

Scope of Mayoral Power (NYC)

(<https://www.dayonefor.nyc/scope-of-mayoral-power/>)

Day One for NYC is an independent, nonpartisan resource to help a new mayoral administration hit the ground running. This guide outlines **key levers of mayoral power, high-impact appointments, critical calendars and legal deadlines, and starter resource packs**. It's written for transition staff, new appointees, and advisors who need a quick, practical orientation to governing New York City.

At a glance

- **Form of government:** "Strong mayor–council." The Mayor leads the executive branch; the City Council legislates; the Comptroller audits and oversees finances; other electeds and boards have defined roles.
- **Scale:** 300k+ employees; ~\$100B annual budget; thousands of contracts; hundreds of boards and authorities.
- **Reality:** Many powers are unilateral **inside City Hall**, but durable wins require alignment with the **City Council, State, Federal** partners, unions, independent boards, and communities.

Mayor's Direct Controls

(core executive levers)



1) Appoint & organize the executive branch

- **Hire/replace leadership.** The Mayor appoints deputy mayors; agency commissioners/chairs; the **Corporation Counsel** (Law Department head); the **Director of the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**; and many board members (e.g., **NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H)**, **NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)**, **City Planning Commission (CPC)** seats, **Rent Guidelines Board (RGB)** seats).

- **Structure the system.** The Mayor can propose reorganizations, create or sunset offices, and issue **delegation orders** clarifying decision rights.
- **Why it matters.** Personnel **is** policy. The caliber and alignment of deputy mayors, commissioners, and counsels sets speed and execution quality.

2) Budget strategy & execution

- **Set the plan.** Mayor proposes the **Preliminary** and **Executive** Budgets; negotiates the **Adopted** Budget with the Council; manages the **Financial Plan** during the year
- **Manage spend & staff.** Directives like **Programs to Eliminate the Gap (PEGs)**, hiring controls, and spending controls are mayoral levers—tempered by labor contracts and service levels.
- **Run capital.** With OMB and agencies, the Mayor shapes the **Capital Budget** and **Capital Commitment Plan** that turns projects into shovels-in-the-ground.

3) Rulemaking, directives & enforcement

- **Executive orders & directives.** Set citywide priorities, interagency coordination rules, and cross-cutting standards.
- **Administrative rulemaking (CAPA).** Agencies issue or amend rules via the **City Administrative Procedure Act (CAPA)**: notice → public comment/hearing → adoption.
- **Enforcement policy.** Through commissioners, the Mayor can shift inspection, summons, or programmatic focus—**within existing law**.

4) Public safety & emergencies

- **Command chain.** Mayor appoints and directs **New York City Police Department (NYPD)**, **Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY)**, **New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM)**, and other safety leadership.
- **Emergency powers.** In a declared local emergency, may issue temporary orders and suspend certain local rules **narrowly related** to the emergency; powers are time-limited and reviewable.

5) Education & human services

- **School governance.** Under state law (mayoral control), the Mayor appoints the **Chancellor of the Department of Education (DOE)** and members of the **Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)**; scope/duration are state-defined.

- **Safety net & care.** Agencies like **Department of Social Services (DSS)** (includes **Human Resources Administration (HRA)** and **Department of Homeless Services (DHS)**), **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)**, **Administration for Children's Services (ACS)**, and **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** deliver core human services; the Mayor sets strategy and crisis posture.

6) Land use, housing & development

- **Planning leadership.** Mayor appoints the **CPC Chair** (also **Director of the Department of City Planning (DCP)**) and multiple CPC members; sets the land-use agenda (e.g., "City of Yes" initiatives).
 - **Project delivery.** Mayor directs **Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)** and **Housing Development Corporation (HDC)** strategies, **NYCEDC** portfolio, city-owned land policy, and capital investments.
 - **ULURP & beyond.** Land-use actions run through **Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)**; Council has final say; the Mayor's veto is subject to Council override.
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From Power to Delivery (implementation realities)



Policies succeed only when the **delivery system** can carry them. NYC's workforce is expert and mission-driven—and is also emerging from a period of **low morale**, leadership churn, and rapid policy whiplash (pandemic operations, shifting return-to-office rules, budget volatility, and changes to pension tiers). Many agencies face hiring backlogs and “shadow” approval layers that slow decisions. Expect to combine **pressure and support** from City Hall to overcome inertia and rebuild trust.

Delivery craft — selected readings

- **Jennifer Pahlka, *Recoding America* (2023)** — why good policy fails without delivery design.
- **“Eating Policy” (Pahlka’s essays)** — e.g., delivery-driven policymaking; cutting procedural drag.
- **Beth Simone Noveck, *Solving Public Problems* (2021)** — problem-driven, participatory governance tools.
(Add links to specific posts/chapters in production.)

A. Culture, silos, and “the way we’ve always done it”

- **What’s on the ground.** Teams juggle overlapping mandates, unclear ownership, and audit anxiety—so they default to the safest process, not the best outcome.
- **What helps.** Deputy mayor sponsorship; explicit authority via delegation orders; time-boxed “delivery sprints”; and public dashboards that track *outcomes* (not just activity). Recognition and consistent internal comms matter for morale.

B. Workforce, unions, and morale

- **Context.** After COVID operations, social-justice protests, and national/political turbulence, many units report fatigue; swings in return-to-office policy and leadership changes have compounded uncertainty. New pension-tier rules (e.g., Tier 6) affect retention math for some titles.
- **Union partnership.** Strong labor relationships can unlock training at scale, safer operations, and realistic timelines for change.

- **What helps.** Early engagement with the **Office of Labor Relations (OLR)** and unions; career-ladder clarity; conversion pathways for high-performing temps/fellows; and visible front-line wins tied to resident outcomes.

C. Technology & data (often what sets the pace)

- **Reality.** Each major agency runs its own tech; systems range from modern to legacy; interagency data-sharing requires MOUs, privacy reviews, and cybersecurity approval. These factors frequently determine how fast a policy can move.
- **Citywide players.**
 - **Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI)** — core platforms and standards. Divisions include **NYC Cyber Command (NYC3)** (cybersecurity/incident response), **311 & Contact Centers**, **Identity/Access (NYC.ID)**, **Enterprise Apps & Integration**, **Network/CityNet**, **Cloud & Data Center Services**, and geospatial collaboration.
 - **Office of Data Analytics (ODA)** (*within OTI*) — data governance, cross-agency sharing, analytics, dashboards.
 - **NYC Opportunity** — Civic Service Design Studio (user-centered research/design), benefits access tooling, evaluation.
- **Ecosystem & precedent.** **NYC Planning Labs (DCP)** pioneered open-source, product-oriented approaches; national models (USDS/18F) inform lightweight delivery methods.
- **What helps.** Common data definitions; APIs over spreadsheets; privacy-by-design service design with residents; phased launches; a deliberate plan to retire tech debt.

D. Procurement & contracts

- **What's typical.** Complex scopes and risk clauses; vendor-responsibility checks; legal review; registration with the Comptroller; change orders; close-out.
- **Human-services reality.** Providers frequently incur costs before registration and first payments. Lags of **6–12+ months** are common, with documented cases exceeding a year; many rely on credit to bridge cash flow.
- **Strategies.**
 - Use the **Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS)** and the **Citywide Chief Procurement Officer (CCPO)** to standardize scopes and templates.
 - Expand pre-qualification, segment procurements, and structure milestone-based payments.
 - Publish cycle-time dashboards; escalate aging registrations weekly.

E. Hiring & HR (design for now and for year two)

- **On the ground.** Even with headcount approval, routine hiring can exceed **12 months** and sometimes **24–36 months** due to title fit, civil-service lists, salary bands, background checks, and unwritten approval steps. Recruitment is competitive; retention suffers where pay/title bands lag the market.
- **Day-one hires (what to do now).**
 - Pre-clear top appointments; line up ethics/COIB and background files ahead of Day One.
 - Use term-limited/fellowship paths where appropriate; set compensation ranges early; designate an **ops staffing cell** to chase blockers daily.
- **System fixes (what to change for year 2–3).**
 - With **Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)**, develop targeted exams, selective certifications, and fast-track pipelines.
 - Modernize job specs for digital, data, design, and delivery roles; create progression ladders.
 - Track time-to-hire publicly; remove “shadow” sign-offs; pilot conditional offers with parallel background checks.

F. Large-organization coordination

- **Mechanics.** Weekly deputy mayor “delivery boards”; cross-agency **project charters** with RACI (Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed); decision logs risk registers; and “One NYC” comms so residents get one story.
 - **Cadence.** 30/60/90-day goals per priority; monthly benefits tracking; quarterly public performance notes (tie to **Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report (PMMR) / Mayor’s Management Report (MMR)**).
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High-Impact Appointments

(plain English roles)



How deputy mayor structures vary

Recent mayors have alternated between **centralizing** power in a strong **First Deputy Mayor** (speed, coherence; risk: bottlenecks) and **distributing** power across 4–5 **Deputy Mayors** with clear portfolios (specialized depth; risk: seams between portfolios). The approach shapes escalation paths and how quickly cross-agency problems get solved.

Deputy Mayors (portfolio leadership)

1. **First Deputy Mayor** — Runs day-to-day government; chairs cross-agency problem-solving; breaks ties.
2. **Deputy Mayor for Operations** — Street-level services, capital delivery, emergency readiness.
3. **Deputy Mayor for Housing & Economic Development** — Housing production/preservation and jobs strategy.
4. **Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services** — Safety-net systems across health homelessness, child welfare, aging, youth.
5. **Deputy Mayor for Public Safety** — Policing, fire, corrections, probation, emergency management.
6. **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives** — Cross-cutting, time-bound priorities (e.g., childcare, climate, equity).

Citywide coordination & shared services

1. **Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB)** — Builds and executes the budget/capital plan; vets fiscal impacts.
2. **Corporation Counsel (Law Department)** — City's chief lawyer; clears legal authority; manages litigation & risk.
3. **Director, Mayor's Office of Operations (Operations)** — Delivery unit: charters, dashboards, CAPA cadence, 311 integration.
4. **Commissioner, Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)** — Workforce, facilities, fleet, citywide procurement supports.

5. **Director, Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) / Citywide Chief Procurement Officer (CCPO)** — Procurement policy and systems; speeds contract cycles.
6. **Commissioner, Office of Labor Relations (OLR)** — Collective bargaining and labor strategy.
7. **Chief Technology Officer, Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI)** — Platforms, cybersecurity (with **NYC Cyber Command/NYC3**), networks, 311, standards.
8. **Chief Analytics Officer, Office of Data Analytics (ODA) (*in OTI*)** — Data governance, inter-agency sharing, analytics.
9. **Executive Director, NYC Opportunity (Civic Service Design Studio)** — User-centered research/design support; benefits access; program evaluation.
10. **Director, Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice (MOCEJ)** — Climate/resiliency strategy and standards.

Public safety & oversight

1. **Police Commissioner (NYPD)** — Policing strategy, consent-decree compliance, safety outcomes.
2. **Fire Commissioner (FDNY)** — Fire/EMS readiness, response times, safety.
3. **Commissioner, Department of Correction (DOC)** — Jail operations, safety, reform.
4. **Commissioner, Department of Probation (DOP)** — Community supervision and alternatives to incarceration.
5. **Commissioner, Department of Investigation (DOI)** — Integrity watchdog; combat waste, fraud, abuse.
6. **Commissioner, New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM)** — Citywide incident command, hazard planning.
7. **Chair, Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)** — Police oversight (Mayor appoints members; Board selects Chair).
8. **Chair, Board of Correction (BOC)** — Jail standards and oversight.

Education, health, and human services

1. **Chancellor, Department of Education (DOE)** — Nation's largest school system; curriculum, operations, labor, capital.
2. **Commissioner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)** — Public health, mental health, emergency health responses.
3. **Commissioner, Department of Social Services (DSS) / HRA & DHS** — Cash/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Medicaid admin; shelter and rehousing.

4. **Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services (ACS)** — Child protection, prevention, juvenile justice programs.
5. **President/CEO, NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H)** (*Mayor influences via Board*) — Public hospital and clinic system.
6. **Commissioner, Department for the Aging (DFTA)** — Senior centers, meals, case management.
7. **Commissioner, Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD)** — Out-of-school time, youth jobs, community programs.
8. **Commissioner, Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV)** — Survivor services and coordination.
9. **Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)** — Immigrant access and integration.

Housing, planning, development, and regulation

1. **Chair, City Planning Commission (CPC) / Director of DCP** — Long-range planning and ULURP leadership.
2. **Commissioner, Housing Preservation & Development (HPD)** — Affordable housing production and code enforcement.
3. **President/CEO, NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)** — Jobs, waterfronts, industrial & innovation assets.
4. **Commissioner, Department of Buildings (DOB)** — Construction permits and safety; major impact on timelines.
5. **Commissioner, Small Business Services (SBS)** — Permits navigation, workforce programs, commercial corridors.
6. **Chair, Rent Guidelines Board (RGB)** (*Mayor appoints members*) — Annual rent adjustments for rent-stabilized housing.
7. **Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)** — Landmarking and design reviews.
8. **Chair, Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)** — Zoning variances and special permits.
9. **Chair, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)** (*Mayor appoints; federal/state oversight*) — Public housing strategy and compliance.

Infrastructure, environment, finance, and city life

1. **Commissioner, Department of Transportation (DOT)** — Streets, safety (Vision Zero), buses, bikes, freight.
2. **Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** — Water, wastewater, air, stormwater; climate resilience.

3. **Commissioner, Department of Sanitation (DSNY)** — Solid waste, snow, cleanliness strategy.
4. **Commissioner, Department of Design & Construction (DDC)** — Delivers vertical/horizontal capital projects.
5. **Commissioner, Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks)** — Parks system, recreation, tree canopy.
6. **Commissioner, Department of Finance (DOF)** — Property tax admin, collections, parking enforcement.
7. **Commissioner, Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)** — Funding for cultural institutions and arts ecosystem.
8. **Commissioner, Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP)** — Worker protections and consumer enforcement.
9. **Chair/Commissioner, Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC)** — For-hire vehicle regulation and driver economics.
10. **Director, Department of Records & Information Services (DORIS)** — Records/archives and Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) operations.
11. **Commissioner, Business Integrity Commission (BIC)** — Trade waste and market integrity.

For the full list of agencies, mayoral offices, commissions, advisory boards, and public authorities with mayoral appointments, see the **Appointments** section of this website.

Other Power Centers

(governing with)



City Council (legislation, budget, oversight, land use)

- **Legislation.** Council drafts/passes local laws; Mayor signs or **veto**es; Council can **override** with a supermajority.
- **Budget.** Mayor proposes; Council amends; adoption is joint. Mid-year modifications require Council action.
- **Oversight.** Hearings, investigations, reporting mandates, and confirmations (for certain posts).
- **Land use.** Council ULURP votes decide rezonings and many discretionary actions mayoral veto is overridable.
- **Political context.** The Council's composition and leadership set the appetite for collaboration vs confrontation; expect hard bargaining on priorities, oversight intensity during crises, and strategic use of reporting mandates.

New York State (Albany)

- **Needs Albany:** school governance (mayoral control), taxation authority, rent regulation, criminal code, **Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)** structure/funding, many health/benefit rules.
- **Mechanics:** state budget season; program bills; chapter amendments; **home rule messages**; "Tin Cup Day" testimony.
- **Levers/risks.** The State can preempt local laws, condition aid, or set mandates; productive relationships with the Governor and legislative leaders are decisive.
- **Political context.** In some cycles, statewide politics turn skeptical of NYC priorities; plan for coalition-building beyond the five boroughs and prepare bill/budget vehicles that meet Albany's constraints.

Federal government

- **Funding & compliance:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) (Medicaid waivers), SNAP/TANF rules, IJJA/IRA grant.
- **Levers/risks.** Federal agencies control permits, grant conditions, civil-rights enforcement, and disaster cost shares; Congress can constrain or expand aid.

- **Political context.** Federal posture toward sanctuary policies, public benefits, and climate funding can swing—use a strong D.C. shop, litigation where needed, and coalition mayors to protect NYC's interests.

Independent & semi-independent actors

- **NYC Comptroller.** Audits; registers contracts; manages pensions; fiscal oversight.
 - **NY State Comptroller.** Audits state/local entities; oversight of certain authorities and pension funds that affect NYC.
 - **Public Advocate.** Investigations, ombuds, public reporting.
 - **Borough Presidents & Community Boards.** Land-use recommendations and community planning voice.
 - **District Attorneys (DAs).** Independently elected; charging policy is theirs.
 - **Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB).** Ethics rules and enforcement.
 - **Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH).** Independent tribunal for many city cases.
 - **Campaign Finance Board (CFB).** Public campaign finance and voter education.
 - **Authorities & systems: NYCHA, H+H, NYCEDC, library systems—**Mayor influences via appointments and funding, but governance is distinct.
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Execution Calendars & Deadlines

- **Budget** — Preliminary (Jan), Executive (spring), Adopted (June); Financial Plan updates year-round.
 - **Rulemaking (CAPA)** — Notice → comment/hearing → adoption (**30–90+ days** typical).
 - **ULURP** — Certification → Community Board (60d) → Borough President (30d) → CPC (60d) → Council (50d) (~6–7 months once certified).
 - **Labor** — Pattern bargaining; arbitration timelines; pay bill modeling.
 - **Appointments** — Term expirations, confirmations, holdover limits; quorum risks o boards.
 - **Performance** — **Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report (PMMR)** (winter) and **Mayor’s Management Report (MMR)** (late summer/early fall).
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Policy to Service

(how it becomes real)



1. **Define the problem & residents.** Who benefits? What changes on the ground?
 2. **Pick the instrument.** Budget shift; executive order; rule change (CAPA); local law (Council/State); contract scope; interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
 3. **Legal & ops check.** Law, Operations, OTI/ODA, and risk sign-off on authority, privacy/security, procurement, and timeline.
 4. **Design delivery.** Owners, milestones, staffing, hiring plan, vendors, tech work, and how we'll measure success (MMR lines).
 5. **Money & labor.** OMB funding approval; OLR labor implications; procurement path mapped with MOCS/DCAS/agency.
 6. **Stakeholders & comms.** Council, unions, advocates, industry, community boards, state/feds; resident-facing comms and help scripts.
 7. **Launch & iterate.** Pilot → scale; fix pain points; publish dashboards; train front-line staff.
 8. **Sustain.** Bake into budgets, rulebooks, contracts, and performance reviews; close the loop with PMMR/MMR metrics.
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Quick Reference — Can / Works With / Can't Alone

- **CAN (inside executive):** Appoint leadership; issue executive orders; propose/execute budget; set enforcement priorities; reorganize City Hall; start rulemaking (CAPA); negotiate labor (with legal/arb limits).
 - **WORKS WITH (shared):** Pass local laws (Council); land use (CPC/Council; limited mayoral veto); adopt budget (with Council); public authorities (board seats + funding); school governance (state); major revenue changes (state); large federal/state grants (compliance & match).
 - **CANNOT ALONE:** Change state criminal code, rent regulation, or MTA control; create new local taxes without state authorization; override a Council veto-override; direct District Attorney prosecutions; control Board of Elections; spend outside appropriation.
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Glossary

(acronyms & terms)



ACS Administration for Children's Services
BIC Business Integrity Commission
BOC Board of Correction
BOE Board of Elections
BSA Board of Standards and Appeals
CAPA City Administrative Procedure Act (NYC rulemaking)
CCPO Citywide Chief Procurement Officer
CCRB Civilian Complaint Review Board
CFB Campaign Finance Board
CMS Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
COIB Conflicts of Interest Board
DAs District Attorneys
DCAS Department of Citywide Administrative Services
DCLA Department of Cultural Affairs
DCP Department of City Planning
DCWP Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
DDC Department of Design and Construction
DEP Department of Environmental Protection
DFTA Department for the Aging
DHS Department of Homeless Services (within DSS)
DOB Department of Buildings
DOE Department of Education
DOF Department of Finance
DOHMH Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DOI Department of Investigation
DOP Department of Probation
DOT Department of Transportation
DSS Department of Social Services (umbrella for HRA & DHS)

DSNY Department of Sanitation
ENDGBV Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence
FDNY Fire Department of the City of New York
FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA Federal Highway Administration
FTA Federal Transit Administration
H+H NYC Health + Hospitals
HDC Housing Development Corporation
HRA Human Resources Administration (within DSS)
HPD Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HUD U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IJA/IRA Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act / Inflation Reduction Act
LPC Landmarks Preservation Commission
MMR/PMMR Mayor's Management Report / Preliminary MMR
MOCEJ Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice
MOCS Mayor's Office of Contract Services
MODA/ODA Mayor's Office of Data Analytics / Office of Data Analytics (within OTI)
MOU Memorandum of Understanding
MTA Metropolitan Transportation Authority
NYC3 NYC Cyber Command (within OTI)
NYCEDC NYC Economic Development Corporation
NYCHA New York City Housing Authority
NYCEM New York City Emergency Management
NYC Opportunity Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (Civic Service Design Studio)
NYPD New York City Police Department
OMB Mayor's Office of Management and Budget
Ops Mayor's Office of Operations
OTI Office of Technology and Innovation
PEP Panel for Educational Policy
PEG Program to Eliminate the Gap (savings program)

RGB Rent Guidelines Board

SBS Department of Small Business Services

SCA School Construction Authority

SNAP/TANF Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program / Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

TLC Taxi & Limousine Commission

ULURP Uniform Land Use Review Procedure