



GENERAL INFORMATION

Candidate info

|                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Name                                 | Elsie Encarnacion                  |
| City Council District #              | 8                                  |
| In which primary                     | Democratic                         |
| Age                                  | 44                                 |
| Education                            | Some College                       |
| Current job, position, or occupation | COS for Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala |

Campaign contact information

|                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Website                      | elsieforcouncil.com              |
| X                            | N/A                              |
| Instagram                    | elsieforcouncil                  |
| Facebook                     | Elsie Encarnacion for District 8 |
| Bluesky                      | N/A                              |
| Other social media platforms | N/A                              |

# INTRODUCTION

**1. What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected?**

- Promise 1: Reinforcing and expanding affordable housing
- Promise 2: Investing in youth development programs
- Promise 3: Improving quality of life infrastructure

**2. If elected, what is the first piece of legislation you would introduce? Why is that your top priority? If you are an incumbent, please also state what legislation you have passed which you are most proud of.**

If elected, my first piece of legislation would build off the bail reform initiative with the goal of reducing the number of incarcerated individuals at Rikers Island. This is critical because we need to see those numbers lowered in order to achieve the borough-based jails we've been advocating for, and more importantly, to address the systemic issue of decriminalizing poverty. Too many individuals are being held at Rikers simply because they cannot afford bail, not because they pose a significant threat to public safety.

I envision this legislation would also expand alternatives to detention, such as supervised release and pretrial services, to keep individuals in the community where they can continue their lives and receive the support they need. By reducing our reliance on cash bail and offering more equitable alternatives, we can not only lower the population at Rikers Island, but also take a significant step toward achieving a fairer and more just criminal justice system.

This is one of my top priorities because it directly addresses the issues of racial and economic disparities in our system and ensures that people are not punished for their poverty.

**3. In your view, what are the major needs of your district's constituents?**

One of the biggest issues facing our district is the ever-growing challenge of housing affordability and the fear of displacement. As a lifelong resident, I understand the importance of preserving affordable housing and ensuring that residents can stay in their homes. I will fight for stronger rent protections, affordable housing development, and policies that prevent displacement. We must also ensure that new development is aligned with the needs of the community, not just the interests of developers.

Our youth are the future, and we must invest in programs that support their growth, development, and success. This includes expanding access to quality after-school programs, mentorship opportunities, and college preparation resources. In parallel, we must create workforce development opportunities that connect our residents to good-paying jobs and career pathways. Workforce development must be responsive to the changing economy, focusing on skills that are in demand and ensuring that our residents can access the training they need to thrive.

Health, safety, and community well-being are interconnected. When we talk about quality of life, we must consider the full spectrum of issues—from access to healthcare and mental health services to ensuring that our streets are safe and clean. We need comprehensive solutions that address not just the symptoms but the root causes of the challenges our community faces, recognizing that issues like affordable housing and wage stagnation are directly tied to the quality of life of our residents.

**4. How long have you lived in the district in which you are running, and do you have any achievements or involvement in your neighborhood you are particularly proud of?**

I am a lifelong District 8 resident. I was born at Metropolitan Hospital and grew up a few blocks away. My entire adult life has been dedicated to serving this district. I have worked on many initiatives that I am proud of. One of which was the District 8 Youth Council (D8YC) a group of youth from District 8 who would meet weekly and discuss issues facing their communities from the lens of youth. We worked on issues like Stop and Frisk and trained youth to be civically engaged. Due to those efforts we were able to appoint the then, youngest member to Community Board 11. We also worked on peace marches, housing marches

and voter registration drives. My goal is to bring the D8YC back to the district and continue that work.

**5. What experience have you had with good government and reform issues? (e.g., voting and election reform, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.**

I have served under the leadership of the past two council members and have had many opportunities to work on different initiatives in regards to good governance and transparency. I am an enthusiastic promoter of participatory budgeting, especially among our youth, because I believe that when people have a direct say in how resources are allocated, it strengthens the very foundation of democracy. Participatory budgeting gives our communities a voice in decisions that impact their daily lives, and that should be the norm, not the exception.

I would expand these processes by introducing participatory legislation that ensures we create spaces for constituents to have a direct role in the legislative process. After all, the laws we create affect their lives, and they deserve to have a seat at the table. This would mean working alongside residents, advocates and community groups, to co-create solutions that directly reflect the needs of our communities. By fostering greater civic participation, we can ensure that decisions made in City Hall are truly representative of the will of the people.

This approach would not only increase transparency but also encourage accountability, ensuring that the policies we pass reflect the diverse voices and experiences of those we serve. Civic engagement is a powerful tool for strengthening our democracy, and I am committed to expanding it in ways that empower my constituents and enrich our community.

**6. What do you think the role of the City Council is in city government this upcoming term?**

In this upcoming term, I believe the City Council must be the most strong, united, and unapologetic it has ever been. As we face increasing challenges on the national level—whether it's attacks on our fundamental rights, environmental policies that harm our communities, or the erosion of social safety nets—New York City must stand firm in protecting its residents. The role of the City Council will be critical in creating local protections and responses to counteract these national trends.

We must prepare to be a council that doesn't just react, but actively takes positions to strengthen the investments, protections, and supports our city needs. This means advocating for the most vulnerable in our communities, fighting for equitable economic opportunities, improving public services, and upholding the values of justice and fairness. We will need to push back against harmful policies, champion progressive reforms, and ensure that our local government continues to be a beacon of hope, opportunity, and resilience.

This council must be unapologetic in its pursuit of justice, fairness, and equity for all New Yorkers, regardless of race, income, or background. Our role is to protect the well-being of every resident, advance policies that promote long-term growth, and be an unwavering force in ensuring our city's resilience in the face of national challenges.

**ELECTIONS AND VOTING**

**7. Do you support moving New York City's elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you co-sponsor a Council Resolution supporting that measure?**

Yes

Voter turnout in New York City elections is exceptionally low, as they are held “off-cycle” in odd-numbered years. To boost local voter turnout and reduce participation gaps, the Legislature passed and Governor Hochul signed a law that moves county and town elections to even-numbered years, and lawmakers are supporting a constitutional amendment that would do the same for city elections, including New York City's. Citizens Union is [leading a coalition of groups advocating](#), to move New York City's elections to even-numbered years, and the City Council is considering a [Resolution in support](#) of that shift.

8. The New York City Board of Elections (NYC BOE) has been a source of frustration for voters and candidates for years. The City Council appoints NYC BOE members and has the power to appoint commissioners who are committed to reform, but the most recent commissioners have been appointed behind closed doors. Do you commit to request a public hearing for BOE nominees, and to only vote for individuals who are publicly committed to reducing party-based patronage and supporting open hiring practices?

Yes

9. Do you support maintaining the use of Ranked Choice Voting in New York City’s elections?

Yes

10. New York City is one of the few cities that maintains a closed primary system, in which only registered party members can vote in the primary election. Do you believe New York City should shift to a form of completely open primaries, allowing all registered voters to vote in one primary where the top two candidates, regardless of party, move on to the general election?

No

Comments (optional)

I’d like to take a moment to clarify that, while I’m currently a no on the proposal for open primaries, as a Democratic candidate, my priority will always be to ensure that any changes to our primary system are implemented thoughtfully and carefully. It’s essential to protect the integrity of our party while making sure our elections truly reflect the will of all voters. I agree that we must make our democratic processes more inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of every New Yorker. However, I believe any changes should be approached with caution to ensure they strengthen our system, rather than dilute the values we hold dear as both a party and a city.

**\* In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve elections and voting in New York City.**

I have worked alongside the current council member to craft legislation that would mandate the Board of Elections to publicly release the district leaders, their maps, and the corresponding assembly districts. Currently, this information is nearly impossible to find online, and making it accessible is essential for transparency and public engagement.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

**11. Individuals with business ties to city government and registered lobbyists can bypass their donation limits by “bundling” donations from other people. Do you support limiting bundling by people on the Doing Business with the City database?**

Yes

**12. Are you a supporter of the City's public campaign matching funds program, and do you commit to protecting the independence of the program and ensuring that the Campaign Finance Board has sufficient resources to run the program?**

Yes

**ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT**

**13. The recent pattern of indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall has exposed serious ethical problems in City Government. Please describe how you will maintain the highest ethical standards in office.**

I will prioritize transparency and accountability with my constituents, ensuring that they are always informed and heard. I will reject corporate interests that seek to compromise my leadership because we cannot function as a city with elected officials who are beholden to outside influences. Government must work for the people, not special interests, and I am committed to upholding that principle every step of the way.

**14. Incoming public servants must sever ties and divest from companies or other interests that have business dealings with the City, but they are not required to recuse themselves when working on matters involving their former business partners, clients, employer, etc. Do you support forbidding public servants to work on matters relating to their former business partners, clients, employers, and other interests for a set period of time?**

Yes

**15. Some campaign consultants also work as lobbyists. Do you support restricting campaign consultants from lobbying the candidates they served for two years after the candidate won elected office?**

Yes

**16. Do you support moving lobbying oversight and enforcement from the City Clerk's Office to another agency charged with ethics issues, like the Conflicts of Interest Board?**

Yes

**Comments (optional)**

Yes, I do agree that transferring lobbying oversight to the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) would help bring greater transparency and accountability to the process. However, I also recognize that such a shift would require adequate training and additional funding to ensure it is implemented smoothly. I would advocate for investing in the necessary resources to support this transition so that it doesn't burden the system or create inefficiencies. The goal is to strengthen oversight without compromising the effectiveness of our ethics enforcement, and that requires ensuring that the COIB has the capacity to handle these new responsibilities properly.

**POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

**17. Who do you think should have the final say on discipline in the New York Police Department? (i.e., Place the final decision with the Police Commissioner; the Civilian Complaint Review Board; the Mayor; the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety; or another individual or entity).**

The best answer may lie in another entity or individual having final say on discipline. I believe we must strengthen the power of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) by creating a mechanism to challenge the police commissioner's ruling when it differs greatly from the CCRB's decision. I've seen firsthand in my district how many individuals are hesitant to file complaints with the CCRB because they don't believe the board has real power to bring justice in their cases against officers. If we are serious about police reform and improving communication between the police and the communities they serve, we must empower the CCRB by providing a secondary line of support for decisions. This would create necessary oversight and ensure greater accountability in the disciplinary process.

**\* In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve police accountability in New York.**

Much of my work on this issue has been focused on the district. I've spent years building a foundation of responsible policing by working closely with our local police precincts to engage in community-focused policing. This approach fosters partnership, where we support one another to address the needs of the community first. In the past, we've engaged directly with officers by attending roll calls at local precincts to communicate our expectations, ensuring they align with the values of the community they serve. We've also invested in groups that support our young people, creating spaces where youth can interact with officers in positive ways. Moreover, we've worked with young people to push back against harmful policies like stop-and-frisk, teaching them how to organize and use their voices to change laws, rather than fostering resentment without any path to meaningful change.

**CHECKS AND BALANCES**

**18. The Mayor currently has the power to block charter revision ballot questions (proposed by the City Council, other charter commissions, and citizen petitions) by establishing their own Charter Revision Commission. Do you support removing this Mayoral power?**

Yes

**19. Do you support allowing bills with strong support to go through the committee process and be put to a vote on the floor without needing the permission of the speaker?**

Yes

**20. Please provide your views about the New York City Council's "advice and consent" powers.**

**In what cases, if any, should a mayor need the Council's approval for an appointment of a high ranking Mayoral official, such as an agency commissioner?**

The Council should have the authority to approve key mayoral appointments, especially for positions that directly impact the lives of residents, such as agency commissioners overseeing housing, parks, sanitation, and other essential services. These positions shape the quality of life for our communities. My platform represents my core values and this aligns with making sure my priorities will be reflected by strong leadership in the agencies they fall under. In addition, the recent slew of indictments against officials in the Adams administration is evidence of the need for expanded City Council powers of advice and consent. Doing so would reduce corruption, increase transparency, and ensure fairer governance

**ADDITIONAL INFO**