

Open Letter to Mayor-Elect Mamdani

To Restore NYC's Commitment to Community and Ethnic Media

On behalf of New York City's ethnic and community media

December 18, 2025

Dear Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani:

The ethnic and community media ecosystem cannot survive another four years of neglect from City Hall.

We write to you as representatives of journalistic outlets across the greatest city in the world and unquestionably its media capital. Yet over the past four years, New York City government's commitment to our sector has declined significantly – evidenced by the erosion of Local Law 83's advertising mandate. In 2021, Local Law 83 (LL83) mandated that all city departments and agencies spend at least 50% of their advertising budgets with community and ethnic media, solidifying a 2020 Executive Order which aimed to rectify an imbalance in media spending. Until that time, based on research conducted by the Center for Community Media (CCM), part of the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, 82% of the city's annual \$18 million ad spend was going to large mainstream outlets with little connection to the immigrant and working communities that are the lifeblood of this city. The rest of us were left with 18%.

The law was groundbreaking in its attempt to rectify that inequity, and pioneering on a national level. Over the past five years, as [CCM reported, NYC policy has directed \\$72 million to community media publishers and broadcasters](#), and the law is being replicated in a handful of states and cities across the country.

"Local Law 83 went a long way in helping small family owned community publishers stay buoyant in an era where sustainability is a dire concern due to shrinking institutional funding opportunities and outsized competition by social media and big tech advertising platforms," said Vania Andre, publisher of The Haitian Times.

Under the Adams administration, however, LL83 slowly eroded. The city's advertising spend declined annually. Outgoing Comptroller Brad Lander's office issued [a damning](#)

[rebutal](#) earlier this year: Overall ad spend fell by 84% after the law took hold, and FY24 saw just \$7.2 million spent on ethnic and community media across all city agencies. There is also no transparency regarding how the city decides who among ethnic and community media gets which advertising contracts and why.

"For those of us publishing in this space, this isn't an abstract compliance issue," says S. Mitra Kalita, publisher of Epicenter NYC and CEO of URL Media, a multiplatform network representing three dozen outlets primarily serving communities of color. "It's the difference between being able to maintain multilingual coverage of an election, or not. It is the difference between whether immigrant elders hear about a benefit in the paper they actually read, or not. It's the difference between some of us as ethnic and community media being able to exist, or not."

Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, you promised to prioritize working-class and immigrant communities – that must include their information needs. Ethnic and community media do more than report news. We interpret public policy for immigrant neighborhoods, connect residents to services, and build trust as AI and algorithms create misinformation havoc. Information gaps in this city can quickly become life-threatening divides.

Your transition committees do not include a body that is media-focused in scope – which is why we are making known our concerns publicly. We the signatories of this letter – 51 of the city's ethnic and community news outlets in 14 languages – call on you to restore our city advertising spending lifeline by championing LL83's full implementation: restoring advertising levels and ensuring greater transparency in advertising decision-making and spending. Your expansive agenda depends on whether New Yorkers understand the resources at their disposal. Widespread availability of affordable childcare, housing, or transit are impossible without a layer of trusted information informing a public how to access them. And that relies on us. FY25 is still underway. Seize this opportunity to reverse the damage and ensure the city's advertising spend includes our outlets so we can collectively get news, information, and resources to hard-to-reach New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

The Center for Community Media, URL Media, and signatories

Allewaa Alarabi Newspaper

Amsterdam News

BK Reader

Black Star News

NepYork

New Jersey Urban News

New York Parrot

News India Times

Bronx Post
Bushwick Daily
ChelseaCommunityNews.com |
LGBTQCommunityNews.nyc
COLlive.com
Desh
Desi Talk in New York
Documented
El Diario NY
Epicenter NYC
ForumDaily
Greenpointers
Gujarat Times
Haiti Liberté
The Haitian Times
Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc.
Harlem World Magazine
Illyria newspaper
Immigrantly
Impacto Latino
Irish Echo
ITV GOLD
Jewish Post
Khasokhas
Muslim Media Corporation

Parkchester Times
Parle
Prothom Alo North America
Queens Latino
Radio Soleil
Roosevelt Islander Online
Sing Tao Daily
The Immigrant's Journal | Caribbean
American Weekly | Workers' World Today |
New Black Voices
The Indian Panorama
The Lo-Down NY
The Manhattan Times | The Bronx Free
Press
The South Asian Insider Weekly
The South Asian Times
Time Television | Weekly Bangla Patrika
Turkish Journal
Urdu News
Weekly Awaz
Weekly Bangalee
Westchester Hispano | New York Hispano