

The possible paths ahead
If Adams quits or gets booted, Jumaane would take over

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Highlight: Public Advocate Jumaane Williams would become the mayor if Mayor Adams is removed or quits. Gov. Hochul (below) says she'll look at all the evidence before deciding where she stands.

Body

Questions about what's next for Mayor Adams intensified Thursday after he was indicted on federal charges of bribery, fraud and foreign campaign donations.

Adams, who's professed his innocence, has said - forcefully - he won't step down. But amid growing calls for his resignation, the mayor could be removed from office against his will. Here's what may follow.

What happens if Adams resigns?

If mounting pressure changes Adams' mind, the next in line is Jumaane Williams, the city's public advocate. Williams, a progressive Democrat, has not called for Adams to step down - but warned his patience has its limits.

"Justice presumes innocence until proven guilty," Williams said in a statement. "At the same time, these charges are even more sweeping and severe than imagined.

"It is federal officials' obligation to prove their case, and it is the mayor's obligation to prove to New Yorkers that there is a real plan and path to govern the city effectively and regain trust, and his time to show that plan is rapidly running out," he added.

Within three days of Adams leaving office, the acting mayor under the city Charter must schedule a nonpartisan special election to be held on the first Tuesday after 80 days. If Adams resigns closer to the primary, a more standard election process would take place, with the winner in November immediately taking office.

If not Williams, the job goes to the third city official in the line of succession, city Comptroller Brad Lander - who called for Adams' resignation Thursday and is running for mayor.

What if he's removed by Gov. Hochul?

If Adams refuses to step down, Gov. Hochul has the power to remove him from office - an authority that was threatened in the early 1900s but never used. As of Thursday afternoon, Hochul said she'd have more to say soon.

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"I've not had a chance to read this [indictment] myself. I am an attorney. I'm going to want to read this and absorb the material embedded within it," she told reporters at an unrelated press conference. "I will be deliberative, I'll be thoughtful, but we're going to come to the right resolution on what to do in this moment."

What if the governor decides not to remove Adams?

Under the Charter, city officials could form an "inability committee" that could vote Adams out. It would be comprised of Lander; Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, the longest-serving borough president; Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, the city's top attorney, a position that's currently vacant; and a deputy mayor of Adams' choosing.

But ***Jerry Goldfeder***, an election and campaign finance lawyer at Cozen O'Connor, questioned whether an inability committee would be applicable in the case of an indictment.

"Inability is a term of art, and it relates to either being physically or emotionally in such a state that you can't carry out the duties of the office," Goldfeder said. "It's not about whether a mayor is indicted, and I would be hard-pressed to conclude that just because someone is indicted they are quote-unquote 'unable to function.'"

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