



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

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Louisa Chafee Appointed Director of the New York City Independent Budget Office

The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) is pleased to announce that Louisa Chafee has been appointed director of the agency. Chafee brings more than two decades of leadership experience in both government and the non-profit sector to IBO, which is charged with providing nonpartisan information on the city budget and economy to local elected officials and the public.

Chafee's appointment was approved unanimously by New York City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams, Comptroller Brad Lander, Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams, and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine (on behalf of the five borough presidents), under guidelines set in the New York City Charter. Their decision followed the IBO Advisory Board's recommendation of Chafee for the position.

"IBO was created to help New Yorkers understand the city's budget and to provide unbiased information about its economy and policies," Chafee said. "For many years, and with much admiration, I've watched the agency do just that. Fomer IBO Director Ronnie Lowenstein and Acting Director George Sweeting have shaped a New York City institution that I am quite plainly thrilled to be joining. I look forward to working with IBO staff to continue and to expand upon its critical work."

Chafee is currently the senior vice president for external relations and public policy at the UJA-Federation of New York. There she is responsible for domestic human service public policy strategic engagement, with a focus on the relationship between government and non-profits. Prior to UJA, Chafee held leadership positions in the city and state governments. She worked for New York City for more than a decade, most recently as the executive director for management innovation at the Mayor's Office. She also served as deputy secretary for human services in New York State, with oversight over human services and veterans affairs.

City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams said, "Louisa Chafee is an outstanding public servant who is well-equipped to lead IBO. As our city recovers and prepares for future success, we need an IBO that can provide independent and insightful information about our city's economy and financial outlook. With more than two decades of leadership in government and the non-profit sector focused on human services and policy, Louisa is a great choice, and I am proud to support her appointment."

Comptroller Brad Lander noted, "The IBO is an important institution for providing independent, transparent insights to the public about the city budget. Louisa brings a deep well of experience in city and state government, as well as with nonprofits who contract with the city, along with a keen intellect, a broad network of relationships, and a strong commitment to public service. I'm confident she'll do a great job building upon the foundation that Ronnie Lowenstein and the team at the IBO have developed over the past two decades."

Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams said, “Congratulations to Louisa Chafee on being appointed IBO director. IBO provides essential information to steer the economic and fiscal future of our city, and her vast experience working with city and state agencies under various administrations, as well as her dedicated advocacy and activism, have prepared her well for this role. Budget decisions are moral choices backed by informed analysis, and as director, I know that Louisa will consider each of these obligations. She will be a vital voice for studying the economic actions of the city, and providing transparency to processes, policies, and their outcomes – including honest assessment of who is most helped and hurt by government decisions. I look forward to her stewardship of the office, and partnership with mine, as we all work to be stewards of the city's finances and the millions of New Yorkers whose livelihoods depend on that leadership.”

Borough President Mark Levine said, “Louisa brings extensive experience in government operations to IBO and is a proven collaborative leader. I have no doubt that she will build upon IBO’s track record of providing rigorous analysis of the City’s budget and policies and will lead the agency in a way that continues to grow its impact and reach.”

Chafee’s selection was the culmination of a nine-month search conducted by IBO's Advisory Board and Bridge Partners, a national search firm with a reputation for conducting inclusive searches. Ronnie Lowenstein, IBO’s former director, retired in January 2022.

Jennifer March, chair of the IBO Advisory Board said, “I and the entire IBO board, and New Yorkers at large, remain indebted to former Director Ronnie Lowenstein for her long-time service, and to former Deputy Director and now Acting Director George Sweeting for his role in building the institution over many years and his shepherding of IBO through this time of transition. The board and I are incredibly excited about Louisa Chafee’s appointment. In stepping into this role, Louisa brings a wealth of experience in the public sector that will be leveraged to build upon the IBO’s strong foundation of non-partisan budget analysis and economic research in the years to come.”

Mark Page, IBO Advisory Board member and former director of the New York City Office of Management and Budget said, “Among all the candidates, Louisa Chafee stood out notably for her experience with government, her time spent managing social services, and her enthusiasm for the job.”

Karim Hutson, member of the IBO Advisory Board and President & CEO of Genesis Companies said “Louisa Chafee’s extensive career in public policy and administration paired with her proven commitment to public service make her uniquely qualified to lead an organization dedicated to making government accessible to all New Yorkers. The IBO’s mission to provide vital information about New York City’s economy is essential to making our city fairer and more accountable. As head of the IBO, Louisa will be an important voice in ensuring every New Yorker can access reliable, unbiased expertise on crucial issues.”

Chafee received a B.A. from Macalester College and an M.P.A. from NYU’s Wagner School of Public Service. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and has two children. Chafee will begin work at IBO on March 1, 2023. Her term expires August 1, 2026.

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