



# New York Insights Review

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# Executive Summary

From September to November 2020, Ballast Research spoke with state and local policymakers in New York to understand how the government and private sector responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what policymakers want to see from advocates during this time.



## New York Policy Priorities



**Small Businesses**



**Healthcare**



**Unemployment**



**Food Security**



**Education**



### Private Sector Response to COVID-19

- Policymakers praise organizations that provide community and philanthropic aid during the pandemic.
- Looking forward, policymakers want the private sector to focus on job creation and economic growth, as well as continued community-focused philanthropy.



### The Impact of COVID-19 on New York Advocacy

- The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted engagement norms and advocacy dialogue, but the foundations of good advocacy remain the same.
- Policymakers emphasize the importance of advocates demonstrating local impact, being authentic and transparent, and exercising clear communication.

**New York Policy Priorities**

# New York Policy Priorities

## Small Businesses

*“In New York City, we’ve got 240,000 small businesses with about 3.6 million employees—the majority of the working population here. **Without small business recovery, we can’t recover the city as a whole because those small businesses employ most of the workers.**”*

-Municipal Commissioner



## Healthcare

*“New York already has poor healthcare outcomes and disparities; COVID has pushed that much further behind. We don’t have enough facilities in our healthcare system. There is some distrust in the community about even using the facilities. So healthcare is a major issue.”*

-Chief of Staff, Legislature, D



## Unemployment

*“The most important priority for my community is getting people employed and back to work, obviously while protecting people’s health. We’ve seen a huge increase in constituent work around accessing unemployment benefits.”*

-Senator, R



## Food Security

*“In my community, our first concern was making sure everyone had food. People worked with both city government and with nonprofits to raise money and handle the logistics. There was a lot of coordination within the community.”*

-Municipal District Manager, D



## Education

*“We need to ensure access to the internet for virtual school. We need to make sure the digital divide doesn’t turn into a diploma divide.”*

-Municipal Council Member, D



### Policymakers approach these issues with concerns for:

- ✓ Mitigating the unequal impact of the pandemic on people and entities most vulnerable
- ✓ Combatting the expected persistent effects of the pandemic on their communities

**Private Sector Response To COVID-19**

# Private Sector Response to COVID-19

New York policymakers believe a robust private sector response is crucial to address the most serious COVID-19 issues in their communities and to generate economic growth coming out of the pandemic. Policymakers are paying attention to private and non-profit philanthropic responses that address the issues that matter most in their communities.

## Charitable Giving

*“Many organizations donated time, materials, money, and food. They gave discounts and tried to help in any way. It was like a race to see who was the most conscious and mindful. Those are races I like to see. We give you business, so take care of us in times of need. People remember those things.”*

-Assembly Member, D

## Food Donations

*“We’ve seen lots of philanthropy and assistance from the private sector, especially nonprofits... You’ve probably heard about food insecurity—nonprofits have been ramping up donations to food banks, which is essential.”*

-Senator, R

## Financial Aid

*“We’ve seen a lot of large companies offering financial support, loans or special programs for small businesses. We worked a lot with our CDFI community to help get PPP loans to small businesses in the city.”*

-Municipal Commissioner

## Policymakers Want Businesses to Focus on Stimulating Economic Growth While Continuing to Support to Communities



### Innovation to Generate Growth

*“Even in a pandemic, private sector competition is the best way to generate economic growth—leading to job creation, innovation, and entrepreneurship... We can’t rely on government relief forever. We’re working closely with advocacy groups that represent coalitions of private companies to get their input and understand how we can best help them.”*

-Legislative Director, D



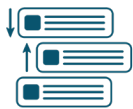
### Community-Centered Philanthropy

*“We need to do a better job assisting the community and all the families who are in need. Many people are out of jobs and they’re struggling. If every corporation could do a little bit to help families, our communities would be better off.”*

-Senator, D

**The Impact of COVID-19  
on New York Advocacy**

# The Impact of COVID-19 on New York Advocacy



## Shifting Policy Priorities

*“Advocacy groups and lobbyists are enormously important for bringing concerns, facts, and proposals to my attention and in turn helping get things accomplished. I don’t think advocacy and lobbying have increased or decreased because of the pandemic. It’s just, like everything else, focused on a new set of topics.”*

-Assembly Member, D



## Increased Virtual Access

*“I need to have meetings about legislation with people so business doesn’t collapse. I’ve found it easier, not harder, to meet with people because everyone is home, even corporate executives. In fact, the pace of legislation has picked up because the access is there. We’re working at such a fast pace; we can’t even believe it.”*

-Assembly Member, D

## Pillars of Strong Advocacy

Despite the shift in policy priorities and communication channels during the COVID-19 pandemic, the pillars of good advocacy practices still hold true.



### Positive Impact

*“Tell us how we can best help you, especially if it’s going to make a difference in our community. What funding do you need or what regulations help and hurt your business? It’s kind of like a job interview; this is your time to brag about yourself, what your company does, and how it impacts the local or state economy.”*

-Legislative Director, D



### Transparency

*“I think about relationship building less in terms of the company and more in terms of the individuals at that company. Do they exude the genuine interest and transparency that we need for those kinds of relationships? It’s also good to know the context of their organizational character.”*

-Municipal Deputy  
Commissioner



### Communication

*“This is probably too simplistic, but what’s most effective is a meeting where they give us background information beforehand, very clearly and compellingly state their position, and then work with us to develop policies that are smart and effective and meet both of our objectives.”*

-Municipal Deputy  
Chief of Staff, D



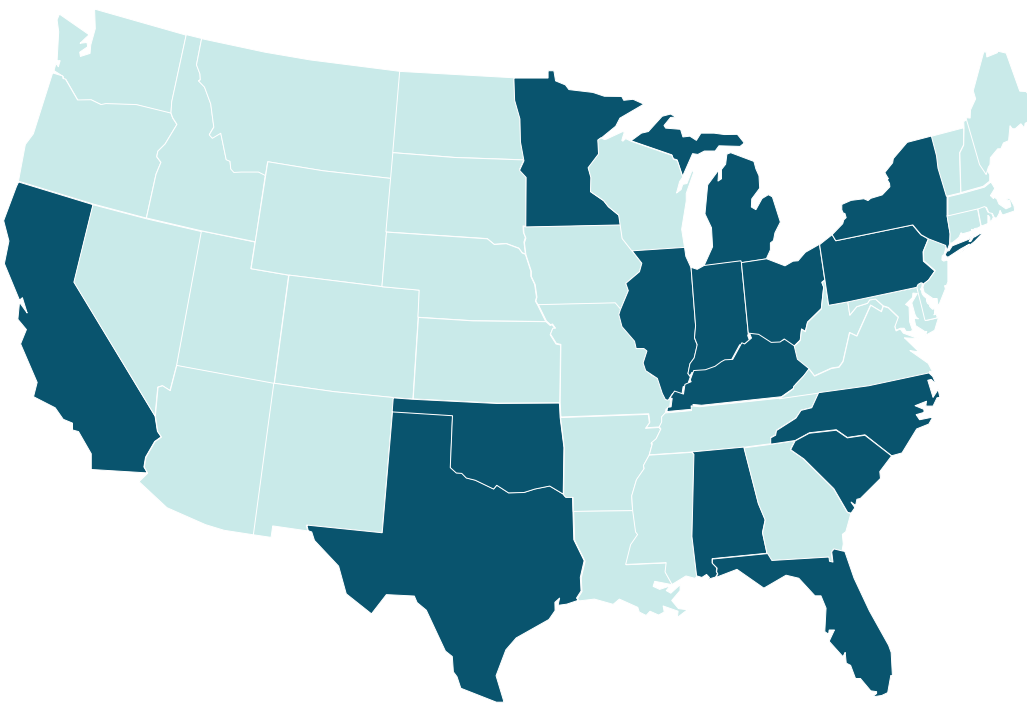
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# States Insights Review

Ballast Research provides direct feedback from senior policymakers to government relations professionals, helping advocates make better use of policymakers' time and provide the resources most useful to those in government.



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