

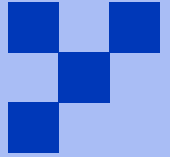


**new york
solidarity
network**

Civic Toolkit



About NYSN



The New York Solidarity Network (NYSN) is the civic and political voice of Jewish New Yorkers. We make sure our community is informed, organized and heard, from City Hall to Albany and in every election in between. NYSN gives members nonpartisan research on state and local issues, briefings on candidates and training in civic skills. We also register and mobilize voters and bring people together to act on the issues that shape our city. NYSN is a nonprofit membership organization open to Jewish New Yorkers and allies of every background.

Why Civic Engagement Matters

 A message from NYSN CEO Rachel Storch

Many decisions shaping daily life in New York happen outside the spotlight—in community boards, Democratic clubs, and local elections. New York’s Jewish community needs a voice in those rooms.

At NYSN, we are working to make civic participation more accessible and approachable. This toolkit explains how local institutions work, what different roles involve, and how you can make a difference.

You can start small. Attend a meeting, ask a question, or volunteer for a local campaign or organization. Learn from others and encourage friends and family to join you. But whatever form it takes, get involved!

At a moment when local decisions carry enormous consequences, Jewish New Yorkers must be present at every level of civic life. Join NYSN today and help ensure New York’s Jewish community has a strong voice wherever decisions are made.

Rachel Storch

Chief Executive Officer, New York Solidarity Network



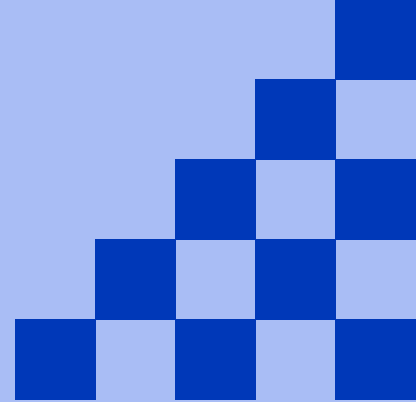
Explore NYSN Membership

Learn about member benefits, upcoming opportunities, and how to join.

Scan the QR code or visit nysn.org/membership.



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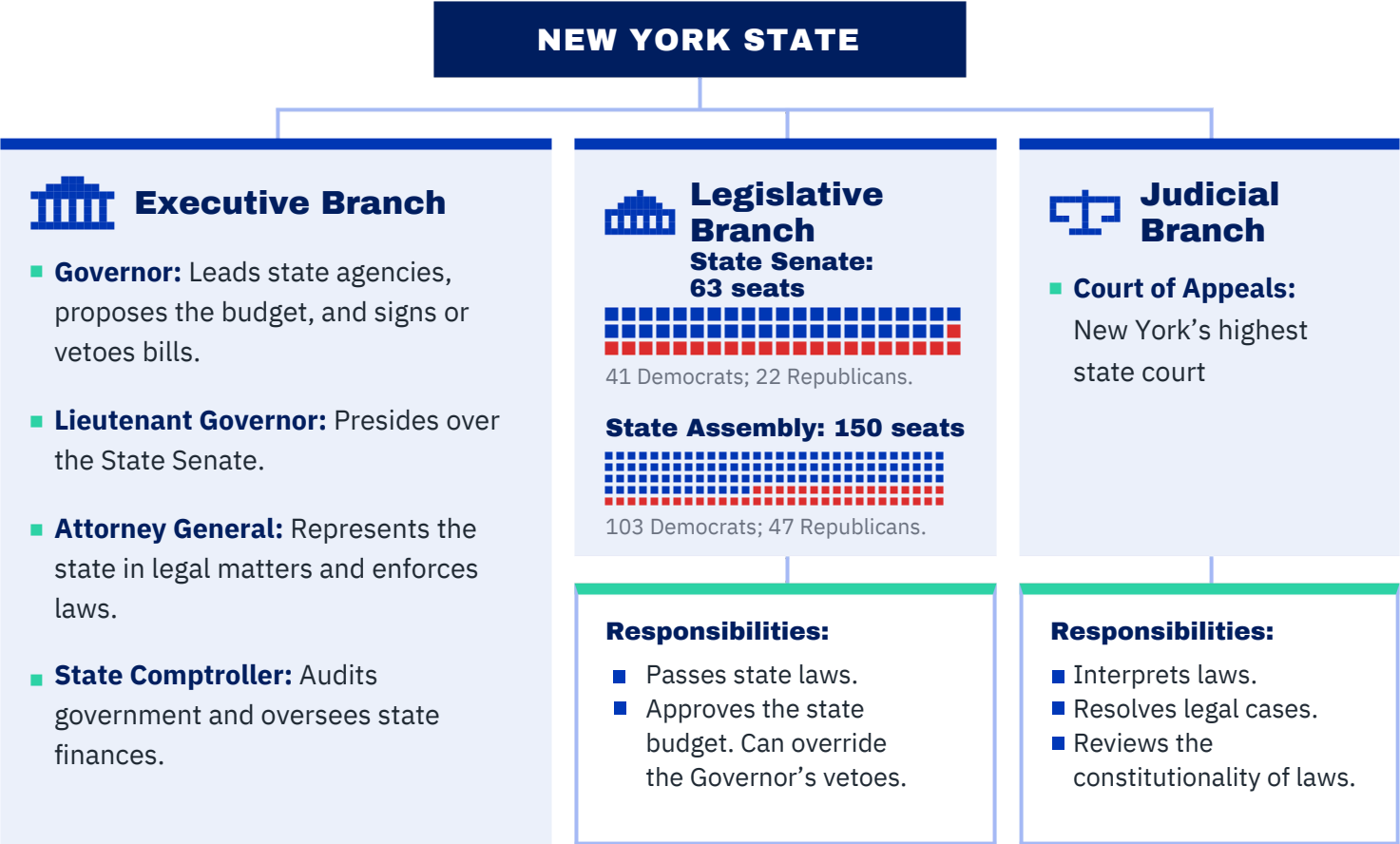
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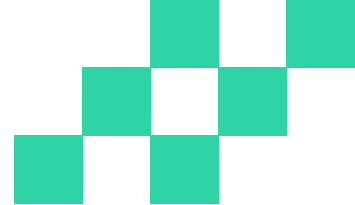
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New York State and Local Government Overview



Finding Your Best Fit

Opportunity	What it is	Start small	Take on more
 Campaign volunteering	Voter outreach, events, and other support for candidates or ballot measures.	Try one shift: 1-3 hours	Volunteer regularly: 2+ hours/week
 Democratic club	A membership group for political discussion, candidate endorsements, and campaign organizing.	Attend a meeting and become a member: 1-2 hours	Become a club officer: 2-4 hours/month; leadership requires more.
 Community board	An appointed neighborhood body advising on land use, budgets, and city services.	Attend a public meeting: 1-2 hours	Apply for a full-board seat: 6-8+ hours/month
 County committee	The local party governing body, with a role in rules, leadership, and certain candidate nominations.	Get involved with your local Democratic club. Ask about an open seat and how to join.	Serve as a member: about 2-4 meeting hours/year, plus petitioning and other activity.
 District leader or State Committee	Elected party representatives who help shape local organizing or statewide party decisions.	Get involved with your local Democratic club.	Prepare to run for a party position. Time commitments vary.



Campaign Volunteering

01

Why does it matter?

Campaign volunteers help candidates and ballot-measure campaigns reach voters and build support. Volunteers are invaluable resources for successful campaigns. Much of Mamdani's success was due to his ability to develop an army of volunteers to do voter outreach.

02

What could I do?

Talk with friends, canvass, make calls, send texts, collect ballot-access signatures, or help at events. Behind-the-scenes roles include research, data entry, fundraising, scheduling, and communications. Reach out to a campaign near you to find out what kind of help they need most!

03

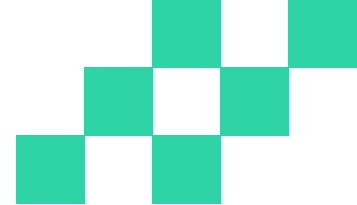
How much time might it take?

Occasional shift: approximately 1–3 hours.
Regular volunteering: 2+ hours per week.

04

What is my first step?

Identify a campaign and reach out about volunteering. Sign up for one shift. Ask about training, materials, your staff contact, and how to record your work. Tip: Bring a friend or family member. It's always more fun with others!



Democratic Clubs

01

Why does it matter?

Democratic clubs bring together people from a neighborhood or with shared political interests. They host discussions and candidate forums, endorse candidates, and organize campaign volunteers. Their endorsements and volunteer networks can strongly influence local elections. Joining gives you a voice in those decisions.

02

What could I do?

Attend meetings, become an eligible voting member, and help with club activities and campaigns. Eligible members can vote on endorsements, leadership, and other decisions under the club's rules.

03

How much time might it take?

Depending on voting requirements, you might only be required to attend 1-2 meetings a year. Meetings usually last 1-2 hours.

04

What is my first step?

Find a club that fits your neighborhood or interests and attend a meeting. Ask about dues, voting eligibility, waiting periods, and attendance requirements. Paying dues may not immediately qualify you to vote.

Community Boards

01

Why does it matter?

Boards advise on land use, neighborhood budgets, and city services. Their recommendations inform agencies and elected officials; district offices also follow up on service concerns.

02

What could I do?

Attend public meetings, join a public committee where offered, or apply for an unpaid, two-year full-board appointment. Full-board members review proposals, serve on committees, and vote on recommendations. Public committee members cannot vote at full-board meetings; committee voting rules vary.

03

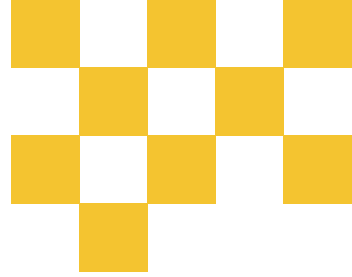
How much time might it take?

Attend a meeting: 1–2 hours. Public committee membership: approximately 2–4 hours per month. Full-board membership: approximately 6–8+ hours per month, including preparation. Expectations vary.

04

What is my first step?

Find your board and attend a meeting. Ask its district office about committee membership or the borough president's office about full-board applications. Full-board applicants must be 16+, live in NYC, and have a district connection through residence, work, or another significant interest.



County Committees

01

Why does it matter?

County committees are the local governing bodies of the Democratic Party, shaping party rules, leadership, and certain nominations and vacancies. Their greatest power lies in choosing the party's nominee when a special vacancy arises. They usually control that choice, which almost guarantees election in deeply Democratic New York City.

02

What could I do?

Serve as a neighborhood representative, review proposals, and vote at meetings. Members serve unpaid, two-year terms.

03

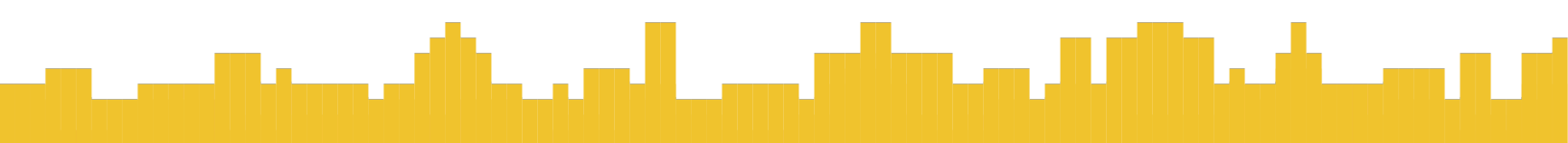
How much time might it take?

An estimated 2–4 meeting hours per year, plus petitioning and other participation. Typically, you will need to collect ~20-60 signatures to get on the ballot.

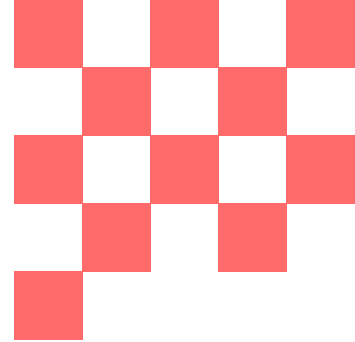
04

What is my first step?

Ask about vacant seats and the appointment process, or prepare to run. Confirm your election district, petition requirements, and filing deadlines before collecting and filing signatures.



District Leader and State Committee

**01**

Why does it matter?

District leaders help shape county-party leadership, local organizing, and candidate support. State Committee members vote on statewide party leadership, rules, and resolutions. District leader and State Committee membership are also stepping stones for higher elected office, so these positions are crucial to ensure a supportive next generation of leaders.

02

What could I do?

As a district leader, represent Democrats in your Assembly district or part of it and connect clubs, campaigns, and county committees. As a State Committee member, represent your Assembly district at state party meetings and conventions. Both positions are unpaid, with two-year terms; district leader duties vary by borough.

03

How much time might it take?

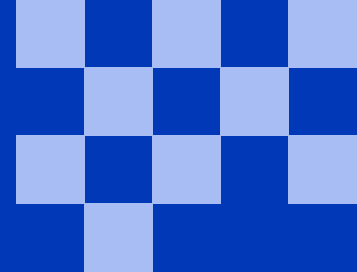
For both roles, commitments vary with meetings, organizing, and campaign activity. Ask current representatives about the work expected locally.

04

What is my first step?

Meet current representatives and build experience through clubs, campaigns, or county committees. Before running, confirm party enrollment, residency, district boundaries, ballot title, petition requirements, and deadlines. Candidates generally petition for a place on the Democratic primary ballot.

Next Steps and How NYSN Can Help



Become a NYSN member and choose your first action:

☐ **Campaign volunteering:** Sign up for one shift supporting a candidate who shares your values.

☐ **Democratic clubs:** Find a club that fits your neighborhood or interests, attend its next meeting, and become a member so that you can vote on endorsements.

☐ **Community boards:** Find your board, attend a meeting, and ask about committee participation.

How getting involved will strengthen the Jewish community

Through clubs, campaigns, and party service, Jewish New Yorkers can shape endorsements, support candidates who share our values, and build relationships across communities. Consistent participation develops the leadership and volunteer networks needed well before the next election or crisis.

How NYSN helps

NYSN can introduce you to a club or community board member, connect you with campaign opportunities for candidates who share your values, and help you navigate local party roles. Tell us what interests you and how much time you have, and we'll make sure you are able to make the most impact possible.

Once you've picked your first action, talk with NYSN today or reach out to us at info@nysn.org so that we can help you with the next steps.



Explore NYSN Membership

Learn about member benefits, upcoming opportunities, and how to join.

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