



NEWS FROM

Speaker of the Assembly **Carl E. Heastie**



Dear Neighbor,

First, I would like to extend my wishes of good health to you and your family. The past year has been the most challenging one for our state in recent history. COVID-19 ravaged our communities, changed our way of life, further exposed deep inequities in our society and left many unemployed and barely hanging on financially. **With the pace of vaccinations rapidly increasing, and the federal American Rescue Plan bringing much-needed federal funding to our state, there are brighter days ahead.** The 2021-22 state budget will accelerate our progress as New York makes its comeback from the pandemic.

This year's state budget ensures that millionaires and ultra-millionaires pay their fair share, funds the Campaign for Fiscal Equity to finally give our schools the resources they need, offers robust rent and mortgage relief and helps small businesses rebound. Instead of needlessly cutting, which would have brought further economic pain to New Yorkers, we

ramped up investment in policies and programs that make a difference in people's lives.

While there is always more to do, the Assembly Majority has once again worked to craft a 2021-22 state budget that puts families first. **I hope you, and your family, enjoy the spring. I look forward to continue working with you to improve our community.** As always, if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office is here to serve you.

With Love and Hope,

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

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Northeast Bronx YMCA to open late summer/early fall of 2021

The state-of-the-art recreational facility and community center being constructed by the YMCA in the Northeast Bronx should be ready to open in the late summer/early fall of 2021. **This recreation center will be a historic asset to the community to provide better health maintenance and social opportunities for young and elderly alike.** It will provide children and families with a place to learn and grow in a healthy environment. This new **\$60 million facility is ready to open come late summer/early fall.** The facility has been under construction for two years now but will be ready to go in the near future. During budget negotiations, Member of Assembly Carl E. Heastie was able to secure **\$1.25 million in operating support for the Northeast Bronx YMCA and \$500,000 in scholarships of financial assistance for memberships.**



Moving full speed ahead, the Northeast Bronx YMCA is nearing its completion. Boasting 2 pools, a gymnasium, along with many other amenities, the 83rd will finally have the state of the art community center we have all been waiting for.

Speaker Heastie keeps the streets of the Northeast Bronx clean

Speaker Heastie was once again able to secure funding to run the Doe Fund, Inc. Ready, Willing, and Able program. Since 2003, the Doe Fund has had a work crew along White Plains Road from Gun Hill Road to 233rd Street that collects trash and keeps the sidewalks and streets clean.



Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie **secured \$100,000 in funding for the Doe Fund, Inc. during the 2019 Legislative Session** to continue this highly successful street cleaning and community beautification project in the Northeast Bronx.

Speaker Heastie provides small business assistance

The enacted budget includes **\$800 million for a new COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant program** that will be administered by the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC). The grants could be used to cover various business costs, including payroll; rent or mortgage payments; payment of local property or school taxes; insurance; utilities; personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to protect worker and consumer health and safety; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) or other machinery or equipment costs necessary for compliance with COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

The Assembly Majority also fought to ensure the enacted budget includes funding for restaurants impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. The budget includes **\$25 million for the NY Restaurant Resiliency Grant program** as well as **\$35 million in tax credits for restaurants** in areas impacted by enhanced COVID-19 restrictions.

Assembly funds education, champions the Campaign for Fiscal Equity

The Assembly Majority has always made it an utmost priority to invest in our schools and we will continue to do so, focusing even more on mental health services in the wake of the ongoing public health crisis.

Whether our kids and educators are currently learning and teaching remotely or in person, they deserve every tool and resource necessary that will help our students flourish.

Final Budget education details:

- Allocates **\$8.2 billion** of the Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER)
- **\$3.8 billion** from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and requires school districts to develop a plan as to how they are going to use the funding to help with reopening schools and mitigate learning loss, among other things



During a press conference to announce the opening of a mass vaccination site brought to the Bay Eden Senior Center by Assemblyman Heastie, local elected officials gathered to urge NY'ers to get their vaccination.

- Increases Foundation Aid by **\$1.4 billion** for a total of **\$19.8 billion**
- This would be a full one-third of what will be provided to schools statewide over the next three years as a part of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity obligation, for a total of **\$4.2 billion**
- This funding commitment will fully phase in Foundation Aid over the course of three years, with school districts receiving at least 60% of their Foundation Aid funding for the 2021-22 school year

Assembly bridges the TAP gap

Speaker Heastie helped secure additional funding during budget negotiations to eliminate the TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) gap. The TAP gap is the difference between TAP funding for students and actual tuition costs. The enacted State budget allocates **\$88 million to increase the maximum TAP award by \$500 for a maximum award total of \$5,665**. This change will allow TAP to cover more of students' tuition during college. The budget also makes a **commitment to pay off the TAP gap at SUNY and CUNY by the 2024-25 academic year**. Additionally, the budget restores **\$35 million** in Unrestricted Aid to Independent Colleges and Universities, or Bundy Aid, which provides unrestricted financial support to private higher education institutions.

Budget funding will jump start higher education

Speaker Heastie's leadership during the budget negotiations was able to make sure the **final budget rejects proposed tuition increases at SUNY and CUNY**. "During these critical times, we must make sure our young people have the support they need to be able to succeed no matter what challenges the future may hold," said Speaker Carl Heastie.

To ensure that services are not cut for the 2021-22 academic year, the final budget:

- Provides **\$100 million** to SUNY and **\$100 million** to CUNY for expansion projects
- Rejects the executive proposal to reduce funding by **\$46.4 million** for SUNY and **\$26.2 million** for CUNY
- Includes **\$20 million** in federal funds for each of the next two years for scholarships to cover non-tuition expenses
- Continues support for the Jose Peralta DREAM Act to provide state financial assistance to undocumented college-bound students
- Includes an additional **\$19 million** for SUNY community colleges and **\$5.6 million** for CUNY community colleges
- Provides **\$10 million** to support Educational Opportunity Centers Capital at SUNY
- Provides **\$1.1 million** to SUNY and **\$902,000** to CUNY for community college child care centers

Speaker Carl Heastie leads the fight to expand opportunity programs

During this year's budget negotiation, Speaker Heastie was able to champion significant investments in Opportunity Programs by **providing a \$30 million – or 20% – increase over last year's final budget in college opportunity program funding**.

The increases will break out as follows:

- **\$42.6 million** for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), an increase of **\$7.1 million**
- **\$38.6 million** for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), an increase of **\$6.4 million**
- **\$33.7 million** for Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), an increase of **\$5.6 million**
- **\$22 million** for Liberty Partnerships, an increase of **\$3.7 million**
- **\$19 million** for the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), an increase of **\$3.2 million**

Speaker Heastie invested **\$18 million in the My Brother's Keeper program to increase opportunities and eliminate barriers for young men of color**.

Assembly fought to ensure the enacted budget includes \$2.1 billion Excluded Workers Fund

Speaker Carl Heastie announced that the enacted State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021-22 Budget includes **\$2.1 billion for the Excluded Worker Fund**. The fund will be administered by the Department of Labor and will provide critical support for workers who do not have access to unemployment.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, essential workers across the state risked their lives to keep our state moving and our families safe," said Speaker Heastie. "When unemployment rates skyrocketed last summer, many of those selfless workers were excluded from any type of federal assistance



Assemblyman Heastie joins officials for the opening of a new food pantry at 1277D Burke Ave., which will help community members impacted by COVID-19.

during this pandemic and we must take care of all New Yorkers.”

The term “excluded worker” would include any individual who does not meet the eligibility requirements for state or federal unemployment benefits, and has not received any such benefits; does not meet the eligibility requirements for the federal stimulus payments; and has suffered a loss of work-related earnings or household income due to COVID-19. This could include having lost employment or work hours.

Benefits would be available to any excluded worker whose gross work-related earnings did not exceed \$26,208 in the 12 months prior to the effective date of the program. Each individual will need to establish proof of identity, proof of residency in New York State and proof of work-related eligibility during the benefit period of March 27, 2020 through April 1, 2021 in order to receive benefits.

Assembly funds assistance for utility bills and food programs

While we can begin to see the end of this pandemic, families continue to face the harsh reality of their utilities being shut off due to job losses. And while there is a statewide moratorium in place to prohibit companies from turning off electricity and other necessities, the **Assembly strongly believes that protections must be in place for consumers – whether we are in a pandemic or not.**

That’s why the budget:

- Increases funding for the Public Utility Law Project (PULP)
- Includes a **\$500 million** increase for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Provides a **\$80 million** increase for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to reflect additional federal funding
- Provides **\$50 million** for the Nourish NY program, which has helped bring food to the homes of many families during the pandemic – food that was produced by New York farmers.

Assembly Majority invests in the MTA

With the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, our public transportation systems took a huge hit this past year and many are still struggling to build back ridership and overcome these significant revenue losses, especially the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). To combat this, the 2021-22 budget restores **critical funding to the MTA and other transit systems statewide so we can keep these services operating and ensure residents can get to and from their destinations safely.**

- The 2021-22 state budget provides significant support

to the MTA so it can continue to serve commuters and meet growing demands as more individuals return to in-person work and school

- Restores **\$236.1 million** in operating assistance for the MTA, including **\$98.1 million** in funding that was withheld in 2020-21
- Restores **\$26.5 million** for non-MTA downstate transit systems, including **\$11.3 million** that was withheld in 2020-21

Assembly Majority secures \$2.4 billion allocation for child care

The COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a significant blow to the child care sector, which has had a disproportionate impact on women and forced many out of the workforce. The enacted budget that was negotiated by Speaker Heastie allocates **\$2.4 billion in federal aid to ensure local social services districts are able to fully fund subsidies provided to eligible families** at or below 200% of the federal poverty level statewide, therefore expanding the availability of subsidies.

The budget would also:

- Reimburse absences and ensure 12-month eligibility for families receiving subsidies
- Support facilitated enrollment and address child care deserts
- Provide scholarships for essential workers and grants for supplies and PPE for providers
- Allocate **\$5 million** in additional funding for the Advantage After School Program, which provides structured activities for kids to help them succeed academically

Assembly Majority secures historic investment in health care

Under the leadership of Speaker Carl Heastie, the Assembly stood strong to make sure our health care providers get the funding they need to keep New York State healthy. **The enacted budget provides an All Funds appropriation for the state Department of Health of \$96 billion, an increase of \$3 billion or 3.2% over the executive proposal.** This funding will give our front line workers the security they need to keep fighting the pandemic.

The enacted budget:

- Restores **\$542 million** to the Medicaid program
- Includes **\$1.63 billion** in federal funding from the Enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) for Home and Community Based Services

(HCBS) to support increased home care wages and personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Rejects the elimination of the indigent care pool funding for major public general hospitals
- Maintains **\$7.5 million** for the administration of the Immunization Program
- Restores **\$3.82 million** for school-based health centers
- Provides **\$15 million** in federal funds to support public education, communication efforts and outreach for communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and communities hesitant to be vaccinated

Assembly wins much-needed financial relief for tenants, landlords and homeowners

Under the leadership of Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie, the Assembly fought hard to allocate **\$2.3 billion for rental assistance as well as \$100 million in state aid to provide for hardship cases for landlords and renters that are outside of federal eligibility.**

Guidelines for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program:

- Initially, renters earning under 50% of the area median income (AMI) will be prioritized for eligibility to the program for the first 30 days. Additional priority will be granted to households with vulnerable applicants.
- After the first 30 days, applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Eligible benefits include up to 12 months of rent arrears accrued on or after March 13, 2020, up to 12 months of utility arrears and up to three months of prospective rent assistance for those who are rent burdened (or paying 30% or more of their income toward rent) if needed to ensure housing stability.
- Renters would be eligible for the program regardless of immigration status.
- Attestation, including self-attestation, will be an acceptable form of documentation. For landlords to receive this assistance, they must agree not to evict an individual due to an expired lease or holdover tenancy for a year, to waive late fees for arrears paid by the program and to not raise rent for a year from the monthly amount when the application is filed.

The budget also includes **\$575 million in federal funding for mortgage assistance**, including residential mortgage relief for low- and moderate-income individuals.

Also, the budget **extends the covered period for mortgage forbearance to either Dec. 31, 2021**, or until current rules that closed or restricted businesses due to COVID-19 are no longer in effect, whichever is later.

Finally, the state budget provides **\$200 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).**

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



NEWS FROM

Speaker
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"To help address COVID-19 and its economic impacts, the state budget makes historic investments in our communities' recovery and puts New York families first."

– Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie

