and further reading

Numbers match this guide. Links open the source publications. Shared source numbers are retained across borough editions; gaps are intentional. Checked October 23, 2026.

[154] [NY1 Joshua Goldfein interview](#)

September 21, 2022. Interview photograph; historical image.

[155] [Camacho v Office of the City Clerk](#)

March 23, 2026. Tingling marriage status decision.

[156] [Matter of Emmanuel C.F. \(Patrice M.D.F.\)](#)

September 19, 2024. Expedited hearing appeal from Cortes.

[157] [NYC Votes elected office explanations](#)

Surrogate's Court authority, including estates, adoptions and guardianships.

[158] [S.M. v Mullman](#)

February 6, 2025. Arbitration appeal from Hagler; corrected published caption.

[159] [New York Courts leadership](#)

Current supervising assignment for Keshia Espinal; court organization.

[160] [Franklin H. Williams Commission Espinal profile](#)

Spring 2021 official court newsletter and photograph.

[161] [Uptown Community Democrats candidate page](#)

Karen Cortes photograph, identified in the district candidate section.

Image credits and research notes

All twenty-four candidates have real photographs displayed at the same size. Hagler and Kingo are cropped from amNewYork's identified candidate collage [102]. Scarpulla, Mendez and Waterman-Marshall come from their official court pages [105–107]. Chin's photograph is from AABANY [108]. Mella, Flores and Benathen appear in candidate materials hosted by Downtown Independent Democrats [103,120,121].

Taylor's photograph is from the 2024 Frontiers of Prevention participant page [150]. Goldfein's is from a September 2022 NY1 interview [154]. Fontaine's is from NYU Law [112]. Cohen's is a still from his January 2023 testimony, identified in Citizen Action's public video [151]. Rizzo's is from his firm biography [115]. These photographs can predate this election.

Hanshaft's photograph comes from his professional education site [116]. Morales-Minerva is cropped from a captioned event photograph reproduced by NY News Press [152]. The image is used only to identify her. Frants's is from his campaign [119]. Bondy's comes from a 2025 Patch interview [153]. Espinal's is from an official 2021 court newsletter [160]. Cortes-Tower's is from Uptown Community Democrats [161].

Levy's photograph is by Dwight Hiscano in Ohio Wesleyan's 2023 alumni feature [126]. Tingling's is from a MOCDC Harlem event gallery identifying the participating candidates [125]. Frankola-Crawford's is from the Irish American Bar Association [127]. Krist's is from Montclair State University [129]. Cropping removes surroundings where possible; it does not change a person's appearance.

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School and admission years were checked against official registration [33]. Professional name forms include Manuel Jacobo Mendez-Olivero, Kathleen C. Waterman, Faith Alison Friedman, Karen M.C. Cortes and Jennifer Marie Frankola. This guide is a dated educational overview, not a complete audit. No candidate was contacted. The posted Board of Elections list sets the roster and party lines; the official sample ballot controls your voting instructions. [52]

[VIEW YOUR OFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT](#)

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