
Project Proposal

Executive Summary

The Office of the Public Advocate is submitting this proposal requesting grant support for the Public Advocacy Project which engages civic leaders and New York City residents in improving government's understanding of city service problems and thus increase its ability to develop long-term solutions. The Project, which consists of a Civic Leader Board and a comprehensive Citizen Satisfaction Survey, is the first of its kind in New York City.

The Office of the Public Advocate in partnership with the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College, the City University of New York, will conduct systematic research on city services to identify those most in need of improvement.

The Project will reach civic leaders and residents via focus groups and surveys. A random sample of 3500 residents will participate in a city service satisfaction survey and civic leaders from across the city will use their experience and expertise to help identify possible root-causes of problems and help propose corresponding solutions.

Hundreds of U.S. municipalities, among them Phoenix, Miami-Dade County, Detroit, San Diego, San Jose, Austin, and Portland, Oregon have and continue to use resident surveys as an index of local government performance.

For example, when a similar citizen's survey was administered in Pittsburgh, the city learned that though residents were concerned about safety, the root cause of their concern was inadequate street lighting. This information enabled the city officials in Pittsburgh to adequately address residents' concerns.

The Office of the Public Advocate will use the information generated from The Public Advocacy Project to develop a research and advocacy agenda and will work collaboratively with Mayor Bloomberg's Administration and city agencies to address service problems. The Project will ensure that problems identified by civic leaders and residents receive the attention they deserve.

The Public Advocacy Project advances the Office of the Public Advocate's mandate to act as the city's quality assurance monitor over the delivery of public services. Data generated from surveys will also arm civic leaders with information they can use to better advocate for their constituencies.

The Public Advocacy Project has an annual budget of \$225,000. The Office of the Public Advocate has committed \$65,000 annually to the project and seeks funding to sustain the project for two years. The New York Community Trust awarded a two-year grant of \$100,000 to build and sustain the project, leaving a balance of \$220,000 to cover programmatic costs during the first two years. The Office of the Public Advocate will continue to fundraise for the project and has created a portfolio comprised of individual donors, corporate and foundation funders whose grantmaking interests align with this initiative.

Statement of Need

While the quality of and access to city services has improved, data from the Public Advocate's Ombudsman Hotline and 311 proves that New York City residents continue to experience problems with government services. Service problems are usually resolved on a case-by-case basis, lacking the systematic analysis so important in identifying why these problems occur. As a result countless city residents continue to face the same problems.

Problems with service delivery persist in part because:

- (1) New York City does not have a process to comprehensively measure the quality of city services; including evaluating basic service satisfaction among residents.
- (2) There is no mechanism in place that identifies the root causes of service problems and proposes corresponding, sustainable solutions.

Following are some of the existing programs that examine city services but are limited in their ability to diagnose the root causes of problems and propose solutions:

- 1) Local officials from around the city coordinate advocacy groups and neighborhood activists, but none analyze city-wide service needs and the underlying causes of complaints.
- 2) Borough Presidents convene community boards and non-profit groups for roundtable discussions of local issues. But, these groups are limited in scope and geography, and fail to identify long-term city-wide solutions.
- 3) The Mayor's Office of Operations collects data on street cleanliness and runs Capstat, which measure agency performance, but these programs are based on indicators or measurements the agencies define, not information reported by the public. No city programs examine root causes of problems.

- 4) 311 has improved individual residents' ability to log complaints, but is unable to measure the service needs or satisfaction levels of residents because recorded complaints come from a self-selected group whose service problems may not fully represent the needs of the greater city population. Furthermore, 311 is not set up to identify the demographic profile of people who experience service problems, limiting the analysis and interpretation of service quality issues.

For example, if a resident calls 311 to complain about a dirty street, the Department of Sanitation (DOS) should clean their street. However, neither the city nor DOS will understand the extent of the street cleanliness problems across the city nor will the cause of the dirty streets be identified. However, if a citizen satisfaction survey is administered, the city and DOS would understand the extent of the street cleanliness problem and its impact on city residents across the city and could more effectively allocate the necessary resources to resolve the problem.

Additionally, if an analysis of root causes is conducted using the expertise of civic leaders across the city, the city might learn that the problem in one neighborhood may be that the garbage cans are not big enough and that in another neighborhood, small businesses may not have organized a commercial sanitation pick-up. This information compiled by civic leaders would enable the city to understand some of the root causes of street cleanliness problems and help develop customized long-term solutions, i.e. having the Department of Small Business Services help businesses coordinate commercial pick-ups.

The Public Advocate is in the unique position to act as an impartial assessor of city services and is therefore the best city-wide office to measure and assess city service needs and problems, from the perspective of residents and help identify long-term solutions that respond to residents' needs.

Civic Leader Board

The Public Advocate's Office has begun appointing 250 civic leaders who will serve on the Civic Leader Board. To date, 130 civic leaders have joined. The civic leaders have extensive experience serving diverse geographic, demographic and socio-economic communities throughout New York City. Constituencies include: civic, tenant and block associations, local business organizations, religious and community-based organizations, parent groups, social service agencies, cultural groups, and more. (See attached list of current civic leaders). The Civic Leader Board provides the Public Advocacy Project with a depth and

breadth of experience that makes it uniquely capable of fulfilling its mission in identifying city service problems and proposing solutions.

During the duration of The Public Advocacy Project, Civic Leader Board members will meet annually at a half-day conference, located at and facilitated by Baruch College's School of Public Affairs. 100 Service problems will be/are identified by the civic leaders who will subsequently rate the services as "extremely" "very" "somewhat" or "not that" important and rate if the service provided is "excellent," "good," "only fair" or "poor." Each board member will anonymously rate the 100 services using a handheld voting device. Results of the votes are/will be seen on screen immediately. Board's members will be randomly placed into five (5) focus groups to discuss the top 10 service areas voted as most in need of improvement. (See attached results from first meeting 11/15/06)

An annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey (see below) will be created using information on service problems identified by civic leaders at the annual meeting. Citizen Satisfaction Survey data will be analyzed by the civic leaders for the purpose of identifying root causes and corresponding solutions.

Advisory Board

The Office of the Public Advocate has assembled a select group of people whose purpose is to ensure the integrity of the survey. The Advisory Board is comprised of some of the most respected New York City leaders. Specifically, they will be responsible for reviewing and commenting on the proposed general scope and drafts of the survey. (See attached list of Advisory Board Members).

Citizen Satisfaction Survey

The Office of the Public Advocate and Baruch College will design and implement a scientifically rigorous telephone survey of 3,500 randomly selected New York City residents. 3,500 residents is a statistically sound sample necessary to provide city government with a clear, comprehensive picture of how residents feel about services and what they need and want. No survey of this kind is currently being conducted in New York City.

The topics covered by the survey will be developed from information on city services gathered from the Civic Leader Board. The survey will be administered annually with both a core set of questions on city services as well as rotating modules of questions on new service concerns that arise during a particular year (e.g., hurricane preparedness concerns in the wake of the Katrina disaster), allowing the survey to capture timely topics of policy relevance.

The Citizen Satisfaction Survey will be an objective survey of residents' needs, use of, and satisfaction with core New York City government services. It should not be confused with the more common polling conducted by groups like Pace, Quinnipiac, and others that focus on general public opinions, not city service issues. Moreover, the survey will not just identify general levels of satisfaction with a large service, like parks, but will identify specific areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, like condition of equipment, cleanliness, safety, access, and more. The Citizen Satisfaction Survey will also identify the importance residents place on a particular service. The significant sample size of the survey will allow for an in-depth analysis of effected subgroups such as public school parents, the elderly, racial and ethnic groups, or neighborhood clusters in a way that the more common opinion polls cannot. After the initial year, the annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey will begin to track changes, providing the Office with information on improvements/deterioration of services, as well as new concerns.

Program Development and Timeline

- **September 2006**
 - Appoint Civic Leader Board participants using neighborhood information and organizations
- **November 2006**
 - Arrange annual meeting at Baruch's School of Public Affairs. The half-day session will feature
 - Instant response technology to track participant opinions of the most commonly used city services
 - Focus groups to identify other service delivery problems
 - Group discussion of service problems identified in focus groups
- **December 2006**
 - Project Website design and copy in association with the Public Advocate's Website
- **January 2007**
 - Appoint Advisory Board members
- **May 2007 – August 2007**
 - Develop random sample citizen satisfaction survey
- **September 2007 – December 2007**
 - collect and analyze data

Outcomes

The Public Advocacy Project is projected to have three outcomes, 100% retention and participation levels are projected for outcomes #1 and #2:

- 1) Identify and engage a random sample of 3500 city residents to participate in the survey developed by the Civic Leader Board and refined and modified by the Advisory Board
- 2) Engage Civic Leader Board and Advisory Board in ensuring that survey administered is reflective of service areas identified and prioritized by the by two boards
- 3) Survey results will guide the development of reports presented by The Office of the Public Advocate to the Administration. Reports will be based on comments by civic leader board members on survey findings, and will be used to discuss service delivery issues, develop/refine existing policy(ies) propose solutions and track/monitor emerging concerns.

The Office of the Public Advocate

According to the City Charter, The Office of the Public Advocate "shall review complaints of a recurring and multiborough or city-wide nature relating to services and programs, and make proposals to improve the city's response to such complaints."

The Office currently helps approximately 12,000 individuals each year access city services through its ombudsman hotline and assists innumerable more New Yorkers by advocating for reform of policies and programs. Recent successes of The Office of the Public Advocate include: citywide reforms that improve access to special education services and reducing enrollment barriers to the food stamp program.

The Office of the Public Advocate has the ability to make tangible differences in the lives of constituents by investigating and publicizing issues of concern, and sponsoring legislation to produce change.

The Fund for Public Advocacy

Betsy Gotbaum created the not-for-profit Fund for Public Advocacy (The Fund) to help support the mission of the Public Advocate, make city government more accessible, and support innovation in government. The Project is an initiative of The Fund.

Baruch College Survey Research Unit

The Office of the Public Advocate is partnering with Baruch College, School of Public Affairs, because of the college's extensive experience providing research and training support to City government, its substantial survey research capabilities on campus, and its established expertise in citizen satisfaction research.

The School of Public Affairs at Baruch College has long been a successful academic partner of New York City government, sponsoring regular forums on local policy issues, training new City Council members, and conducting policy research for various City agencies.

Each year, Baruch's Survey Research Unit conducts 10,000 telephone interviews about health risk behaviors for the New York City Department of Health, the largest local health survey of its kind in the US and a major source of health policy and planning data. Baruch's Survey Research Unit also conducted the City Council's 2000 and 2001 Survey of Satisfaction with City Services, the first official citizen survey sponsored by a branch of New York City government. Baruch's faculty has published widely in peer-reviewed journals on citizen satisfaction measurement and methods. Finally, Baruch's School of Public Affairs is home to the eTownPanel project, a Sloan-funded initiative to use the Internet to gather feedback on citizens' experiences with the quality of government services and other important local issues.

Conclusion:

The Public Advocacy Project advances the Office of the Public Advocate's mandate to act as the city's quality assurance monitor over the delivery of public services. The Public Advocacy Project provides a unique and unprecedented opportunity for collaboration between citizens and government to work together to develop solutions to service delivery that will affect residents and neighborhoods throughout New York City. We are appreciative of this opportunity to submit the proposal for funding consideration.

Annual Program Costs

Funding sought for

- Annual event cost \$10,000
- Random sample Citizen Satisfaction Survey(Baruch fee) \$150,000

In-Kind Costs

- Program director \$55,000
 - OTPS Costs
 - Telephone
 - Email
 - Fax
 - Paper
 - Computer
 - Workstation
 - Website development and host
- \$10,000

Total program cost for 2 years: \$450,000.00

Appendix

Civic Leader Board member profile:

Civic Leader Board members are selected by the Public Advocate's Community Affairs staff based on their experiences and expertise serving communities. The Office of the Public Advocate sought to have a balance in interests and communities represented.

Following is the criteria for filling the 250 positions on the Civic Leader Board. Political affiliations were not considered or a factor in the selection process.

Breakdown by organization type:

Three to four leaders were selected in each borough (smaller numbers in Staten Island) to represent each of the following types of organizations:

1. Community Based Organization/Religious institutions
2. BID/Business/Econ Development Organizations
3. Civic/Block Associations
4. Parent/Education/Youth organizations
5. Aging organizations
6. Cultural organizations
7. Social Services including: Women's, Health, Immigrant, LGBT organizations
8. Tenant Advocates
9. Environment/Parks organizations

Breakdown by borough:

The following outlines borough affiliation of Civic Leader Board members:

Brooklyn:	60
Manhattan:	50
Bronx:	60
Staten Island:	20
Queens:	60

List of Current Civic Leader Board Members as of April 2007:

1. 165th St. Mall Improvement Association
2. Alliance for Community Services
3. American Foundation for the University of the West Indies
4. Asian- American Consulting Services Inc./ Newland Community Center
5. Astella Development Corporation
6. Asthma Free School Zone
7. Auburndale Improvement Association Inc.
8. Bay Ridge Consumer Federation
9. Beach 41st Residents Association
10. Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association
11. Block Association 122 (BA122)
12. Briarwood Community Association
13. Brinkerhoff Action Association
14. Brighton Neighborhood Association, Inc.
15. Bronx House
16. Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment
17. Brooklyn Chinese American Association
18. Brooklyn Housing & Family Services
19. Cambria Heights Development Corp. Inc.
20. Carleton Manor Resident Council
21. Casita Maria
22. Central Astoria LDC
23. Children's Storefront
24. Chinese American Planning Council
25. Chinese Immigrants Services, Inc.
26. Circle of Support/Circle of Youth
27. Citizens Action of NY and NYC/ Coalition for a Livable West Side
28. Coalition for Asian-American Children & Families
29. Community Board 12 in Queens
30. Community Education Council 20
31. Community Education Council, District 31
32. Community Health Action of Staten Island
33. Community Healthcare Network
34. Concerned Citizens of Laurelton
35. Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island
36. Council of Peoples Organization
37. Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island
38. Community Service Society
39. Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, Inc. (CCJ)
40. Dakota Group (An Alliance of Friends)
41. Dominican-American Society of Queens
42. East Harlem Council for Community Improvement, Inc. (EHCCI)
43. Flatbush Avenue BID
44. Flushing Development Center
45. Forest Hills Community House
46. Generation Q of the Forest Hills Community House
47. Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)
48. Greater Woodhaven Development Corporation
49. Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
50. Harlem Police Athletic League Parent's Association
51. Harriet and Kenneth KupFenberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives
52. Homes for the Homeless
53. Housing Works NYC Advocacy Department
54. Hudson Moving and Storage
55. Immigration Advocacy Services, Inc.
56. Informed Voices
57. inMotion, Inc.
58. JCC of Canarsie
59. JCC of Greater Coney Island, Inc. and Shorefront Jewish Community Council
60. Jewish Community Center of Staten Island
61. Juan Pablo Duarte Foundation
62. Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center
63. Korean American Counseling Center, Inc.
64. Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center Library
65. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
66. Liberty Center for Immigrants
67. Lucille Rose Tenant Association
68. Manhattan Beach Community Group
69. Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
70. Manhattan Community Board 1
71. Marine Park Civic Association
72. Mary Queen of Heaven
73. Midwood Development Corp.
74. Mind Builders Creative Arts Center
75. Mother A.M.E. Zion Church
76. Mothers Against Guns Inc.
77. Mount Sinai United Christian Church
78. Murray Hill Neighborhood Association
79. Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership
80. Neighborhood Enhancement for Training Services, Inc. (N.E.T.S.)
81. Neighborhood Health Providers
82. New York City College of Technology, CUNY
83. New York Therapeutic Riding Center
84. Newton Civic Association Inc.
85. NHSJ
86. North River Community Environmental Review Board, Inc (NRCERB)
87. Northeast Bronx Association, Inc.
88. Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition

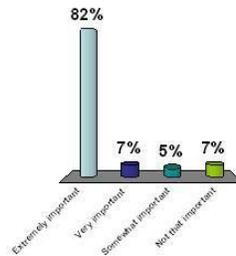
89. Pakistani-American Federation of New York, Inc.
90. PFLAG
91. Project Hospitality Inc.
92. Prospect Hill Senior Services
93. Queens Borough Hill Civic
94. Queens Jewish Community Council
95. Queens Jewish Community Council of Rockaway Peninsula Rawlins & Gibbs, LLP
96. Richmond Hill East Business Persons Corporation
97. Richmond Hill South Civic Association
98. Religious Congregations Committee
99. Rochdale Village Social Services Inc.
100. Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corporation
101. Rosedale Civic Action Association
102. Russian American Arts Foundation
103. Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn
104. Services for the Underserved (SUS)
105. Sesame Flyers Int'l. Inc.
106. SNAP Senior Center
107. South Bronx Action Group, Inc.
108. South Bronx Mental Health Council, Inc.
109. Staten Island African American Political Association
110. Sunnyside Railyards Monitoring Committee
111. Sunset Park/5th Avenue BID
112. SymphonySpace
113. Tolentine Zeiser Community Life Center, Inc.
114. Union Turnpike Merchants Association
115. United Canarsie South Civic Association
116. United Forties Civic Association
117. United Jewish Organizations Of Williamsburg, Inc.
118. Village Alliance BID
119. West Brighton Local Development Corp.
120. West Cunningham Park Civic Association
121. West Indian American Progressive Action Council
122. Westerleigh Improvement Society
123. Where to Turn
124. YM & YWHA
125. Where to Turn
126. YH-YWCA Washington Heights and Inwood

Top Ten Problems in Service Delivery as identified by the Civic Leader Board at the Annual Meeting located at Baruch College on 11/15/06

#1

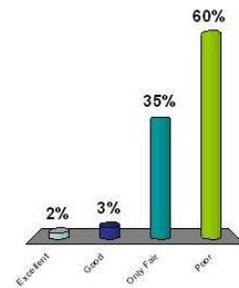
How important is affordable housing?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

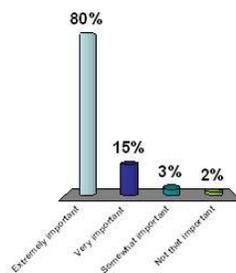
1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Only Fair
4. Poor



#2

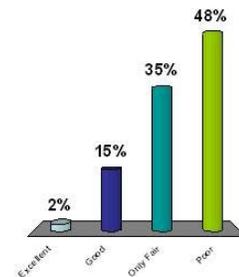
How important is traffic congestion?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

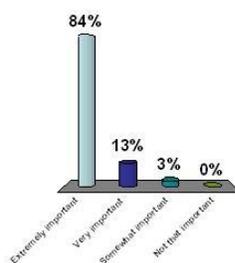
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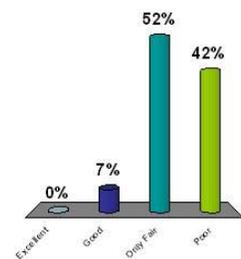
How important is reducing the high school dropout rate?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

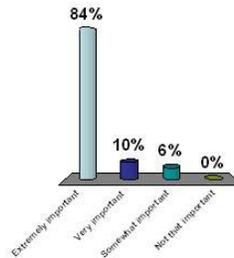
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#4

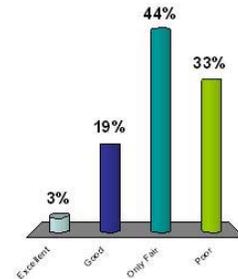
How important are after-school programs?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

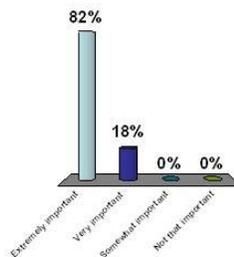
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#5

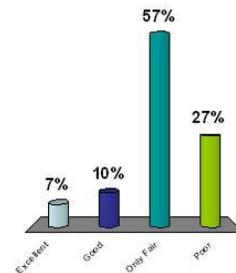
How important is the accessibility of city agencies to groups or individuals?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

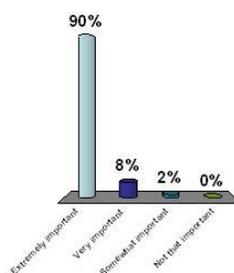
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#6

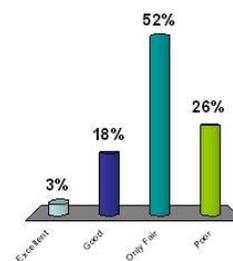
How important is school safety?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

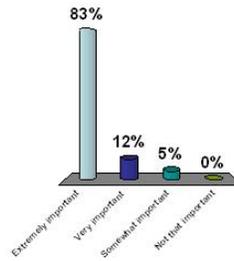
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#7

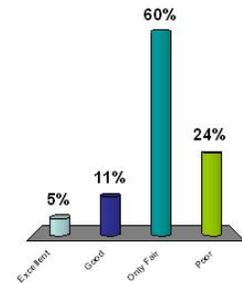
How important is the economic development outside of Manhattan?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

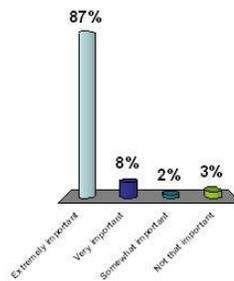
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4. Poor



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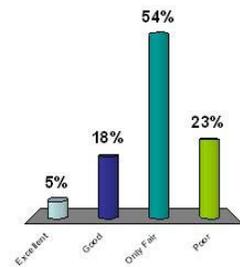
How important is drug abuse or drug dealing?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

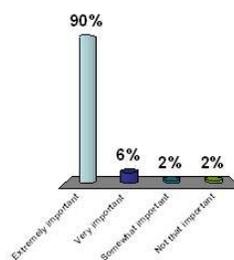
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4. Poor



#9

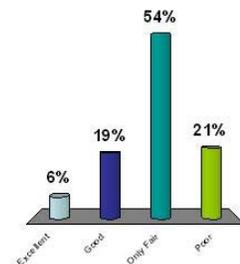
How important is access to health care?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

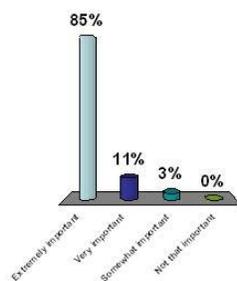
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4. Poor



#10

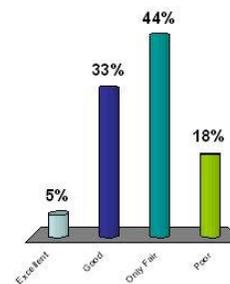
How important is police-community relations?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not that important



How good a job is city government doing in this area?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Only Fair
4. Poor



Advisory Board Members

Ester Fuchs, **Columbia University SIPA Program**, *Chair*

Sal Albanese, **Mesirow Financial**

Fran Barrett, **Community Resource Exchange**

Dick Dadey, **Citizens Union**

Darwin M. Davis, **The New York Urban League**

Diana Fortuna, **Citizens Budget Commission**

Fatima Goldman, **Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies**

David Jones, **Community Service Society**

Peter Kostmayer, **Citizens for NYC**

Mary McCormick, **The Fund for the City of New York**

Michael Miller, **Jewish Community Relations Council of New York**

Ana L. Oliveira, **The New York Women's Foundation**

Lillian Barrios-Paoli, **Safe Space**

Stephanie Palmer, **Mission Society**

Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, **Catholic Charities**

Nancy Wackstein, **United Neighborhood Houses**