

*Hon. Jumaane Williams  
New York City Public Advocate*

*Hon. Eric Adams  
Brooklyn Borough President*

*Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke  
Ninth Congressional District*

*Congressman Hakeem Jeffries  
Eighth Congressional District*

*Senator Velmanette Montgomery  
Twenty-Fifth Senatorial District*

*Senator Kevin Parker  
Twenty-First Senatorial District*

*Senator Roxanne Persaud  
Nineteenth Senatorial District*

*Senator Zellnor Myrie  
Twentieth Senatorial District*

*Assemblyman N. Nick Perry  
Fifty-Eighth Assembly District*

*Assemblyman Charles Barron  
Sixtieth Assembly District*

*Assemblyman Walter T. Mosley  
Fifty-Seventh Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Latrice Walker  
Fifth-Fifth Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte  
Forty-Second Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Diana Richardson  
Forty-Third Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright  
Fifty-Sixth Assembly District*

*Assembly Member Jaime R. Williams  
Fifty-Ninth Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Mathylde Frontus  
Forty-Six Assembly District*

*Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Forty-First Council District*

*Council Member Mathieu Eugene  
Fortieth Council District*

*Council Member Laurie Cumbo  
Thirty-Fifth Council District*

*Council Member Inez Barron  
Forty-Second Council District*

*Council Member Robert Cornegy  
Thirty-Sixth Council District*

*Council Member Farah Louis  
Forty-Fifth Council District*

## BROOKLYN BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS COALITION

April 22, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor of New York City  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio:

COVID-19 has wreaked unspeakable global tragedy and has ravaged this state beyond recognition; thousands of deaths with more, unfortunately, to follow; shuttered businesses small and large; millions without work or income; and countless lives upended by the volatility visited upon every area of life throughout this crisis. These are nothing short of extraordinary times.

Unfortunately, this pandemic has had an even more extraordinary impact on the communities we represent. Black people are dying at a higher rate than the rest of New York while making up the majority of frontline workers keeping the state afloat. This disproportionate impact demands a commensurate response and is why we write today to **demand that New York immediately convene a task force to specifically address the Emergency, Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding needs of black New Yorkers in Central and South Brooklyn.**

COVID-19's outsized impact on black communities, while incredibly unfortunate, is not unexpected. Disparities in access to adequate healthcare, affordable housing, and education made this disproportionate impact probable. Additional systemic disparities in the criminal legal system, public housing, and economic opportunity made it inevitable. As such, specific administrative and policy actions are necessary and we stand ready to assist in their implementation. Immediate circumstances require a plan to extinguish the fire, history demands that we concurrently plan to rebuild the house.

To that end, we will be proposing a set of specific recommendations for this task force with an expectation of swift implementation. The Elizabeth Jennings Graham Community Investment Plan (the “Lizzie Plan”), if adopted, would begin to address the emergent and long-term needs of the black communities we represent. Thus far, black voices have been excluded from the decision-making in response to COVID-19; the convening of this task force, and subsequent adoption of the recommendations put forth by the Plan, seeks to rectify this injustice.

**At minimum, this task force should address, with our input:**

- Specific and granular data on infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths in the black community;
- Provision of PPE for all essential workers, many of whom are black;
- All manners of testing in black communities, including the testing of essential workers, the availability of rapid testing, and additional testing sites;
- Relief for black owned businesses;
- Resources specifically dedicated to food distribution in the black community;
- Housing affordability and stability for renters, homeowners, and property owners;
- Accountability for nursing homes;
- Consumer protections against rate hikes, negative credit reporting, garnishment, and debt collection;
- Relief for immigrants who, thus far, have been left out of relief efforts;
- Reforms to the criminal legal system, including the release of justice-impacted individuals at increased risk of infection;
- Bridging the digital divide, particularly in the context of education;
- Emergency Census outreach given the historical undercounts in black communities compounded by the current crisis.

This list is not exhaustive; the forthcoming Lizzie Plan will include further details and recommendations. **This letter, however, recognizing the fierce urgency of now, serves as an initial call to action to begin the process of redress and revitalization of black communities most impacted by COVID-19.** These extraordinary times have exposed how porous the safety nets for our communities are; we demand these holes be filled.

Every day this net remains weak, our community suffers. Thus, we appreciate your prompt attention and response to this letter. We look forward to working together to provide real relief and recovery for black New Yorkers.

Sincerely,



Jumaane D. Williams  
New York City Public Advocate



Congress Member Yvette D. Clarke  
9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District



Hon. Eric Adams  
Brooklyn Borough President



Congress Member Hakeem Jeffries  
8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District



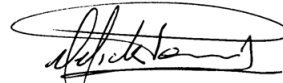
Senator Kevin Parker  
21<sup>st</sup> Senate District



Senator Zellnor Myrie  
20<sup>th</sup> Senate District



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Assembly Member Jaime R. Williams  
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Assembly Member Tremaine Wright  
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Council Member Farah Louis  
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