

MOVING NEW YORK FORWARD

Dear Neighbor,

The 2017-18 state budget marks a monumental point in New York history. It's not just a spending plan, but rather a far-reaching, comprehensive plan to put families first and strongly invest in New York's future. This year's state budget is so much more than a spending plan – it's a detailed blueprint to move our state forward. From making sure the wealthy pay their fair share, to strengthening our kids' education, to finally 'Raising the Age,' this budget continues our progress and proves we're committed to innovation, opportunity and supporting those that need a helping hand. This budget funds our shared New York values.

While it took many hours, many late nights, and intense negotiations we were able to resolve many important issues that will ultimately help to grow the state economy. This year's \$153.1 billion 2017-18 state budget invests in public education, funds a first-in-the-nation free tuition plan to help students go to college, Raises the Age to give kids a second chance, expands ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft and makes a significant commitment to ensuring every New Yorker has clean drinking water.

The final state budget—though it did not resolve every issue—is a bold step forward for the working families of our state and paves the way for a brighter future for all New Yorkers. This fair and fiscally responsible plan is what our district and state needs to move forward.

Jeffrion L. Aubry
Member of Assembly
35th A.D. Queens County

INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS AND OUR CHILDREN

Education is the great equalizer, but to make that a reality we need to keep driving funding to our schools. This year's state budget does just that – the 2017-18 state budget increases education aid by \$1 billion for a total of \$25.7 billion, a 4.1 percent increase from last year's budget, reaffirming the Assembly Majority's unrelenting commitment to putting every student on their path to success. The budget also increases Foundation Aid by \$700 million for a total of \$17.2 billion.

The budget includes a \$50 million increase in Community Schools Aid for a total of \$150 million. This funding allows schools to be converted into community schools that deliver valuable services to both students and families, including offering critical support to at-risk children, strengthening neighborhoods and preventing the schools from being taken over by the state.



Additionally, the budget provides:

- \$817 million in total funding for prekindergarten programs;
- \$35 million for after-school programs;
- \$5 million to expand half-day and full-day prekindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds in high-need school districts;
- \$2 million for Advance Placement (AP) Test Assistance;
- \$2 million for the Master Teachers Program;
- \$400,000 for Excellence in Teaching Awards; and
- \$300,000 for cyberbullying prevention.

There's truly no better investment than one in our kids. By giving our schools the funding and resources they need, we can protect vital education programs and help our kids learn, grow and get ahead.



Giving Students A Needed Boost

For too many students, hurdles outside of the classroom stand between them and the future they want and deserve. We're committed to making sure those struggles don't get in the way of their success, because every young person should get a fair shot.

The budget provides \$16.7 million for Early College High School programs, which help at-risk students earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree.

To further strengthen education services, the budget includes:

- \$103 million in funding for 4201 schools for the blind and deaf;
- \$20 million for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers – an increase of \$5.7 million;
- \$1.5 million in restorations for the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), for a total of \$13 million, to provide career training and job placement services, as well as \$250,000 for an enhanced credentialing program;
- \$1 million to restore funding for adult literacy education, for a total of \$7.3 million; and
- \$1.2 million for regional community schools technical centers.

In addition, the budget provides \$25 million for technology projects at nonpublic schools and \$25 million for security upgrades to nonpublic schools, community centers and daycare facilities at risk of hate crimes or attacks. The budget also provides nonpublic schools \$5 million to hire STEM teachers and \$7 million for costs related to complying with immunization requirements, along with an \$8 million increase for nonpublic school aid.

The Assembly also rejected the executive proposal to allow any school district to apply for waivers from certain special education requirements because all kids deserve a sound education.

IMPLEMENTING THE EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP, SUPPORTING STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The 2017-18 state budget makes a substantial investment in SUNY and CUNY schools and helps expand access to higher education through scholarship and opportunity programs.



Working families in New York State and across the nation are seeing the costs of a college education soar as the need for a college degree to access good-paying jobs has never been greater. This year's budget allows eligible students to attend public colleges and universities tuition free, helping even more young people make their college dreams come true.

The state budget provides funding to establish the Excelsior Scholarship, a groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind initiative to make SUNY and CUNY schools tuition-free for New Yorkers who earn less than \$125,000 annually. Students who attend a private college in New York and earn less than \$125,000 annually would also be eligible for a scholarship award of \$6,000.

The budget also includes \$100 million for SUNY and \$60 million for CUNY in capital funding for maintenance and expansion purposes. Further, the state budget allocates \$450 million for SUNY and \$224 million for CUNY for critical maintenance. To help students and their families meet the rising, non-tuition costs of college, and \$8 million to help SUNY and CUNY develop online educational resources to help alleviate the high cost of textbooks for students.

The SUNY and CUNY programs receive much-needed funding in the state budget so they can continue to do great work educating and nurturing the leaders of tomorrow.

Funding For Our Community Colleges

To ensure community colleges can continue helping its students get ahead, the budget allocates \$6.2 million to SUNY community colleges and \$3.1 million to CUNY community colleges for an increase of \$50 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, for a total of \$2,747 per FTE student. The budget also includes \$3.1 million for a new scholarship program for part-time students attending SUNY or CUNY community colleges so students with family or other responsibilities can finish school on their own schedules.

The budget restores \$2.5 million in funding for CUNY ASAP and \$1.5 million for SUNY GAP to help provide remediation to community college students. \$1.1 million is restored to SUNY child care centers and \$902,000 to CUNY child care centers.

In addition, the final state budget funds a host of other SUNY-led programs, including:

- \$87.9 million for SUNY Health Science Centers to help support top-notch teaching hospitals across the state;
- \$60 million for Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC), a restoration of \$5 million; and
- \$6.5 million for Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) labs, a restoration of \$2 million.

The budget also requires the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) to complete a college affordability study examining student loan debt relief and student loan refinancing options as well as affordability initiatives to help find ways to reduce the cost of student textbooks, transportation and housing.

PROTECTING PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries are essential neighborhood assets, offering everything from books and educational materials, to technology and job search tools to community programs. The budget restores aid to public libraries by \$4 million to ensure they can continue to provide services and resources to residents, for a total of \$95.6 million. In addition, the budget provides an increase of \$10 million in capital funding for a total of \$24 million.

SUPPORTING COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

The 2017-18 state budget restores \$23.8 million for opportunity programs:

- Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP): \$35.5 million, a restoration of \$5.9 million;
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP): \$32.2 million, a restoration of \$5.3 million;
- Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge program (SEEK): \$28.1 million, a restoration of \$4.6 million;
- Liberty Partnerships: \$18.4 million, a restoration of \$3 million;
- Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP): \$15.8 million, a restoration of \$2.6 million;
- Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP): \$11.9 million, a restoration of \$1.9 million; and
- College Discovery Program: \$1.3 million, a restoration of \$225,000.

The Foster Youth College Success Initiative is funded at \$4.5 million, a \$1.5 million restoration and a \$1.5 million increase to help foster youth attend and succeed in college.

ENSURING THE WEALTHY PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

To ensure New York's wealthiest continue to pay their fair share, the 2017-18 budget extends the state millionaires tax for two years. It was set to expire at the end of this year. Revenue from the tax is crucial to funding important services and programs throughout the state, including public education and infrastructure improvements.

I fought to extend the millionaires tax, because with income inequality continuing to rise, we need to make the wealthy pay their fair share and do their part to help better fund our schools and vital programs. We're all New Yorkers and we all want to see our state as strong as possible – this tax helps make that happen. That's why I'll continue the fight to also expand the tax.

TAX POLICIES TO HELP THE MIDDLE CLASS

This year, we fought to ensure that previously approved middle-class income tax cuts were in the budget. It also enhances the Child and Dependent Care Credit for taxpayers earning between \$50,000 and \$150,000. The credit is based on a sliding income scale for working parents who pay for child care or those who live with a spouse or dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care.

COMBATING THE HEROIN EPIDEMIC

The heroin epidemic has affected families in every corner of the state. By increasing funding and targeting it to the right programs, we can ensure more people get the help they need to conquer their addiction. Despite increased media attention and legislative action, the heroin and opioid epidemic continues to rage in communities across New York State. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of heroin- and opioid-related deaths increased by 47 percent.

The 2017-18 state budget increases funding by \$43 million over last year – for a total of \$213 million – to fight the heroin epidemic and increase access to treatment for New Yorkers struggling with a substance abuse disorder. This funding supports a variety of treatment and prevention programs, including family support navigators, peer supports, recovery clubhouses and community coalitions, and \$10 million in additional capital support to increase the number of beds in in-patient treatment facilities, and restores \$2 million for New York City Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS).

RAISING THE AGE

The budget includes a measure to ensure young people who encounter New York's criminal justice system are treated fairly and given a better chance to turn their lives around. Raise the Age, which raises the age of criminal responsibility in New York from 16 to 18 years old, is an issue the Assembly Majority has championed for more than 12 years.

Raising the Age for teenagers is not about letting them off the hook for the crimes they commit, but acknowledging that many teens make mistakes, not because they are bad people, but because they are kids, and they often don't know better and can't fully appreciate the consequences of their actions. If we truly want to reduce crime and increase safety, we need to give them a greater chance of turning their lives around and learning from their mistakes.

The Assembly fought to help as many kids as possible, as quickly as possible, and worked diligently to have all nonviolent felony charges begin in Family Court, but ultimately compromised with a reluctant state Senate in order to make progress on many of the other important issues. After a long-fought battle, New York will no longer be one of only two states in the country to prosecute 16- and 17-year-old defendants in nonviolent cases as adults in Criminal Court.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM

All New Yorkers deserve help to effectively navigate the legal system, regardless of race, socio-economic or immigration status. New York vows to protect all of its citizens and live up to its reputation as being the nation's progressive leader. *The state budget provides \$10 million to expand immigrant legal defense services, as well as restores \$8.4 million to support legal services, including an additional:*

- \$1.06 million in support for the New York State Defenders Association;
- \$600,000 in support for immigrant legal services; and
- \$500,000 for alternatives to incarceration (ATI) programming.

KEEPING NEW YORKERS SAFE

With the rise in hate crimes in recent months, the state budget establishes a Hate Crimes Task Force in New York to prevent, investigate and detect hate crimes, as well as issue reports to combat these crimes and other forms of discrimination. We also restored a total of \$4.3 million in Legal Services Assistance Fund support, including \$2.8 million for civil and criminal legal services grants, and almost \$3.2 million in domestic violence-related civil and criminal legal services support. In order for our justice system to work for any, it must work for all. Equality and fairness are the bedrocks of our society.

PROTECTING MEDICAID AND AFFORDABLE CARE

An investment in public health makes New York stronger. I fought for these programs so families are able to get the care they need without breaking the bank. This year's budget restores funding for Medicaid and other public health programs and addresses rising drug and health insurance costs so that more New Yorkers have access to the health care they need.

The budget restores \$78.8 million in proposed reductions to Medicaid and restores \$37.6 million to public health programs. The measures:

- restore \$20.2 million to existing prescriber prevails provisions, which ensure patients and their doctors have the final say in choosing medication in managed care and fee-for-service plans;
- allocate \$14.6 million to restore the Essential Plan and reject proposed co-payment and premium increases;
- provide \$6.3 million to reject the executive proposal to limit coverage for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs and increase OTC co-payments; and
- provide Medicaid coverage for donor breast milk for hospitalized, high-risk preterm infants who can't receive breast milk from their mothers.

Further, the budget restores \$10 million in cuts to emergency rooms across New York State; provides \$10 million to support safety-net hospitals, which care for low-income and uninsured patients, \$10 million for critical access hospitals, which provide services in rural communities, and \$20 million for mental health facilities.

The Assembly fought to ensure the hospitals that provide care to the most at-risk New Yorkers can continue serving their communities.

The state budget also provides funding for a variety of public health priorities, including:

- \$1 million for Community Health Advocates, which helps New Yorkers understand their health insurance and access the health care services they need;
- over \$1 million for HIV/AIDS Community Service Programs (CSPs) and Multi Service Agencies (MSA);
- \$750,000 for Family Planning Services;
- \$500,000 for New Alternatives for Children;
- \$500,000 for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP);
- \$500,000 for the Diversity in Medicine Program;
- \$400,000 for the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC);
- \$300,000 for the LGBT Health and Human Services Network; and
- \$250,000 for the Nurse Family Partnership.

Additionally, the final budget provides \$150 million for a life sciences laboratory public health initiative to help construct new laboratory facilities or update existing ones to support life science research and innovation. It earmarks \$20 million for bioscience and neuroscience programs.

SUPPORTING SENIORS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The 2017-18 state budget provides \$13.5 million to support long-term care, including restoring \$10 million to preserve spousal refusal, ensuring couples do not lose their life savings in the event a spouse becomes ill and needs nursing home care. A spouse who has to face the already devastating experience of moving a loved one out of their home and into a long-term care facility shouldn't also have to give up their financial security. This program helps them keep their hard-earned savings to live on.

Additionally, the budget includes:

- \$2.7 million to prevent limiting Managed Long Term Care eligibility to only those eligible for nursing homes; and
- \$750,000 to restore nursing home bed hold payments for therapeutic leave.

To protect seniors' hard-earned and well-deserved property tax relief, the budget rejects the executive proposal to change the Enhanced STAR program by requiring all seniors eligible for the Enhanced STAR program to register with the state and participate in the Income Verification Program. Currently, though, seniors are able to register with their local assessor or register when they file their income tax returns – a process that is far easier and causes fewer headaches.

Further, the budget extends consumer protections, including access to a pre-foreclosure settlement conference, to homeowners with reverse mortgages to help more New Yorkers stay in their homes and protect their investments.

INVESTING IN AFFORDABLE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STATEWIDE

A secure, affordable place to live is vital to every family's health and stability – particularly for children. The Assembly is committed to funding services and programs that help ensure all New Yorkers have a place to call home. This is why the state budget releases the long-awaited and hard-fought \$2.5 billion to combat homelessness across the state and fund programs for the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

The budget provides \$2.5 billion for affordable housing and anti-homelessness initiatives, much of which was appropriated last year but could only be released once a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was agreed to. *The budget releases this money and provides:*

- \$1 billion for supportive housing to construct 6,000 or more units statewide, including \$50 million in operating aid;
- \$472 million for the Multifamily New Construction Program;
- **\$200 million for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) capital repairs;**
- \$150 million for the Middle-Income Housing Program;
- \$146 million for the Multifamily Preservation Program;
- \$125 million for public housing authorities outside New York City;
- \$125 million for senior housing;
- **\$100 million for 100% Affordable Housing in New York City;**
- **\$75 million for Mitchell-Lama preservation programs;**
- **\$63 million for the Small Buildings Program to rehabilitate buildings and build affordable housing units in them;**
- \$45 million for the Rural and Urban Community Investment Fund Program;
- \$41 million for home ownership programs;
- \$13 million for the Manufactured Homes Program; and
- \$10 million for the Main Street Program, which helps fund preservation efforts in historic neighborhoods.

The budget increases funds for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCs) for a total of \$2 million, which help keep seniors in the homes and neighborhoods where they have built friendships and support networks. For the second year in a row, the Assembly has led the way, including these programs in our one-house budget and ensuring it was enacted in the final budget. Seniors who stay in their own homes, with adequate support, are less likely to need expensive nursing home care. They also bring stability and vitality to our neighborhoods.

SUPPORTING HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS

This year's budget funds several mental health programs, including:

- \$10 million in capital support for children's behavioral health;
- \$1.3 million to reject jail-based competency restoration, which would allow a defendant to be restored to mental competence in a jail facility rather than a hospital; and
- \$1 million restoration for crisis intervention teams.
- \$20 million for nonprofit infrastructure improvements to help human services organizations make capital repairs to facilities and update technology.

To help refugees in their time of need, the budget includes \$2 million for refugee resettlement programs. These vital programs assist individuals as they make the transition to life in a new country far from the tragic circumstances they bravely left behind.

As the first state to implement former President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative, New York took a historic step to address the opportunity gaps facing young men of color and help them overcome these and other barriers to reach their full potential. The budget includes \$18 million in funding to the program.

INVESTING IN CLEAN WATER, REBUILDING CRUMBLING INFRASTRUCTURE

We should never have to worry that the water coming out of our faucets and drinking fountains is anything but safe for our children. Contaminated, dirty water can have devastating long-term effects, causing illnesses and hurting development, and we need to prevent that. We have to be proactive on something this important. The budget provides \$2.5 billion for water infrastructure to help ensure clean drinking water by repairing and replacing old pipes and water mains, as well as preventive measures, such as source water land acquisition, to keep water from becoming polluted.

The funding for water infrastructure, which is a \$500 million increase over the executive proposal, includes: **\$200 million for drinking and wastewater infrastructure improvements in New York City's watershed.**

HELPING NEW YORKERS GET WHERE THEY'RE GOING QUICKLY, SAFELY

Our infrastructure is at the heart of our community and economy. This year we made significant investments to protect the safety and reliability of our roadways and bridges so people have peace of mind when they're traveling on them.

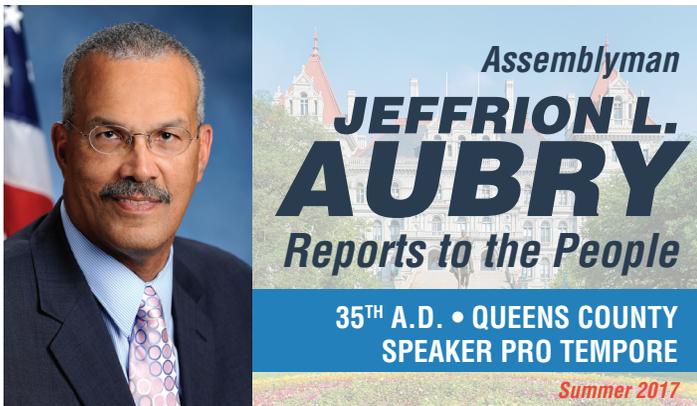
In addition, millions of New Yorkers rely on mass transportation, and the ridership is only growing. The Assembly secured \$65 million for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Capital Plan to help accommodate more passengers and improve efficiency. This funding is a full restoration of the amount cut by the executive proposal from the MTA's operations budget. The budget also provides an additional \$65 million for Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) renovations. We allocated \$20 million for non-MTA transit system capital projects and \$10 million in non-MTA transit system operating assistance. Further, the budget provides \$10 million for aviation and airport infrastructure projects and \$20 million for snow plows for DOT. It also rejects increasing motor vehicle title fees.

CREATING JOBS, INVESTING IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Excelsior Jobs Program offers incentives for businesses to expand in and relocate to New York State by providing tax credits to firms making a substantial commitment to growth through either increased employment or through capital investment in a New York facility. The budget makes more businesses eligible for the incentives to relocate and invest in New York by making the thresholds more realistic and attainable. We're investing in the booming industries that will define the future and making it a priority to train workers for the jobs that will pay well and help our economy grow.

And to help ensure workers have the skills needed for good, available jobs, the budget expands the Employee Training Incentive Credit Program to make it easier for companies to include worker training as part of their expansion projects. It also extends the Youth Works Job Program for five years with \$50 million in funding, with \$10 million dedicated to an apprenticeship program.

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- Implementing The Excelsior Scholarship, Supporting State Protecting Public Libraries
- Colleges and Universities
- Supporting College Opportunity Programs
- Ensuring The Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share
- Tax Policies To Help The Middle Class
- Combating The Heroin Epidemic
- Raising the Age
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- Investing In Affordable, Supportive Housing Statewide
- Supporting Human Service Programs
- Investing In Clean Water, Rebuilding Crumbling Infrastructure
- Helping New Yorkers Get Where They're Going Quickly, Safely
- Creating Jobs, Investing In Economic Development