



Commentary/Op-Ed - December 2025

The Other Side of Affordability

Our new commentary in *Vital City* argues that solving New York City's affordability crisis will require more than just tackling the soaring cost of living. The incoming mayor also needs a plan for tackling the other side of affordability—raising incomes and building wealth. Our piece offers five ideas for how the new administration can jumpstart an economic mobility agenda.

by Eli Dvorkin and Jonathan Bowles

Solving New York City's affordability crisis will require more than tackling the soaring cost of living. In this *Vital City* op-ed, CUF's editorial and policy director, Eli Dvorkin, and executive director, Jonathan Bowles, argue that the next mayor needs a plan for the other side of the equation: raising incomes and building wealth.

Throughout the mayoral campaign, Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani understandably focused on the immediate pressures New Yorkers feel every day — rising rents, childcare costs, transit fares and the price of groceries. What received far less attention was why and how his administration might improve economic mobility: helping more New Yorkers move out of poverty, achieve economic stability and reach the middle class.

It's not enough just to boost the number of New Yorkers who can get by in this high-cost city; a lot more New Yorkers need options that will help them get ahead. That requires more than just increasing the base wage, but also setting up individuals to access the well-paying jobs that are growing in the city's economy and build wealth.

Dvorkin and Bowles urge the Mayor-Elect to form a serious economic mobility strategy, and they provide five concrete, achievable steps the new administration can take to jumpstart an economic mobility agenda including boosting college attainment among low-income New Yorkers and scaling up more of the city's micro-businesses.

Read all the recommendations and [full op-ed here](#).



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