VOTER GUIDE: CITY COUNCIL

District 45
Primary Day: June 22, 2021

About this Voter Guide

New Kings Democrats ("NKD") developed a voter guide to help inform Brooklynites about the 2021 City Council primary races. It includes information about the 16 City Council races in Brooklyn and the candidates that will vie for the Democratic nod on June 22, 2021. **This PDF includes just City Council District 45.**

About New Kings Democrats

NKD is a progressive, grassroots political organization committed to bringing transparency, accountability, and inclusionary democracy to the Brooklyn Democratic Party. Founded by veterans of the Obama campaign, it is a borough-wide political organization that helps people seeking to become more engaged in local politics, and hopes to nurture a new generation of elected Brooklyn Democratic leaders.

As of the date of publication, NKD has endorsed candidates in City Council Districts 33, 34, 35, 37, and 39.

Please e-mail politics@newkingsdemocrats.com to learn more about our work.

About: City Council, Ranked Choice Voting, and How to Vote

What does the City Council do?

City Council is the lawmaking body for the city, made up of 51 elected officials. In much the same way that Congress acts as a check and balance to the Executive Branch, City Council acts as a check and balance to the Mayor's office. Brooklyn has 16 City Council members, representing districts 33 through 48. To see a map of the districts, visit council.nyc.gov/districts. Currently, all City Council members from Brooklyn are registered Democrats.

In addition to debating and passing laws, City Council is responsible for negotiating and passing the city budget, monitoring city agencies, and making land use decisions.

City Council can also pass resolutions on state and federal issues that are relevant to New Yorkers. Resolutions allow City Council to speak on behalf of NYC voters and can play an important role in the development of law and public policy.

How does Ranked Choice Voting work?

New York City will now use Ranked Choice Voting (RCV, also known as "Instant Runoff Voting") in the primary and special elections for Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, and City Council. Voters elected to use RCV in a 2019 ballot measure with 73.5% support.

New York City's RCV law allows voters to rank up to 5 candidates in order of preference. If you prefer, you can still vote for just one candidate. Ranking other candidates does not hurt your first-choice candidate.

To learn more, see the Board of Elections guide: vote.nyc/page/ranked-choice-voting.

If a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, they win the election. If no candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. Votes for the eliminated candidate are redistributed to their voters' next ranked choice. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won a majority of these votes. The process is repeated until a candidate wins an outright majority and is declared the winner.

Want to practice RCV on a ballot? Check out this link on rating your favorite bodega snacks from Rank The Vote NYC.

✓	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate A	○	●	○	○	○
Candidate B	○	○	●	○	○
Candidate C	○	○	○	○	●
Candidate D	●	○	○	○	○
Candidate E	○	○	○	●	○

X	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate A	○	○	○	○	○
Candidate B	○	○	○	○	○
Candidate C	○	○	○	○	○
Candidate D	●	●	●	●	●
Candidate E	○	○	○	○	○

Why Ranked Choice Voting matters

RCV is more democratic, but ensuring voters are informed about the process is crucial. Ranking candidates lets you choose several candidates that share your values rather than rallying around a single front-runner. This way of voting can help build coalitions and means your vote *always* counts, whether or not your first-choice candidate wins. You can still have a say in who's elected!

RCV also encourages candidates to be civil in campaigns since all candidates are vying for the top five slots on your ballot. Theoretically, candidates will try to appeal to more voters, rather than narrowly cater to their assumed base, meaning candidates who are more diverse and representative of community members win elections. **In cities that use RCV, more women and people of color are elected.**

Confirm your voter eligibility and where to vote

Confirm if you are registered to vote at www.nycvotersearch.com. If you are registered to vote, results will include your City Council district. You can confirm your polling location by clicking "Poll Site Information" in the top-right corner of the screen.
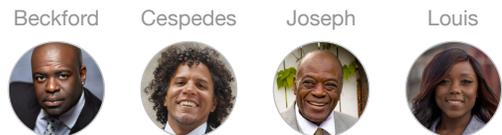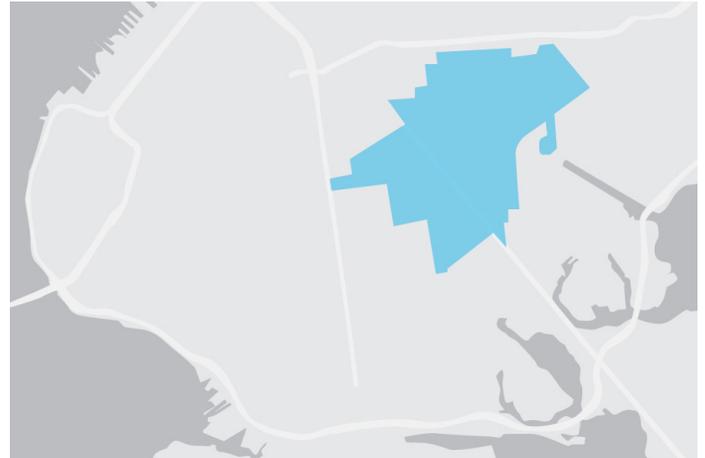
In Brooklyn, where most races will be won by Democrats, the Primary election is the real election for these local positions—**so it is very important that you are registered as a Democrat and can vote this June**. You can register by mail, online, or in person prior to May 28 and still be eligible to vote in the Primary Election as long as you are registered with a party. Visit vote.nyc/page/register-vote to register to vote.

Important dates for primary election voters
* **May 28**—last day to register to vote in the Primary Election
* **June 12**—early voting begins
* **June 15**—deadline to request an absentee ballot for Primary Election
* **June 22**—Primary Election and last day to postmark the primary election ballot, or deliver to Brooklyn Board of Elections (345 Adams Street) or your local polling site

COUNCIL DISTRICT 45

Council District 45 comprises Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Marine Park, Flatlands, and Kensington. Though less crowded than the special election race in 2019, a number of the same candidates are reappearing in this race for the Council seat. All candidates have a significant uphill battle against incumbent Council Member Farah Louis.

	Beckford	Cespedes	Joseph	Louis
Committed to free or accessible healthcare for all?	√	√	√	X
Has a plan for small-business rent relief during COVID?	√	X	X	X
Has a plan to reform the ULURP (land use) process?	√	√	X	X
Committed to *not* taking money from real estate developers?	√	X	X	X
Committed to *not* taking money from law enforcement agencies, foundations, or unions?	√	X	X	X

The information in the chart above is based on publicly available information. Where we have noted "yes" or "no" to a candidate's commitments, "no" may also indicate that the candidate's position is unknown or unavailable to the public.

COUNCIL DISTRICT 45, continued

Anthony Beckford

About the candidate: Anthony is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, participates in a large number of community organizations, and is the President and Co-Founder of Black Lives Matter Brooklyn. He has taken the New York Health Act pledge and the Green New Deal for NYC pledge.

What stands out about his platform: He has a plan to tax the rich and use that revenue to "fix NYCHA" and make CUNY tuition-free.

Where you can learn more:
www.anthonybeckford.com
@Vote4Beckford

Lou Cespedes

About the candidate: Lou is an architect who has worked on building projects around the city. He is focused on fighting upzoning efforts in East Flatbush.

Where you can learn more:
www.loufor45.com
@LouforFlatbush

COUNCIL DISTRICT 45, continued

Cyril Joseph

About the candidate: Cyril is a community activist who worked blue-collar jobs most of his life and has served as a director and board member of several non-profits in his retirement. He is running on a platform of job creation, affordable housing, and criminal and immigrant justice reform. Much of his plans involve the use of tax credits, including offering them to landlords who reduce rent on individuals and small businesses.

What stands out about his platform: He wants to offer local businesses tax credits for hiring graduates of local vocational training centers.

Where you can learn more:
cyrilforcitycouncil.com

Farah Louis, *incumbent*

About the candidate: Farah is the current Council Member for the district. She joined the Council after winning a special election in 2019 when Jumaane Williams vacated his seat to become Public Advocate. She worked as a staffer in Williams' office for six years prior to joining the Council, but Williams did not endorse her, instead endorsing her opponent. She was endorsed by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association when she ran in 2019 and voted "Yes" on the current budget, which did not defund the NYPD in meaningful ways.

What stands out about her platform: Farah has not made an online presence part of her reelection campaign. Her website does not list any specific things she wants to accomplish if re-elected and still maintains much of the text from when she was first elected in 2019.

Where you can learn more:
farahlouis.com
@CMFarahLouis

A FEW FINAL NOTES

For each City Council District candidate, we completed the "yes"/"no" chart based on publicly available information. Where we have noted "yes" or "no" to a candidate's commitments, "no" may also indicate that the candidate's position is unknown or unavailable to the public.

For the question "Committed to free or accessible healthcare for all?", we noted a "yes" if a candidate has publicly stated support for accessible healthcare for all, universal healthcare, or the New York Health Act.

For the question "Has a plan for small-business rent relief during COVID?", we noted a "yes" if a candidate has an explicit, detailed plan for how to get small businesses rent relief during or as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the question "Has a plan to reform the ULURP (land use) process?", we noted a "yes" if a candidate addressed problems with the ULURP or land use process and outlined specific ways they would address this in the Council.

For the question "Committed to not taking money from real estate developers?" and "Committed to not taking money from law enforcement agencies, foundations, or unions?", we noted a "yes" if a candidate has explicitly stated that they have not and will not take money from the parties noted.