



**Maintaining  
White Male Privilege in  
New York City Government?  
The Role of Race, Ethnicity and Gender  
in NYC Mayor de Blasio's Appointments**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Background and Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Racial-Ethnic Make-up of the de Blasio Administration</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Distribution of Frequency of Appointments by Job Title</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Distribution of Frequency of Appointments by Agency</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Lack of Upward Mobility</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Racial Segregation in City Agencies</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Distribution of Frequency of Appointments by Gender</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The Role of Public Sector Employment</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recommendtions for Change</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>17</b>

This study is dedicated to the memory of  
the late **Walter Stafford, Ph.D.**,  
*a compañero* in the struggle for social justice

**“ . . . [T]he story of the declining middle class, white privilege (however fragile), and structural racism are cut from the same cloth. While structural racism creates and distributes harsher burdens and fewer benefits to people of color, it limits us all. . . . We must use a structural-racism lens to understand inequity and poverty and to develop meaningful policies to end both.”**

—Maya Wiley in [2006](#), before her appointment as Counsel to Mayor de Blasio

**“ . . . White supremacy isn't just a white dude in Idaho  
White supremacy protects the privilege I hold  
White supremacy is the soil, the foundation, the  
cement and the flag that flies outside of my home  
White supremacy is our country's lineage,  
designed for us to be indifferent. . . ”**

—Macklemore and Ryan Lewis,  
*White Privilege II* (2016)

**T**he recognition by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio of the perils of continuing a “tale of two cities,” in which race and class are inextricably tied, and the need to have a government that looks like New York’s residents, points to the importance of race and ethnicity in Gotham’s DNA. As the country’s largest “majority minority” city, Mayor de Blasio faces many challenges in promoting the realities of creating “one city.” An important aspect of his agenda is Mayor de Blasio’s ability to make the full and equitable participation of Asians, Blacks and Latinos in the governing of this city a priority from a racial-ethnic equity lens. As the de Blasio Administration passes its halfway mark, one way to gauge his success in this regard is the extent of the racial-ethnic diversity of his appointments and how well it reflects the city’s changing demographics.

To describe the wide disparities documented in this report as a consequence of the existence of “White male privilege” uses a controversial concept directly articulated by members of Mayor de Blasio’s Administration and further validated by the Mayor’s own description of the racial-ethnic and gender inequalities that he was elected to address. In raising this problem with the Mayor since his election in 2013, we have been met with silence on the subject. This has been a silence that brings to mind the thought-provoking observation attributed to James Baldwin that “being white means never having to think about it.” Considering what is at stake here is the full participation of over two-thirds of the city’s population that is composed of people of color and women, their extreme underrepresentation in Mayor de Blasio’s appointments in his first two years in office raises troubling questions about his self-described “progressive” agenda and how people of color view the legitimacy of municipal government as this pattern of exclusion becomes increasingly evident.

While much attention is given to the racial-ethnic composition of legislative bodies, such as the NYC Council, the make-up of the executive branch of government receives much less. This issue is further complicated by the existence of a so-called “progressive” municipal administration like that of Bill de Blasio that [rhetorically champions a broad notion of “diversity” in its staffing](#). Demographic changes in New York City present a dramatic challenge to municipal employment and policymaking that dates back more than three decades since it first became a [“majority minority” city](#). Does the de Blasio Administration staffing reflect a true diversity or does it reinforce a White male privilege that undermines his challenge to the existence of a “tale of two cities”?

The question this poses is whether race and gender play significant roles as inputs to New York City government in creating a representative democracy that politicians refer to when they raise the cliché of forming a government that is like the city’s population. Much less discussed are the roles of race and gender in determining the city government’s policy outputs in terms of service and budget priorities and implementation. The assumption here is that the racial-ethnic and gender composition of municipal government play important roles in informing its governing decisions, thus making an analysis of this composition an important line of inquiry. The existence of a self-described “progressive” administration like that of Mayor de Blasio represents an ideal case study in this regard. Is the de Blasio Administration truly representative of the interests of the city’s diverse racial-ethnic groups and women or does it represent a form of [a “trickle down progressivism”](#) that is paternalistic to its majority communities of color and women?

## Background and Methodology

The [National Institute for Latino Policy \(NiLP\)](#) has been analyzing the racial-ethnic composition of New York City government in various ways since the Koch Administration and continued from the election of De Blasio in November 2013 [during his transition period](#). This report is an analysis of the nature of the frequency of his political appointments between January 2014, when he first took office, though February 2, 2016..

The approach used to identify the race and ethnicity of his appointments is based on the Mayor's publicly-announced naming of 613 staff and board/commission members. This approach was made necessary in the absence of any publicly-available database of appointments made by the Mayor's office. Because of the nature of the information available, these appointments are counted as individual acts of employment without adjusting for the effects of departure from these positions or the role of promotions and lateral appointments. As a result, what we are tracking in this report is the *frequency of appointments* by Mayor de Blasio. To date, efforts to get the de Blasio Administration to provide a complete listing of its appointments have been unsuccessful.

The racial-ethnic and gender identifications of the individual appointments were based on biographical information and photographs accessed through Internet searches. Although the attempt was to identify individuals who had significant experience in the racial-ethnic community they were associated with, in some cases this connection was not clear-cut. For example, in the Latino case, although included in this analysis as Latino, the authenticity of the race and ethnicity of some of the appointees was challenged by some. Among those who raised the most questions was the identity of Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña who, although she identifies as a US-based Latina, has her roots in Spain. There were also concerns about Deputy Mayor Richard Buery's Hispanic identity because, according to some insiders, although he is of Honduran background, his involvement was seen as being primarily in the African-American community with very little in the Latino community. Despite this questioning of their Hispanic authenticity, they are identified in this study as Latino, which some may view as over counting the number of Latino appointees. Depending on one's perspective on this question, our analysis could be criticized for *overstating* the number of Asian, Black and Latino appointments.

Another question regarding the role of Hispanic identity in the city's hiring policies is the need to reflect the diversity of the Latino community. New York City has one of the most diverse Latino communities in the United States in terms of national-origin. According to the 2010 Census, the city's Latino population was 31.0 percent Puerto Rican, 24.7 percent Dominican, 13.7 percent Mexican, 7.2 percent Ecuadoran, 4.1 percent Colombia and 19.3 percent other Central and South American. This Latino diversity needs to be adequately reflected in the city's hiring decisions to assure full Latino coverage of participation in city government. For example, while all Puerto Ricans arrive in New York already as U.S. citizens, this is not the case for most other Latinos, which is a legal status difference of great significance. The same holds in terms of the city's Asian and Black communities. Unfortunately, the city government data on the composition of its workforce does not take these differences into account despite their importance.

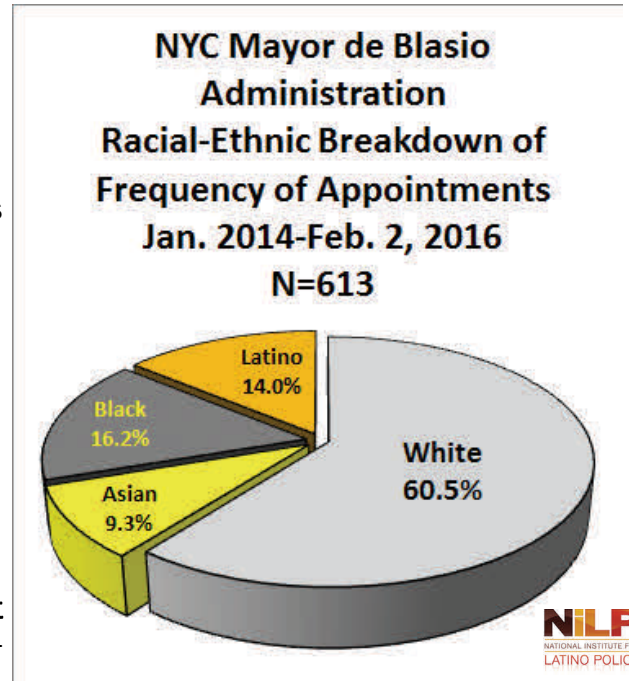
Also largely overlooked in this process is the role of race in the Latino community. There has been an increasing racial consciousness within the Hispanic community giving rise to alternative identities like Afro-Latino, Afro-Dominican, Afro-Boricua and Neo-Taino that adds another important layer to Latino identity. For example, based on statistics from the 2009 American Community Survey for New York State, while 64.7 percent of Colombians identified racially as White, only 26.2 percent of Dominicans and 47.1 percent of Puerto Ricans did so. The non-White racial identification of these Latinos included being Black, multi-racial and a more general "some other race."

### The Racial-Ethnic Make-up of the de Blasio Administration

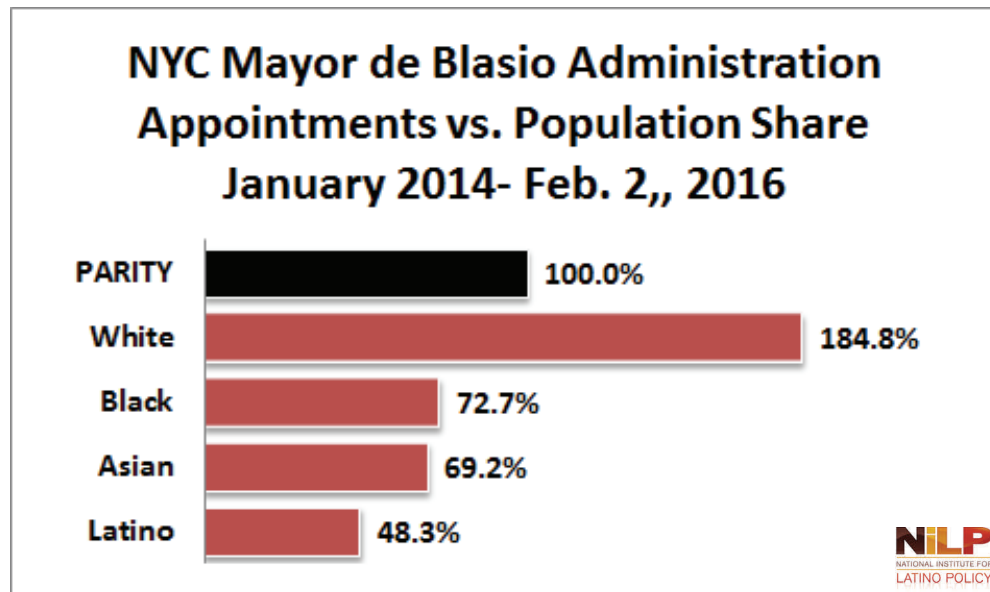
The diversity gap in Mayor de Blasio’s political appointments in the first half of his of his Administration is quite wide. As of February 2, 2016, the cumulative 2014-2106 racial-ethnic composition of his publicly-announced appointments is 61.0 percent White and 39.0 percent people of color. Communities of color are represented as follows in his appointments: 16.2 percent Black, 14.0 percent Latino and 9.3 percent Asian.

This is in sharp contrast with the composition of New York City’s population. According to 2010 Census, New York City was 33.3 percent White and 66.7 percent of color. A straight-line population projection based on 2000-2010 trends results in the city’s 2020 population’s communities of color becoming 68 percent. In 2010, Whites made up 33.3 percent of the city’s residents, followed by 28.8 percent Latino, 22.8 percent Black and 12.6 percent Asian.

Comparing each racial-ethnic group’s share of de Blasio appointments with their share of the city’s population further reveals the scale of these representational disparities. Whites are overrepresented in appointments by almost twice their representation in the population, while Asians, Blacks and Latinos are significantly underrepresented. Among people of color, **Latinos are by far the most underrepresented**, while Blacks and Asian are underrepresented to roughly the same degree. (see chart below)



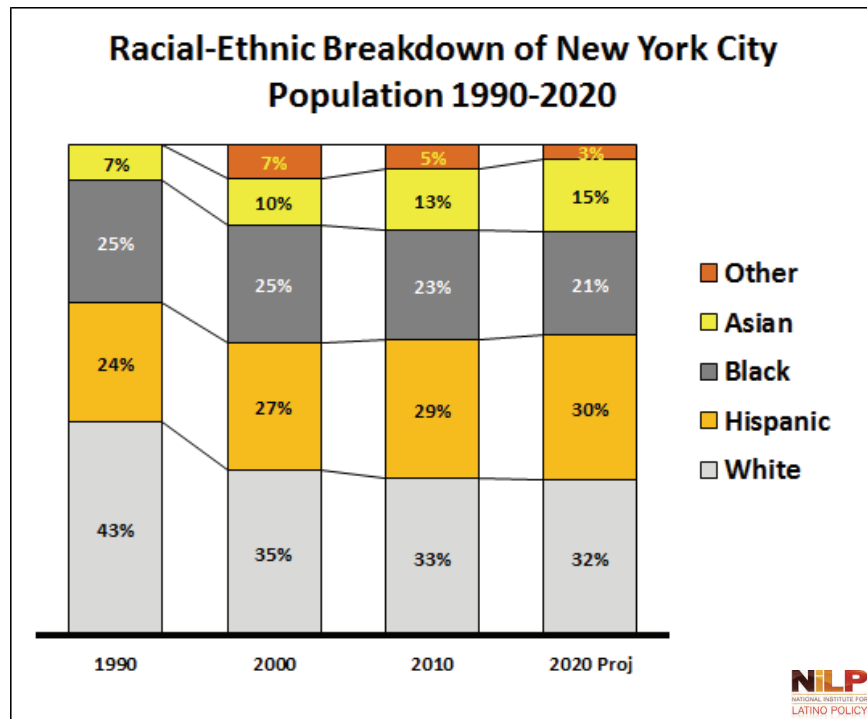
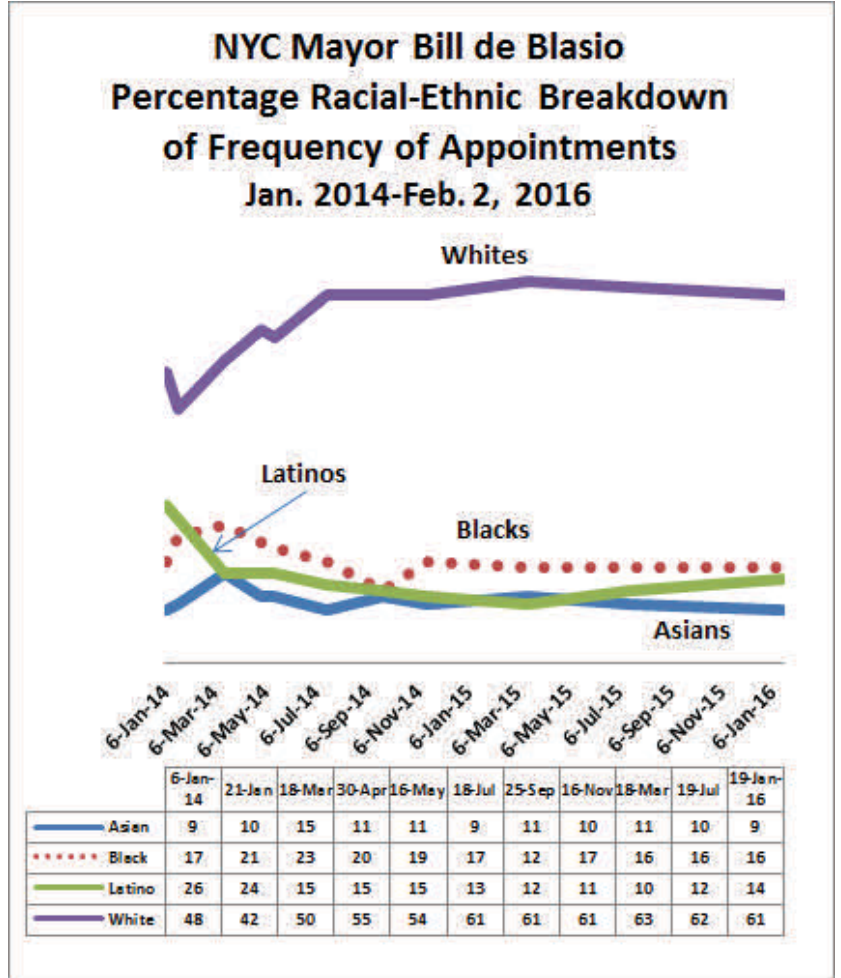
This racial-ethnic disparity in the de Blasio appointments has increased over time. In the two years since de Blasio took office in 2014, the White share of his appointments increased from 48 to 61 percent. Since November 2015, while the Latino share of appointments increased from 10 to 14 percent, that of Blacks and Asians decreased slightly. As Mayor de Blasio has been under [increasing criticism from Latino leaders about his poor record of Latino appointments](#), it appears that his response to this pressure has



been to lower his rate of Black and Asian appointments to maintain the overrepresentation of Whites in city employment. However, despite this increase, Latinos remained the most underrepresented group among Mayor de Blasio's appointments.

The extreme racial-ethnic disparity in appointments by Mayor de Blasio points to a definite pattern reinforcing the role of White privilege in New York City government under a progressive Administration. This pattern of appointments, as a result, maintains the status quo in the overall municipal employment that it reflects.

According to the city's [latest official equal employment opportunity \(EEO\) report](#), overall local government employment in 2015 was 38.9 percent White, 34.0 percent Black, 18.7 percent Latino and 7.7 percent Asian. This pattern contrasts with the city's most recent racial-ethnic demographic changes: as the Black and White share of the city's population has been decreasing, these two groups are overrepresented in overall city government employment, while Latinos and Asians, which are increasing in the population, are underrepresented in the overall municipal workforce. The de Blasio pattern of appointments only adds to these disparities.



## Distribution of Frequency of Appointments by Job Title

In 9 out of 11 job titles identified, Whites were the largest group of de Blasio appointees. The only exception was in the small job category of Deputy Mayor (which includes the First Deputy Mayor and 4 other Deputy Mayors), in which Latinos accounted for 60 percent of the appointments made. This includes the replacement of one Latina with another (Lillian Barrios-Paoli with Herminia Palacios) and the appointment of Richard Beury, whose Hispanic authenticity is questioned by many. Some feel he should be listed as a Black appointee. The dominant position of First Deputy Mayor is held by a White male.

Whites are the majority of the appointments in 8 of the 11 job titles, ranging from 57.1 to 84.2 percent. The two whitest positions are those of Advisors (Senior Advisor, Special Advisor, etc.) at 84.2 percent, and that of Judge at 71.7 percent.

These racial-ethnic disparities are reflected in the city’s overall employment. Among [officials and administrators in 2015](#), 61.5 percent were White, while 7.9 percent were Asian, 17.6 percent Black, and 12.7 percent Latino. While Asians and Latinos are underrepresented in the overall municipal government workforce, the underrepresentation of Blacks in higher level positions is especially great, given that Blacks are overrepresented in city government employment (Blacks are 23 percent of the city’s population, but make up 34 percent of the city government work force).

The appointments made by the Mayor are an important route by which to address the lack of diversity in the city government’s policymaking and management positions. By simply reproducing historical disparities in this regard, the Mayor is reinforcing the lack of upward mobility experienced by city workers of color.

<b>NYC Mayor de Blasio Administration</b> <b>Racial-Ethnic Breakdown of Frequency of Appointments by Job Title</b> <b>Jan. 2014-Feb.2, 2016</b>					
	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Total
Advisors	5.3%	0.0%	10.5%	84.2%	100.0%
Boardmember	10.3%	16.0%	13.1%	60.6%	100.0%
Chair	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Chief of Staff	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Commissioner	15.8%	18.4%	18.4%	47.4%	100.0%
Deputy	0.0%	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	100.0%
Deputy Mayor	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Director	10.3%	7.7%	20.5%	61.5%	100.0%
Judge	3.3%	16.7%	8.3%	71.7%	100.0%
President	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%	57.1%	100.0%
Other Staff	5.3%	15.8%	21.1%	57.9%	100.0%
Staff Positions	9.1%	15.7%	14.0%	61.2%	100.0%
Board Memberships	10.3%	16.0%	13.1%	60.6%	100.0%





## Distribution of Frequency of Appointments by Agency

**W**hites were the largest group of de Blasio appointees in 18 of the 24 city government agencies, boards and commission for which appointments were publicly-announced. The agencies with the largest percentage of White appointees are:

- Criminal Court Judge (81 percent)
- Board of Corrections (75 percent)
- Civil Court Judge (67 percent)
- Family Court Judge (64 percent)
- Education Department (60 percent)
- Office of the Mayor (58 percent)
- City Planning Commission (50 percent)

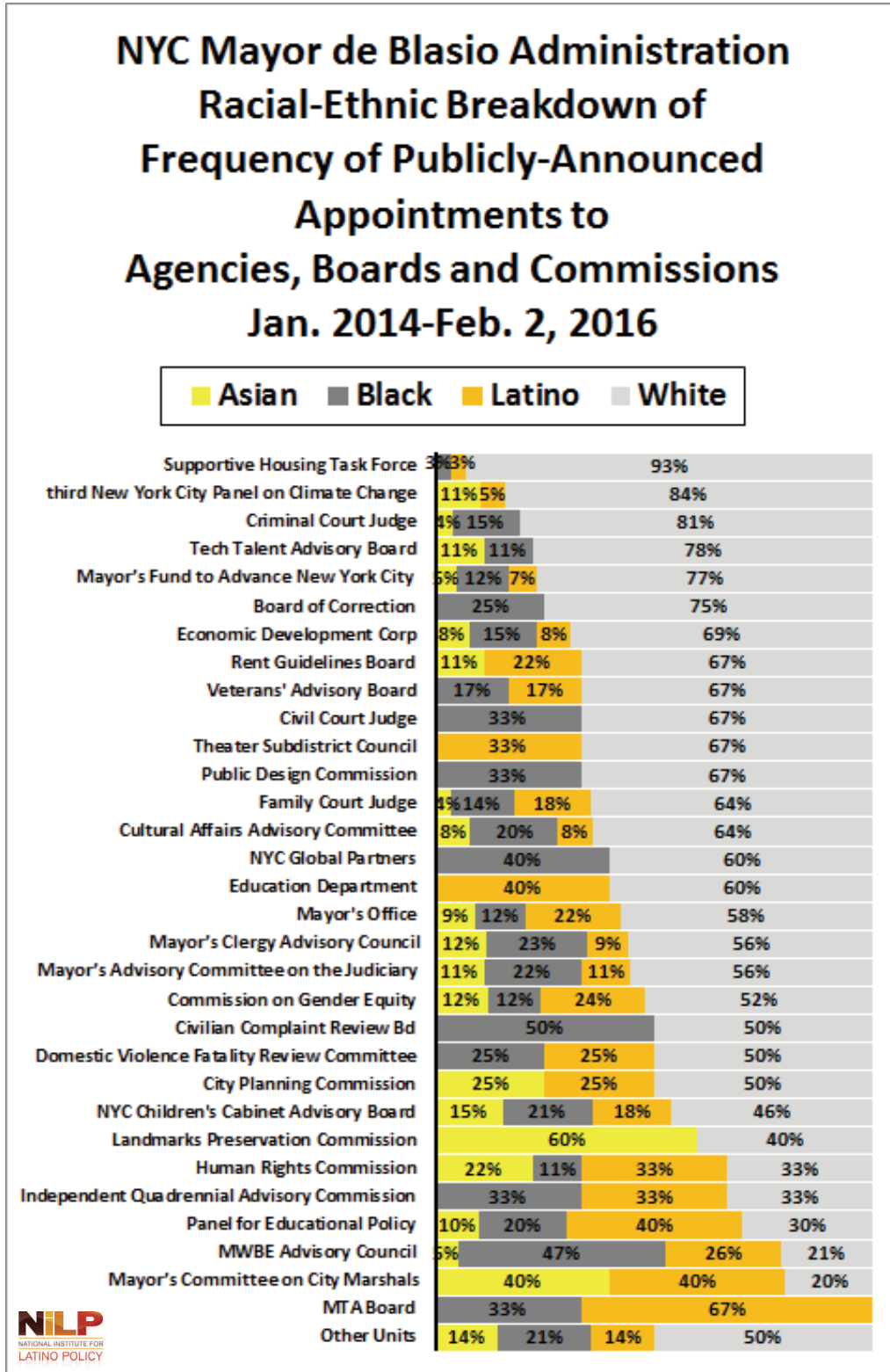
The boards and commissioners with the largest percentage of White appointees are:

- Supportive Housing Task Force (93 percent)
- third NYC Panel on Climate Change (84 percent)
- Tech Talent Advisory Board (78 percent)
- Fund to Advance NYC (77 percent)
- Economic Development Corporation (69 percent)
- Rent Guidelines Board (67 percent)
- Theater Subdistrict Council (67 percent)
- Veterans Advisory Board (67 percent)
- Public Design Commission (67 percent)
- Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission (64 percent)
- Global Partners (60 percent)
- Clergy Advisory Council (56 percent)
- Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary (56 percent)
- Commission on Gender Equity (52 percent)
- Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (50 percent)

Given de Blasio's "progressive" self-description, the racial disparity in this distribution of appointments is troubling. The Whitest agencies are those whose clients are mostly people of color: corrections and the courts. Among the Whitest board/commission members are those in areas that impact the most on the city's communities of color, such as supportive housing.

In light of this disparity, it is interesting that in the Latino case the elimination of the [Latin Media and Entertainment Commission](#) (although inactive since 2014 it is still listed on the de Blasio Administration's website) is another indicator of this problem of racial-ethnic underrepresentation. Established in 2003 by Mayor Bloomberg with much fanfare (its honorary co-chairs were Jennifer Lopez and Robert De Niro), Mayor de Blasio never reactivated this commission upon taking office. This commission had as its goals the development of strategic plans to retain, recruit, and expand Latin media and entertainment productions, businesses, and jobs in New York City, for New York City to attract and host high-profile Latin entertainment productions and events and to support and create New York based events. It consisted of 24 commissioners drawn largely from the city's top Latino media and entertainment circles. To compound the vacuum created by the absence of this commission, Mayor de Blasio also presided over the [abrupt](#)

[departure in October 2015 of Cynthia Lopez](#), the Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, who he had just appointed in April 2014 (recently replaced Julie Menin, who was the city’s Consumer Affairs Commissioner). Both of these developments have occurred with no or little explanation by Mayor de Blasio.



This is also troubling because the case can be made, given the underrepresentation of people of color in city government, that one important way to build a career pipeline for these communities would be through greater participation in paid and volunteer board and commission memberships. As the most underrepresented group in overall appointments, Latinos are, in addition, by far the most underrepresented in these board and commission memberships. Mayor de Blasio, therefore, is missing an opportunity to address existing racial-ethnic disparities as well as incorporating greater numbers of politically progressive people of color in his Administration.

**L**ack of Upper Mobility. In addition to the problem of racial-ethnic underrepresentation there is the issue of the lack of upper mobility of city workers of color. Two extreme examples come from two departments of uniformed officers: the Police and Corrections. Although Latinos are well represented in the ranks of these two agencies (23.7 percent of the Police Department and 17.9 percent of Corrections), Latinos in leadership positions in both departments are almost nonexistent.

In a [September 25 2014 letter](#) to NYPD Commissioner Bratton, Brooklyn City Councilmember Antonio Reynoso wrote that he was “troubled that the higher you go within the Department, the more the number of Hispanics decrease.” Of the NYPD’s top leadership of commissioners and chiefs, Latinos make up only 13.3 percent, and among the 77 local precincts, Latinos are only 11.7 percent of the commanders.

In the Bronx police precincts, the one borough with a Latino population majority, Latinos are only 16.7 percent of its precinct commanders, while in Queens where Latinos make up over 28 percent of the population, there are no Latino precinct commanders.

In his letter to Commissioner Bratton, Councilmember Reynoso pointed out that, “The top leadership of the NYPD should look like this City and the quality of the executive positions Latinos are appointed to greatly matters. This means that they should be empowered as decision-makers and be significantly involved with you in shaping policies that affect this City.” To date, the Commissioner has not officially responded to the Councilmember on this issue.


The situation is much worse for Latinos in the Department of Correction. With Latinos making up about a third of inmates in the city jails and 17.9 percent of Correction employees, there are no Latinos in the department’s leadership, which ranges from commissioners to assistant chief. The agency’s watchdog, the Board of Correction, also has no Latino representation among its eight members.

In a [November 19, 2015 letter](#) to Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte, Antonio Velez, President of the Department’s Hispanic Society, wrote: “During your tenure Hispanic officers and civilians have been systematically demoted, terminated and denied opportunities for advancement at such unprecedented levels that Latinos at the senior levels of command in the Department of Corrections are now at an historic low.” He went on to state, “Commissioner Ponte, enough is enough. Hispanics in the Department of Correction deserve better, and we cannot wait any longer for you to address our concerns.”

**R**acial Segregation of City Agencies. The very uneven racial-ethnic hiring practices of New York City government in terms of [total municipal employment](#) have resulted in a highly racially-segregated workforce. (see chart on next page) While Whites are the largest group of full-time employees in 8 of the city agencies’ functional areas and Blacks in 4, Latinos and Asians are not in the plurality in any of them. Whites, for example, make up 70 percent of the Fire Department and 54 percent of the agencies with Sanitation and Sewage functions, while Blacks are 63 percent of the employees in the Corrections agencies and 61 percent in the Public Welfare ones.

The replication of the city’s highly racially segregated neighborhoods within its municipal workforce is a problem that has not received any attention. It has basically created a system of racially and ethnically-

based gatekeepers that promotes a tribalism between some city agencies and divides city government into a series of racial-ethnic turfs that conflict with basic civil service principles. Despite the inter-group tensions it creates, city leaders incorrectly treat it as an inevitable development.

<b>Racial Segregation of NYC Government Agencies</b> 	
Source: NYC Workforce Analysis 2013	
<b>Mostly White Agencies</b>	<b>%</b>
Fire (FDNY)	76
Landmarks Preserv Comm (LPC)	72
Emergency Mgt (OEM)	64
Consumer Protection (DCP)	59
Sanitation (DSNY)	55
Environmental Protection (DEP)	55
Mayoralty	54
Law (LAW)	52
Cultural Affairs (DCLA)	51
City University (CUNY)	51
Admin Trials and Hearings (OATH)	50
Records and Info Servs (DORIS)	49
Education (DOE)	48
School Construction Auth (SCA)	47
Transportation (DOT)	46
Buildings (DOB)	42
Investigation (DOI)	41
Police (NYPD)	41
Info Technology and Telecom (DOITT)	40
Civilian Complaint Rev Bd (CCRB)	38
Design and Construction (DDC)	38
Business Integrity Comm (BIC)	35
Human Rights (CCHR)	34
Finance (DOF)	34
<b>Mostly Black Agencies</b>	<b>%</b>
Admin for Children's Services (ACS)	67
Probation (DOP)	66
Homeless Services (DHS)	65
Corrections (DOC)	63
Human Resources Admin (HRA)	60
Youth and Comm Dev (DYCD)	49
NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA)	48
Housing Preserv and Dev (HPD)	47
Health and Mental Hyg (DOHMH)	45
Aging (DFTA)	45
Human Rights (CCHR)	43
Health and Hospitals Corp (HHC)	43
Finance (DOF)	42
Parks and Recreation (DPR)	42
Small Business Services (SBS)	40
Taxi and Limousine (TLC)	33

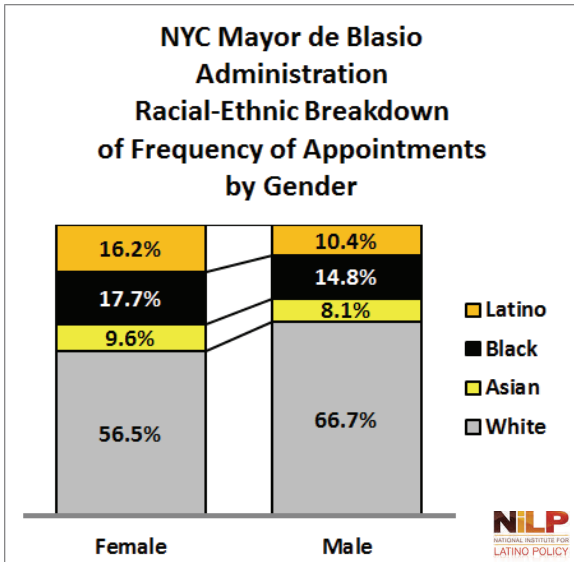
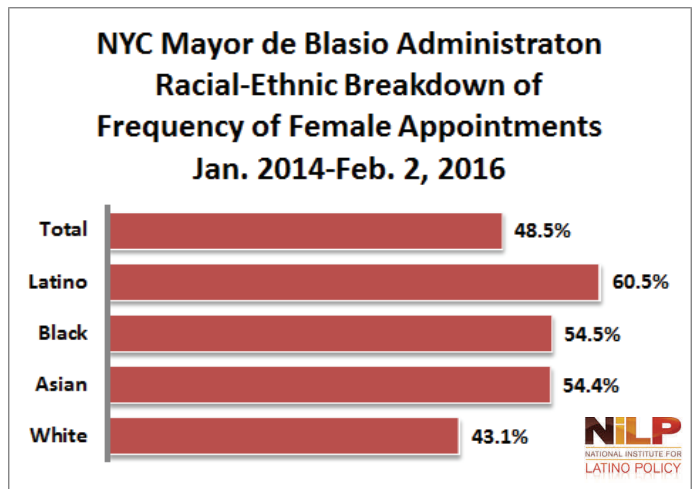
## Frequency of Appointments by Gender

**M**ayor de Blasio has promoted an agenda that seeks to address [the problem of gender equity](#). However, in terms of his appointments, men remain in the majority (52.3 percent), although women are in the majority (52.3 percent) of New York City’s population..

However, de Blasio’s appointments are more responsive in correcting gender disparities among people of color than with Whites. His frequency of appointments in his first two years in office included these percentages of women for the following racial-ethnic groups: 54.4 percent of Asians, 54.5 percent of Blacks, 60/6 percent of Latinos, but only 43.1 percent of Whites.

The underrepresentation of White women raises concerns about the role of gender within a context of the continuing problem of **White male privilege**. At the same time, the overrepresentation of women among underrepresented Latinos raises questions about the impact of this gender overrepresentation on their overall participation in city government. The de Blasio appointments have reflected gender parity for Asians and Blacks.

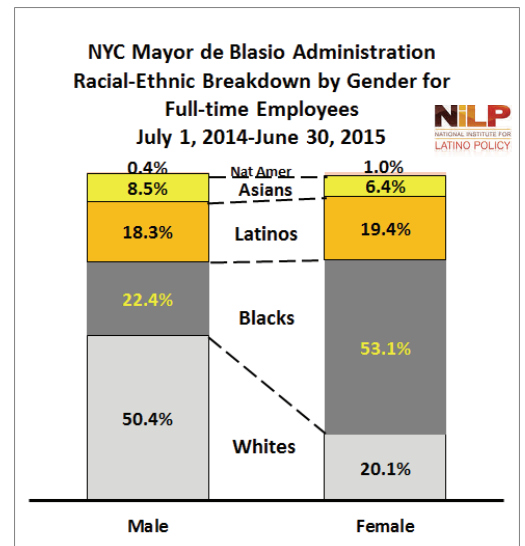
In terms of the Mayor’s appointments, this pattern counters the charge made by some that affirmative action programs have been largely high jacked by White women at the expense of people of color.



The effect of these differences in the rates of appointments broken down by gender is to increase the overall share of White appointments among the males. While the share of people of color among the women appointments has increased overall, these groups’ overall underrepresentation in appointments also results in Whites representing a majority of the females appointments.

In terms of the city’s overall workforce based on the city’s [2015 EEO4 report](#), there has developed over time major racial-ethnic disparities, only reinforced by Mayor de Blasio’s pattern of ap-

pointments. Among female municipal employees, only 20.1 are White, compared to 50.4 percent who are male. For Black city workers, the majority (53.1 percent) are female, while only 22.4 percent are male. This disparity within a disparity distorts the makeup of the municipal labor force from both racial-ethnic and gender lenses.



## Recommendations

In a city like New York, where the population is now over two-thirds made up of people of color, the full participation of these communities in city government needs to become a much greater priority than currently exists. The persistence of White male privilege in the city government's hiring practices raises serious concerns about the state of the city's democratic structure and practices. It also serves to reinforce the existence on a dual economy and politics that reinforces and worsens existing racial-ethnic disparities. As demonstrated in this study, Mayor de Blasio's pattern of appointments to his Administration clearly reflects the existence of power of White male privilege even under a self-described "progressive" administration. The continuing racial segregation of the city's government agencies, as documented in this report, only serves to perpetuate racial divisions in the city that, if this remains unaddressed, are reproduced in its public policies. The result would be the development of what I call a "[trickle-down progressivism](#)" that is paternalistic to people of color and perpetuates the status quo for the majority of the city's residents.

The degree of racial-ethnic diversity of New York Mayor de Blasio's appointments, as well of the overall municipal workforce, is assessed by him and his staff in comparison with the [previous administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg](#), by arguing that it is now more diverse. While Mayor de Blasio has successfully used the media to give the *impression of greater diversity* in his Administration, [the historical record](#) says otherwise.

However, given Mayor de Blasio's rhetoric about addressing the problem of a "tale of two cities" and promoting the development of "one city" reflective of its population, the expectation was that he would be addressing existing racial-ethnic disparities in an unprecedented manner. As documented here, this has not been the case in terms of his political appointments and their clear lack of impact on increasing the diversity of the city's overall workforce.

It is important to note that this report does not advocate any type of racial-ethnic quota system to achieve this increased diversity. What we advocate for are effective systems of outreach and recruitment, a culturally sensitive hiring process and the city's greater self-awareness of the issues involved.

**The Role of Public Sector Employment.** As we have raised this issue with the de Blasio Administration, there is the tendency by Administration officials and many in the news media to dismiss it as simply a demand for patronage by special interest racial-ethnic groups. By framing this problem in this way, its legitimacy is questioned and the issue is easily minimized or dismissed. However, city government employment has historically played an important role in the development of the city's racial and ethnic groups.

Why is public sector important to the communities of color? Taking, for example, the case specifically of the Latino community as the most underrepresented in Mayor de Blasio's appointments:

- We estimate that the disparity between the actual municipal jobs Latinos hold and their representation in the civilian labor force is costing the Latino community as much an aggregate \$1.5 billion in annual salary income. For a community with the highest poverty level in the city (29.1 percent) of the major racial-ethnic groups, this would be a major engine for growing a stronger middle class in this community.
- Public sector employment brings with it higher levels of union membership and generally provides greater benefits, such as pension income, than private and nonprofit sector jobs. For example, while only 11.9 percent the city's Latino elderly have pension incomes, this is in com-

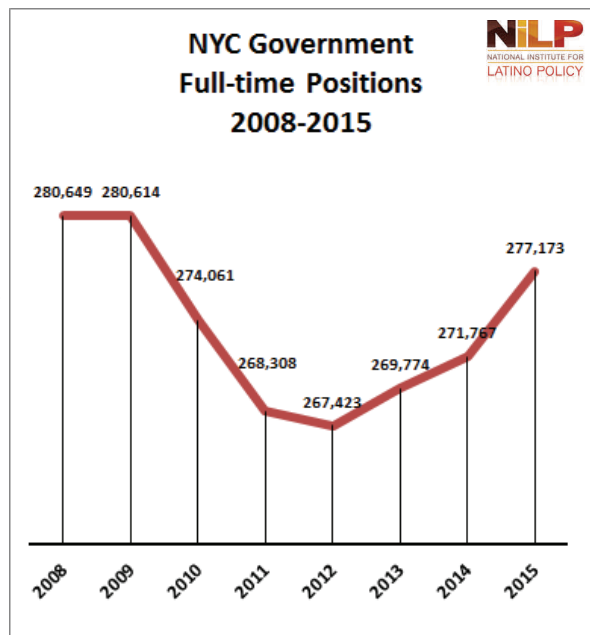
parison to 32.7 percent of White and 31.4 percent of Black seniors.

- As a community with a large dependence on city services, a significant Latino presence in city government provides a connection to this community that promotes cultural competence in its services and increases the relevance of its program planning.
- Studies have shown that public sector workers have higher levels of civic participation, such as voting, because of its relevance to their daily work. Latinos have one of the lowest rates of voter participation in the city that a greater participation in public sector jobs would affect in positive ways.
- While Latinos have made some gains in elected public office in the City Council, their absence from significant policy positions in the executive branch keeps them from being at the table where critical decisions over the budget and program priorities are first framed and ultimately implemented.
- Finally, there is a significant citywide leadership deficit in the Latino community that is contributed to by this community's lack of inclusion in policymaking positions in city government. Participation in city government at policymaking levels provides unique lessons in the operation of government and promotes an indispensable political leadership networking that is currently seriously lacking among the city's Latinos.

Another obstacle to addressing the problem of the racial-ethnic disparities in municipal employment has been the argument that since 2009, for the first time, the majority of the City Council has been composed of people of color and since 2014 it has, again for the first time, a person of color as Council Speaker..

This is seen by some as an adequate level of racial-ethnic diversity of city government, but ignores important differences in the power and functions of the legislative versus the executive branches of city government. New York City has a strong mayor-council system of government, in which the executive branch drives the city's agenda by developing its budget and providing its services and implementing its laws. In comparison with the Mayor, the City Council's role is more limited and affects city policies largely at the margins. The fair representation of people of color in the city's executive branch is, therefore, critically important.

A major obstacle to creating a more diverse New York municipal workforce has been the city's budgetary problems and a history of decreases in the number of city jobs. However, this is not the case in terms of the de Blasio Administration, which has just unveiled a \$82.1 billion preliminary budget, a \$4.4 billion increase from the \$77.7 billion preliminary spending plan de Blasio proposed last year. This represents a second year of budgetary increases that have resulted in an increase in the city's payroll. This, therefore, presents Mayor de Blasio with a unique opportunity, available for the first time in a while, to seriously address the racial-ethnic disparities in city employment.



**R**ecommendations for Change. In an effort to get the De Blasio Administration to address these issues, the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP) has been working with the Campaign for Fair Latino Representation, a voluntary coalition of Latino leaders and organizations, calling for a meeting with Mayor de Blasio since his election to brief him on the problem and present him with recommendations for change. It is widely accepted that the success of any organization's efforts to promote the

diversity of its workforce is dependent on the full support and involvement of its chief executive officer. Despite this, the Mayor has declined to participate in such a briefing.

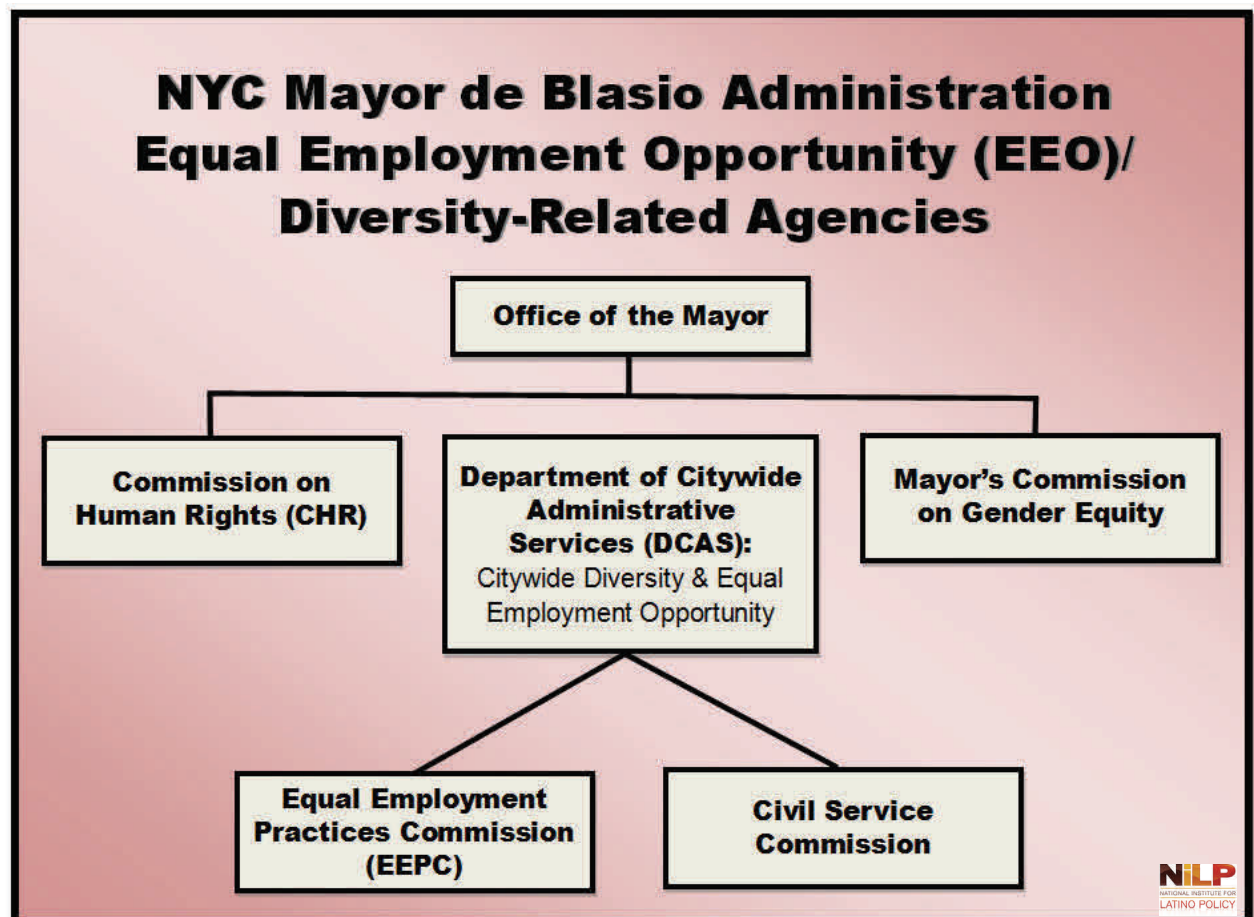
The purpose of the recommendations made here is not to create a racial-ethnic hiring quota system. Rather, it is to promote the adoption of policies that would give the city's diversity employment efforts a higher priority and make them more effective in eliminating the extreme racial-ethnic disparities that currently exist. .

In order to begin to address this problem, we recommend the following:

1. A critical review of the role of the following key employment diversity agencies is long overdue: the Department of Citywide Administration Services, the Equal Employment Practices Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Mayor's Commission on Gender Equity and the Civil Service Commission. The city's diversity programs have become much too passive, defensive operations and do not have the authority or mission to aggressively promote workforce diversity. One [recent comprehensive academic analysis of New York City's workforce diversity programs](#) found widespread inefficiencies and lack of targeted financial resources as basic problems that require further investigation.

Such a review should be conducted by the Office of the Mayor. However, given that Mayor de Blasio has thus far refused to personally meet with community advocates to directly address this problem, the City Council should hold joint hearings of its Committee on Civil Rights and Committee on Labor and Civil Service on this matter.

Consideration should also be given to the merging of these EEO agencies to give them greater focus and





reduce redundancies and the fragmentation of their functions. For example, at a time when the Commission on Human Rights is refocusing its attention on gender discrimination issues, the Mayor created a Commission on Gender Equity that duplicates this work. There is also the problem that the [Equal Employment Practices Commission](#) is mandated to audit all of the city agencies' affirmative action programs [without the proper level of resources](#) to do so.

2. The diversity workforce data and plans of each agency should be made transparent both centrally and for each agency individually. We recommend that the city mandate that each city agency, board and commission provide both EEO data and the diversity plans on each of their websites on an annual basis to increase their accountability on this issue. Currently this information is buried only on the website of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

3. Each deputy mayor and agency commissioner and head should be made responsible to develop plans for the desegregation of their agencies and to promote the full diversity of their workforces. This should include promoting agency plans for both internal vertical and horizontal workforce mobility as well as outreach to underutilized communities.

- a. Each head of a city agency should be required to hold a major meeting at least twice a year of their agencies with stakeholders in the city's communities of color to discuss community concerns about staffing, resource allocation and other issues.
- b. The city should develop staff development programs that include staff transfers between departments and agencies.
- c. Each city agency should be required to establish employee affinity groups for major racial-ethnic groups, women and other protected classes, and create a citywide coordinating body of these affinity groups based in the Mayor's Office.

4. The promotion of work force diversity should be made a core value of city government and its managers should receive incentives for the progress they make in this area. As recognition of the importance of diversity, we recommend that it be added as an indicator in the annual Mayor's Management Report.

5. Serious attention needs to be given to pipeline development issues for people of color coming into the city government's work force. We recommend the development of an inventory of the various internship, fellowship and related programs that seek to develop and recruit new talent to see how effectively they have been working with people of color. Are existing programs doing an effective job? Do they need to be reorganized, or new outside programs be recruited? Can nonprofits be better utilized for this purpose? Is the city fully utilizing the potential role that the City University of New York and the Department of Education can play in promoting public service as a value and experience among the city's youth of color?

## Conclusion

**A**s the de Blasio Administration enters the second half of its first term, can it afford to continue to ignore this problem of the racial-ethnic disparities of its hiring practices? At stake, in part, is the future viability of the practice of White male privilege and the relevance of a progressive agenda to a “majority minority” city.

[A Rockefeller Brothers Fund-supported report commissioned by the Department of Cultural Affairs](#), detailing the degree of racial-ethnic, gender and age diversity of the city’s cultural institutions, found that they were dramatically less racially and ethnically diverse than the city’s population. The disparity was almost identical to what we found with Mayor de Blasio’s appointments. As the Department of Cultural Affairs plans to use these findings to promote greater racial-ethnic diversity in these cultural institutions, the striking irony is that this department has **one of the worse records in municipal government of the employment of people of color on its staff: for example, for example, of the 65 positions listed on their website as of February 2, 2016, only 3, or a tiny 4.5 percent of the total were Latinos.** In addition, its current Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission has a membership that is *64 percent White!* One could reasonably argue that the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs, therefore, has little legitimacy in promoting this greater diversity among its grantees.

The National Institute for Latino Policy, in collaboration with the [Campaign for Fair Latino Representation](#), has sought over the last three years to engage Mayor de Blasio in a serious discussion of the issues documented in this report to no avail. Without the [active engagement of the city’s top official](#), the problem identified here will continue to fester and can undermine support for his self-described “progressive” agenda for New York City. After all, it stands to reason that without the full participation of two-thirds of the city’s population, all we are left with is a benign assertion of a White privilege that will result in a hollow populism and reliance on a “trickle-down progressivism” that will only perpetuate those very inequalities it purports to address.

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