



2019 Public Advocate Candidate Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires will be public documents available on our website, so put your best foot forward. If we ultimately hold an endorsement vote in your race, your questionnaire will be circulated to our membership before the vote.

Candidate name	Jumaane D. Williams
Preferred campaign contact: name, email address, phone number (we won't publish this)	
What New York City civic and political organizations are you involved with?	I've been proud to work with a large number of Brooklyn progressive organizations throughout my time at City Council, including the more than 25 clubs that endorsed my previous bid to run for Lieutenant Governor of New York State. I'm also proud to be a founding member of The Ernest Skinner Political Association.
How long have you lived in NYC? In what neighborhoods?	I was born and raised in Brooklyn, and I am proud to live here my whole life.
What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?	My level of productivity at City Council, while successfully holding people accountable as an activist. To date I have authored and passed 51 laws during my tenure, including landmark legislation such as the Community Safety Act, the Fair Chance Act, and the Construction Safety Act. All the while, I have been able to successfully negotiate funding increases from two different mayors, establishing new anti-gun violence programs and doubling the size of the summer youth employment program
Name a current/past city elected official you admire, and tell why.	Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm is someone who will always have my admiration for her "unbought" and "unbossed" brand of leadership. I am blessed to represent the overlapping district in the Council and, in her legacy, can understand exactly why she is beloved. Throughout my career, I have prided myself in speaking truth to power, without regard to the political implications therein. Of the many people who have taught me to do so, including my Mother, there is no doubt that Congresswoman Chisholm tops the list.
The Public Advocate (PA) does not have clearly defined powers and responsibilities, compared to other executive positions. Name one way Letitia James (or a previous PA) has been effective.	<p>The role of the Public Advocate has five primary roles, to serve as a legislator, ombudsman, Charter cop, Pension trustee and appoint individuals to a variety of positions. From day one, I would make sure to effectively serve in each of these five roles. As a Charter cop, enforcing that agencies are executing their Charter-mandated responsibilities, has been little deployed. Especially now, in a time of expanding progressive legislation and policies, there must be a force actively guaranteeing that the intentions of the people's representatives in Council are being felt on the streets and in the lives of the people of New York. I would eagerly embrace that role as Public Advocate.</p> <p>One of the undervalued but potentially powerful tools best used by Attorney General-Elect Tish James, as Public Advocate, is the ability to use the office's legal division to challenge the Mayor and city agencies, where other bodies, including at times, the council, have failed. The Public Advocate has broad Charter oversight powers, and I plan to use these powers, be it by the cooperation of agencies, or by compelling them through legal action, to benefit all New Yorkers.</p>
How have previous PA's missed opportunities to influence city	As mentioned, I plan to make further use of the Charter cop powers given to the Public Advocate. I will also make sure that everyday New Yorkers have a

<p>leadership?</p>	<p>greater say in the drafting and advocacy of legislation before the Council by establishing new tools, including a crowdsourcing website, to capture the best ideas. Those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.</p>
<p>NYC faces problems with no immediate or obvious solutions that require balancing needs of many stakeholders. Name one "hard problem" and describe how you'd help solve it.</p>	<p>Resolving our affordable housing crisis requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. There are obvious solutions, like finally persuading a newly aligned legislature to repeal the Urstadt law and close loopholes in our rent regulation laws. There are also less obvious, but powerful solutions related to holding agencies accountable for producing and preserving truly income-targeted housing. For example, virtually every week, there are large scale residential developments that leave affordable housing programs that expiring regulatory agreements (These programs are governed by regulatory agreements). Additionally, the Mayor spearheaded the disastrous Mandatory Inclusionary Housing policy with no leadership from the Council pushing back on it during the last term-- despite the fact that it will lead to rising rents and increased displacement.</p> <p>I will use the office's power to enact legislation to require the city actively track when these agreements expire, so that we can stop people from facing sudden, unaffordable market rents and, often, eviction. I will continue to put my body on the line, where needed, to help force leaders to act.</p>
<p>What are the top three issues you would focus on as PA? Have you drafted any legislative proposals?</p>	<p>The top three issues I would focus on as Public Advocate will center around creating safe, affordable income targeted housing, transparency and accountability in government-- particularly around the broken MTA--, reducing gun violence and improving our criminal justice system and police force. Not all of these problems lend themselves to a legislative solution, but when they do (such as increased restrictions on access to guns), I will pursue them. I also look forward to rolling out more detailed legislative proposals on these issues throughout the campaign.</p>
<p>What metrics should we use to evaluate your success as PA?</p>	<p>A successful Public Advocate helps focus our attention on tough issues, uses legal and legislative tools to enact change, and ensures that constituents have a direct line of communication to city agencies. I'll use these metrics to hold myself accountable. While most city officials must work in concert with city government to get things done, this job is different, and must act as a Charter cop and watchdog independent of the Mayor, Council and city agencies to ensure all parts are working together.</p>
<p>Do you see yourself as working mostly in partnership with Mayor DeBlasio, or in opposition?</p>	<p>I would love to work in partnership with 2013 Mayor de Blasio, as he was an official I was proud to endorse and was engaged in bettering the lives of the disadvantaged. I do not recognize from the Mayor de Blasio of today. I would be glad to support him where he acts in the best interest of the people, but from this Amazon deal to going backwards on police accountability & transparency, he has given me many reasons to doubt that we can work in partnership in many areas.</p>
<p>What city agencies do you think are most in need of oversight from this office?</p>	<p>NYPD accountability and transparency have gone backward under this Administration, and it falls to the Public Advocate to try and pick up the slack. There should also be strict oversight of HPD, to ensure we are getting the critically needed housing targeted to the lowest possible income bands for our public investment, The DOE, ACS, HRA are also in desperate need of a watchdog in city government to expose wrongdoings and improve its functions for the greater good.</p>
<p>What changes in powers of the PA should be made in the City Charter? What's your response to calls for elimination of the PA</p>	<p>Independent budget, as well as explicit subpoena and lawsuit powers are baseline reforms I would pursue. The Public Advocate should have an advisory role in ULURP similar to that of the borough presidents, giving</p>

position?	advocacy groups a dedicated forum for weighing in on any REZONING, rather than play catch up after developers have cut their deals.
Should the PA have subpoena power?	Yes.
What is your position on Amazon HQ2? What would you do for people of Long Island City and nearby if the project goes forward?	The fact that this Mayor and this Governor managed to finally sit down and collaborate on executing an end run on the people of New York, instead of on the MTA, NYCHA, or housing in general is a disgrace and I oppose the deal. I've already partnered with Council colleagues to introduce legislation prohibiting these kinds of deals going forward, and would gladly put my voice and my person in front to ensure that the people of LIC are not forced out or taken advantage of in whatever way possible.
PA special election is non-partisan. Do you see yourself as a Democrat, or would you consider running as a member of another party in the future?	I am a registered Democrat and hold myself as such. I have also run on the Working Families Party line and am a member of Democratic Socialists of America. I am encouraged by the progressive direction the Democratic Party has made since the blue wave and intend to continue pushing the party in this direction. Still, the Public Advocate is a non-partisan position and must hold people accountable irrespective of party lines to ensure our government is running as it should.
What reforms would you advocate for in the local and state Democratic party?	There is so much more our state's Democratic Party and State/ County Committees should be doing to effectively run in a democratic way. As a Bernie delegate in 2016 and having recently run against the establishment in in the Lieutenant Governor's race, I have seen first hand how our party shuts out progressive candidates then calls for 'Democratic Unity,' which often means telling the left to sit down and shut up. I have never heeded those directives and never will- party leadership needs to be responsive to the people and their wishes. The people writ large are the real power center more than any individuals, and when the party is wrong, I call them out and mobilize efforts to change their course of action or establishment, top-down methods. New York needs to live up to the progressive reputation that it proclaims, and that means the Democratic Party must better embrace candidates who are "not establishment," and stand for bold progressive ideas, and for the working people, not corporations or their large donors.
What is your base of support in a citywide election? Describe the coalition that gives you a path to victory.	Through the support and endorsement of progressive groups such as New Kings Democrats, activists, and labor, I was able to earn over 400,000 votes citywide this September in my campaign for Lieutenant Governor. This coalition remains in place, with new additions in labor and other community leaders.
How much money have you raised? What are your major sources of campaign funds? Are there any types of donors you won't accept contributions from?	Our campaign has hired a fundraising firm to focus on small dollar donors. I'm happy to discuss our specific fundraising strategy with NKD in person.
What endorsements have you received from publications, elected officials, community leaders, or political organizations?	ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte [campaign co-chair] State Senator Kevin Parker [campaign co-chair] State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud (Brooklyn) State Senator James Sanders (Queens) Assembly Member Walter T. Mosley (Brooklyn) Assembly Member Diana C. Richardson (Brooklyn) Assembly Member Al Taylor (Manhattan) Assembly Member Helene E. Weinstein (Brooklyn)

	<p>Assembly Member Jaime R. Williams (Brooklyn) Assembly Member Mathylde Frontus (Brooklyn) NYC Council Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo (Brooklyn) NYC Council Member Ben Kallos (Manhattan) NYC Council Member Andy King (Bronx) NYC Council Member Brad Lander (Brooklyn) NYC Council Member I. Daneek Miller (Queens) NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso (Brooklyn/Queens) Former NYC Public Advocate Mark Green Kings County Democratic Party Chair Frank Seddio</p> <p>LABOR UNIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS 100 Black Construction Workers Building & Construction Trades Council of Greater New York Laborers' International Union of North America Local 79 New York State Laborers' Local Organizing Fund UA Plumbers Local #1 PSC CUNY NY Progressive Action Network NY Working Families Party Shirley Chisholm Democratic Club</p>
<p>What is one fun fact about you?</p>	<p>I love to sing, sometimes loudly. Apologies to my council neighbors. Hold off on those noise complaints!</p>

I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature: 

Date: December 14, 2018

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your signed and scanned questionnaire to politics@newkingsdemocrats.com and info@newkingsdemocrats.com