

Assemblymember  
**Tony Simone**

Assembly District 75



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Dear friends,

The state legislature has passed the budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. This year's budget contains hard won victories in many areas, including housing, healthcare, education, and the passage of Sammy's Law. Below, you can read more about what we got done in this budget. I am proud to have worked on this budget with my colleagues in the Assembly, and look forward to continuing to deliver for New Yorkers this legislative session.

My Community Office at 214 West 29th Street Suite 1401, 212-807-7900, [Simonet@nyassembly.gov](mailto:Simonet@nyassembly.gov) is here to help you in any way we can. Please contact us if you're having a problem with a government agency, your landlord, a utility, or if you have concerns or ideas about the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Tony

### **Housing**

Coming to an agreement on a housing package that prioritized development of affordable units while simultaneously protecting existing tenants was my number one priority in this year's budget. Earlier this week, I shared an overview of the housing package that was approved by the Legislature; [you can read that full statement here](#).

### **Stopping Retail Theft**

In recent years, retail theft has become a major concern for all citizens. It's critical that we guarantee that New York is not only a safe place to live, work, and commute, but also to shop. The Assembly has passed a number of measures to address the public safety concerns around retail theft, including categorizing assault on a retail worker as a class E felony; creating a new crime of fostering the sale of stolen goods online in order to combat stolen goods crime rings; allowing prosecutors to charge thieves with grand larceny from separate thefts; and creating a tax credit for small businesses to cover retail theft expenses and security. These

steps will stem the tide of retail crime that we've seen in recent years, and make New York safer for everyone, particularly the workers who operate the stores we rely on.

### **Sammy's Law**

After many years of tireless advocacy, Sammy's Law has finally passed as part of this year's budget. [Sammy Cohen Eckstein was a 12-year-old boy who was killed by a driver in Brooklyn in 2013](#). Since his tragic death, his mother, Amy Cohen, transformed her grief into action by championing this legislation that would have saved her son's life. Sammy's Law changes the state law that had previously restricted New York City from lowering its speed limits. The consequence of this law is that the city can lower its speed limit from 25 to 20 MPH, which will help to slow traffic and make our streets safer for all New Yorkers. Keeping the street safe for pedestrians, bikers, and drivers alike is one of my top priorities in Albany, and I have been a vocal supporter of Sammy's Law. I am thrilled that it has finally passed, and I have so much appreciation for Amy and the advocates who worked so hard to make this life-saving bill a reality.

### **Increasing Bus Service for New Yorkers**

The budget allocates an additional \$12 million to increase bus frequency and reliability ahead of the implementation of congestion pricing.

### **Healthcare**

One of the victories in this year's budget that I'm proudest of is on behalf of the more than half a million people in New York State who rely on insulin every day. This life-saving medication will no longer be subject to copays or any cost sharing requirements, increasing its accessibility and ensuring the health of so many people who have struggled to afford it.

The budget makes critical investments in health care services including \$800 million in funding for financially distressed and safety-net hospitals and \$350 million in funding for hospital rate increases. The spending plan includes \$31.1 million to fund critical programs to help individuals involved in the criminal justice system and diagnosed with a mental illness get the care and services they need.

### **Environmental Funding**

The enacted budget invests \$2.5 billion in funding for the environment, including \$400 million for the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). It also allocates \$500 million to support New York State's clean water infrastructure.

### **Education Funding**

The enacted budget includes \$35.9 Billion in school aid to the General Support for Public Schools (GSPS), which includes \$24.9 billion in Foundation Aid, a \$934.5 million increase over the previous year. It is crucial that we address the effects that the pandemic has had on our children's education, and this funding will ensure that schools can instruct kids and

prepare them for their futures. The budget also reinstates the “Hold Harmless” provision within Foundation Aid, which keeps school districts from receiving a cut in Foundation Aid.

The Assembly’s budget also includes (but is not limited to):

- An additional \$1.5 million in funding for Schools for the Blind and Deaf (4201 schools), for a total of \$113.4 million;
- \$14.3 million to restore funding for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers;
- \$1 million for the State School Immunization Program

### **Mayoral Control Proposal**

The budget will also extend mayoral control of the New York City School District for two years, until June 30, 2026. Further, the budget will increase the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) from 23 members to 24 members to include one independent voting member, who will serve as chair of the PEP for a one-year term. The mayor will be required to select this member from a pool of three nominees: one by the speaker of the Assembly, one by the temporary president of the Senate, and one by the chancellor of the Board of Regents.

### **Illegal Cannabis Shops**

I have been working closely with my colleagues around the city and state to devise a solution to the proliferation of illegal cannabis shops that are breaking the law and targeting kids with their products. We must do everything we can to help the legal market flourish, and a critical part of that is to crack down on the illegal shops that are rapidly multiplying in our streets. To combat the illegal shops, OCM can now issue an order to immediately padlock a store with an egregious violation and any other store on a second violation. Egregious violations include:

- Documented sale to minors;
- Unlicensed processing of cannabis;
- Violent behavior toward investigators;
- Reports of hospitalization due to consumption of products;
- Close proximity to houses of worship, schools or public youth facilities; and
- Sales of cannabis that has not been lawfully tested.

In addition, the sheriff’s office will have the authority to conduct regulatory inspections of cannabis shops and will have the power to require landlords to take action to remove the occupant within five days. If they do not, a fine of five times the rent charged or \$50,000 will be issued. These measures are key to curb the illegal market and I look forward to the improvements that enforcement will provide.

## **Hate Crimes**

This year's budget modernizes the New York State hate crimes law by including 31 new offenses as eligible for hate crimes. They include gang assault, certain sex crimes, human trafficking, graffiti, false reporting, and criminal possession of a weapon. I was proud to join my colleagues Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal and Assemblymember Grace Lee in pushing for this change. It is essential that those who commit such horrendous crimes are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and this change will guarantee prosecutors can pursue criminals exhaustively.

## **Funding Secured**

I led a number of funding initiatives to help our district and the state and I'm proud to have secured the following in this year's budget:

- **\$450,000 for New Alternatives for Children's Healthy@Home program** which serves low-income families with children who have medically complex needs by providing health services at home and avoiding long term or permanent hospitalization.
- **\$400,000 for LiveOn NY** to support their New York State Rights and Information for Senior Empowerment (RISE) Program which connects older adults with information on critical resources available to help them make ends meet, remain in their homes, and thrive in life.
- **\$180,000 for GMHC** to fund HIV and STI testing, linkage to care programs and to help provide supportive housing services to clients with histories of chronic homelessness.
- **\$100,000 for Covenant House** in Hell's Kitchen to support their legal services department, youth trafficking prevention programs and youth mental health services.
- **\$2,000,000 for the Joyce Theater** to fund their expansion allowing for greater educational and programming opportunities.

I'm proud that this year's budget is investing in the local community of District 75, and I'll keep fighting for investments in my neighbors every day!

## **Community Resources and Events**

It's time for spring cleaning! My office is sponsoring a shred truck in Chelsea to help you clear out stacks of papers that are no longer needed and go into spring refreshed.

The shred truck will be parked at the Penn South Playground, on 26th Street between 8th & 9th Avenues, on **Sunday April 28th from 10am-1pm.**

# SHRED TRUCK



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**ASSEMBLYMEMBER TONY SIMONE**

It's time for spring cleaning! Bring your old documents to be shredded & clear out your space!

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH**

**10AM-1PM**

**PENN SOUTH PLAYGROUND  
WEST 26TH STREET BETWEEN 8TH & 9TH AVENUES**

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

**(212) 807-7900 | [SIMONET@NYASSEMBLY.GOV](mailto:SIMONET@NYASSEMBLY.GOV)**

## **Older Adult Technology Clinic**

On Wednesday, May 29, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Lincoln Center's Rubenstein Atrium (61 W 62nd St at Broadway), tech coaches and trainers from OATS and Senior Planet/AARP, and DOROT will provide one-on-one help to answer questions about smartphones, laptops, and email software. For an appointment window, call (212) 873-0282.

## **Office of Child Support Services Webinars**

HRA's Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) Training Institute presents an ongoing free series of webinars designed to shed light on the sometimes complicated aspects of child support. The webinars are designed for staff at city agencies and community-based organizations, as well as parents – and professionals that work with those parents. Each session starts with a presentation that is followed by a question and answer period. There are a

number of webinar sessions scheduled through the remainder of the year; you can view a list of the upcoming events [here](#).

### **New York Institute of Technology Scholarship Opportunities**

NYIT offers a number of scholarship and academic opportunities for New York City students. See below for excellent opportunities!

#### **Public Sector Scholarships**

The award will cover up to 50% of a students' flat-rate full-time tuition (12-18 credits) for up to eight continuous full-time semesters of enrollment (six semesters for transfers, 10 for an approved five-year program). [Read more here!](#)

#### **Academic Opportunities: High School & Middle School**

Free [Business Bootcamps](#) for high school students: New York Tech School of Management College-level workshops taught by our expert faculty, students will get critical training they can add to their résumés and incorporate into both their academic and professional lives as they seek entry to college and the business world. The bootcamp is offered for free to all high school students interested in any major. Students may attend the workshops individually or attend all six sessions. Students who complete all bootcamp sessions will receive a certificate of completion from New York Tech School of Management.

Free [Middle School Summer Maker Academy](#) New York Tech College of Engineering & Computing Sciences

During this weeklong program students will be faced with the challenge of building a Clean Cargo Allocation Ready Truck (CCART) that will meet the main objectives set forth by UN Sustainability Goal #3, to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." The main task for your vehicle is to deliver products safely and germ-free between personnel in a retail and/or commercial environment. This one-week [Middle School Summer Maker Academy](#) is being offered at New York Institute of Technology, New York City AND Long Island, Old Westbury campus, on July 29-Aug 2. Students apply to the campus most convenient to them. This program is free of charge thanks to a generous donation, 20 students will be accepted on each campus.

#### **Calling All Mentors: Mentor a Manhattan High School Student!**

[iMentor](#) is an education non-profit and youth mentoring program working to empower first-generation college students to graduate high school, succeed in college and their career, and achieve their highest ambitions through one-on-one mentorships. Each year, iMentor supports 3,000 students in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and in your neighborhood at the Business of Sports School (439 West 49th St.)

## Mentoring Relationship (starts Fall 2024):

- Mentors commit to writing to mentee once per week (remote) and meeting once per month during the school year (in-person at the mentee's school)
- Mentees are given guidance, training, and are surrounded by a mentor community that will support your mentorship and help you grow professionally and personally.
- This is a 3 hour a month commitment during the student's school year.

Experience the joy and satisfaction of giving back to your community in a whole new way by taking the first step in becoming a mentor. Join iMentor at an upcoming 100% commitment-free [virtual mentor orientation](#) to learn more.

If you have any further questions don't hesitate to reach out to Rachel Hutt, Senior Volunteer Recruitment Manager, [rhutt@immentor.org](mailto:rhutt@immentor.org)

Want to get a sneak peek about how you can impact a young scholar? [Watch this inspirational video](#)



## Experience The Joy Of Mentoring A NYC Student!

iMentor NYC supports public high school students on their pathways toward college attainment and economic mobility for themselves and their families. Volunteer mentors join a highly supportive community where they are matched with a student. The experience is an opportunity to build a personal and professional relationship, while also benefiting from iMentor's vast community of 3000+ volunteers throughout the city and across all career industries.

### What You Will Do:



#### Weekly Email

Send one message a week to your mentee through iMentor's platform.



#### Monthly Meet-Up

Once a month, we host mentors and mentees for an evening pair event.



#### Connect

Communicate with your mentee over their junior & senior year of high school.



#### Plan for the Future

With the support of our program managers, coach your mentee through preparing for their post secondary options.



While 95% of iMentor's students aspire to go to college, only 67% believe they can. Together with iMentor you can coach, guide, and inspire toward students' highest aspirations.



Mentoring develops leadership, management, and communication skills for both mentors and mentees.



iMentor supports ALL students. We don't limit enrollment through academic requirements.



Take the first step today.

## **2023 Report on Community Classrooms at Pier 57**

The [Community Classrooms at Pier 57](#) have been a wonderful resource for the West Side by providing tech-enabled, bookable spaces for hosting educational, recreational, and cultural experiences in an accessible and collaborative environment. Community Classrooms are free to book and accessible year-round. The classrooms host everything from film screenings to coding classes, and more.

## **2024 New York State Parks Centennial Challenge**

This month, Governor Hochul announced the 2024 Centennial Challenge, which invites all New York State residents and visitors to explore our state parks, learn about New York history, and give back to New York State Parks for the next generation of adventurers. Beginning on January 1, 2024, the New York State Parks Centennial Challenge includes 100 missions that can be completed at various state parks and historic sites. Participants will need to complete 24 missions throughout 2024 to complete the challenge.

Some example [Centennial Challenge](#) “missions” include:

- Go camping at one of more than 8,500 campsites
- Visit a “new-to-you” state park or historic site and bring a picnic
- Pack your skates and go skating at one of state parks’ ice rinks
- Talk to an interpreter about the history of a state historic site
- Join a volunteer event
- Learn the Leave No Trace principles and apply them during your next visit

For more information on the Centennial Challenge, [visit the NYS Parks website](#).

## **NYC Public Schools Teacher Application Now Open**

New York City Public Schools has recently launched its annual [Online Teacher Application](#) for the upcoming academic year. This reflects a steadfast commitment to ensuring every child in our city has access to quality education by attracting talented and qualified educators.

### **Key Information:**

Eligibility: The [Online Teacher Application](#) is open to all candidates who currently hold or will obtain New York State (NYS) teacher certification by September 2024.

Support: A range of resources are available for applicants, including a flyer, [an Application](#)



[Guide](#), [virtual info sessions](#), and an [Online Support Center](#).

For more details and to access the application, visit [TeachNYC.net](#).

**NYC Public Schools**  
Eric Adams Mayor  
David C. Banks Chancellor

# NYC'S STUDENTS DESERVE THE BEST TEACHERS.

Join the movement.  
Teach NYC!

## A REWARDING CAREER

### COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

Teachers with a bachelor's degree and no teaching experience will earn **\$64,789**. Teachers with a master's degree will earn **\$72,832**.

### COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS

NYCPS offers a robust benefits package including health, dental, and vision insurance, a pension plan, an annual bonus, and UFT membership.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Develop your teaching skills with professional development resources for new teachers and a mentor your first year.

## MAKE AN IMPACT

### THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

NYC Public Schools seeks passionate teachers who are New York State-certified or on track to be by September 2024.

### HIRING TRENDS

This year, in-demand subject areas include Special Education, Math, Science, Bilingual Education, World Languages, and Career and Technical Education.

**Start your journey today!**

[APPLY NOW >](#)

**STAY IN TOUCH**