



A SPECIAL REPORT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

from Assembly Member

2016 Edition

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

DISTRICT OFFICE: 1365 First Avenue (between 73 St. & 74 St.) • New York, NY 10021 • 212-288-4607
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 818 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5676
Email: seawright@nyassembly.gov • Website: <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Rebecca-A-Seawright>

Dear Neighbor,

As your voice in the New York State Assembly, and as a public servant in our community, I am committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in our neighborhood and advocating the enactment of more equitable state resources.

During the past two years, in my first term, I was the prime sponsor of ten pieces of legislation, and eight were signed into law.

I fought for and obtained more funding for our local senior citizen centers and organizations that bring needed services to our elderly residents. My attendance record was 100 percent. To win for our community, you need to be there when it counts! This newsletter provides important information for you.

I invite you to visit our community office and request that you keep us informed of the issues important to you. Thank you for your support!

Best Wishes,

Rebecca A. Seawright
Member of Assembly, 76th District

Senior Citizens Homeowners Exemptions (SCHE)

Sliding Scale real estate sliding exemption of 5% to 50%.

Eligibility

Owners of one-, two-, three-family houses, condominiums or cooperative apartments, who are or turn 65 the same calendar year they apply, and who use the property as their primary residence. Applicants should apply by March 15th to qualify for benefits for the following July 1st billing period. Those who are eligible for SCRIE are not eligible for SCHE. Those who qualify for SCHE automatically receive the enhanced STAR exemption.

Income Limits

Combined total income for all owners of all sources must be less than \$37,399. Individuals can deduct documented un-reimbursed medical and prescription expenses.

Resources Limits

 None

Government Agency

New York City Department of Finance: 311
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/landlords-sche.page>

Reduced Fare MetroCard

Reduced fare privileges on MTA NYC Transit-owned local route buses and subways, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Privileges on all local buses are available at all times, and on express buses anytime except weekday rush hour: Monday through Friday, 6:00-10:00 a.m. and 3:00-7:00 p.m. Two of the following forms of identification are required to apply: Valid New York State Driver's License, Medicare Card, Birth Certificate, Valid New York State Identification Card or Passport. At least one must contain a picture. Reduced Fare MetroCard automatically deducts correct reduced fare and allows you to transfer for free between MTA NYC Transit subways and buses. 2016 Regular fare is \$2.75; 2016 Reduced Fare is \$1.35.

Eligibility

Persons 65+ and disabled riders.

Income Limits/ Resource Limits

 None

Government Agency

MTA NYC Transit: 718-330-1234 or 511
<http://web.mta.info/nyct/fare/rfindex.htm>

The MetroCard Bus/Van Locations

Roosevelt Island Senior Association (546 Main Street)	2 nd Mon	11:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
Upper East Side at 79 th Street & 3 rd Avenue	1 st & 3 rd Wed	9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.
Upper East Side at 79 th Street & York Avenue	1 st & 3 rd Wed	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Yorkville at 86 th Street & Lexington Avenue	2 nd & 4 th Tues	11:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
Yorkville at 90 th Street & York Avenue	1 st Thurs	7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
East Side at 57 th Street & 1 st Avenue	1 st Fri	9:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m.
East Side at 57 th Street & 3 rd Avenue	1 st Fri	10:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
Carnegie Hill at 92 nd Street & Lexington Avenue (YM/YWHA)	2 nd & 4 th Tues	9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Yearly grant or energy credit, depending on income, household type and size, and type of fuel used.

Renters: \$30 or \$35 if heat is included in rent.

Homeowners: Up to \$600 based on gross income and type of fuel used.

Eligible individuals living in government subsidized housing or a group home if heat is included in rent: \$21

Eligibility

Low-income homeowners and renters, people who receive SNAP benefits, temporary assistance, Code A SSI or are living in government housing.

Income Limits

Monthly income: *Individuals*: \$2,244; *Couple*: \$2,935.

Resource Limits

None for regular benefits. Emergency Benefits: if your heat has been or is about to be shut off. Must meet income and resource limits of less than \$2,000 if no member of households is 60+, or less than \$3,000 if any member of household is 60+.

Government Agency OTDA

NYS HEAP Hotline: 800-342-3009

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/programs/heap/program.asp#income>

Consumer Corner

Seawright Demands More from Verizon

New York State Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commission members hosted a Public Hearing in Albany this past January, and Committee Member Seawright demanded that Verizon provides services to its customers in an informative and transparent manner regarding the migration from copper to fiber-optics. Out of this hearing, Verizon committed to reconsider its communication practices tailoring it to the needs of Upper East Side, Yorkville and Roosevelt Island community.

In July, 2016 Seawright's office met with Verizon to discuss their ongoing plans to continue migration on the Upper East Side. Assembly Member Seawright believes that companies need to contribute to educating consumers about the new technology, and most importantly, to notify them of different options as customers.

For the customers who have not switched to fiber-optic phone service, you will receive **"NOTICE OF COPPER RETIREMENT" and "NOTICE OF NETWORK UPGRADE: IMMEDIATE CUSTOMER ACTION REQUIRED FOR CONTINUED SERVICE"** informing you that your traditional copper landline will be converted to the fiber-optic network.

Know the facts about migration:

- There will be no more landlines
- You have the right to choose your service provider
- If you choose the migration in advance, you can keep your phone number
- Regardless of your choice, all voice messages will be erased.

Beware of ATM and Point of Sale (POS) Device Skimming

"Skimming" occurs when a card reading device is placed over the original card reading device. The devices are hard to identify because they are identical molds of the original equipment. The NYPD has even found skimming devices attached to the key card entry on the doors of banks. Additionally, be aware of "money trapping", the practice in which a device is attached to the deposit slot of the ATM, retrieving information after the transaction occurs. The reader accesses financial information from the card, which is then used in online transactions or by making a "clone" card.

Tips to avoid scams and identity theft:

- Before using any ATM reader or point of sale card reader, gently pull on the frame of the card reader. If you notice anything out of place, damaged or taped together haphazardly, exercise caution
- Be aware of targeted places, such as ATMs in tourist areas
- Protect your financial information by covering the pin pad during use. Some skimmers hide cameras near the ATM pin pad to record your pin number
- Report any suspected skimming devices to your financial institution and to the NYPD.

Health

Assembly Member Seawright Votes to Ban Medicine Price Gouging

The Assembly passed legislation to prohibit medicine price gouging which prevents people from accessing life-saving medication. Assembly Member Seawright, who sits on the committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection, said: "We must act to add medicine to the list of items subject to price gouging. Soaring drug prices made headlines in 2015 and if we do not intervene, the trend will not stop in 2016." Overpriced medications have been burdening the healthcare system, both hindering the treatment of ill patients and the doctors who need to provide appropriate treatment for the best care. "I speak on behalf of numerous seniors in my district who are greatly affected by the soaring prices of medicine. I speak on behalf of the hospitals in my district, who are forced to buy medications from secondary suppliers at a significantly higher-rate, and on behalf of their patients who cannot live without them. We should not allow the market to hold patients hostage at the most vulnerable time of their life," Seawright continued.

Seawright Co-Sponsors "Choose Your Pharmacy Bill" in Light of New Law Mandating E-Prescriptions

As of March 27, 2016, all prescriptions have to be submitted to the pharmacy electronically. As a result, the new system limits choice and does not allow for the patient to shop around for competitive prices. Assembly Member Seawright co-sponsored legislation that would authorize the prescriber to send the prescription to a holding site until the patient has found the pharmacy or until it is time for patients to refill their prescription. The bill also says the prescriber will print out a copy of the prescription at the patient's request as a reminder and as a tool for the pharmacy to search for their prescription when it is time for pick-up. Seawright is co-sponsoring another bill related to the e-prescribe mandate which will allow low-volume prescribers who write 25 or less prescriptions per year to be exempt from e-prescribing in order to avoid the costly investment in technology.

Housing

Reverse Mortgage for Seniors

Assembly Member Seawright fought in Albany to allow senior citizens living in co-ops to obtain reverse mortgages. Affordability for seniors is a top priority which is why access to reverse mortgages is critical to keep them in their homes.

Tenant Rights

Every day we see tenants who are facing eviction and harassment by their landlord. If you or someone you know is experiencing harassment by their landlord, please consider the community office a resource for dealing with these problems. Our office can assist with answers to your rights as a tenant. We host a free housing clinic on the first Monday of the month at your community office. Please contact us for more information.

CARTER BURDEN CENTER FOR THE AGING

1484 First Avenue (between 77th and 78th Street)

Hours of operation • Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

LUNCHEON CLUB AND SENIOR PROGRAM

351 East 74th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenue) • **Tel: 212-535-5235**

Monday to Friday Lunch • 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

343 E 70th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenue) • **Tel: 212-744-5905**

Hours of operation • Every day 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Every Day: breakfast at 8:15 a.m., lunch at 11:30 a.m., & dinner at 5:30 p.m.

ROOSEVELT ISLAND SENIOR CENTER

546 Main Street, Roosevelt Island • **Tel: 212-980-1888**

Hours of operation • Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday to Friday Lunch • 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Transportation

Seawright Helps Secure \$1 Billion for 2nd Avenue Subway

Funding was restored for the Second Avenue Subway including the \$1 billion that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority slashed from its capital budget for the project last November. Officials from the Second Avenue Subway project have reported that the project is still on time for a December 2016 opening. As we near the completion date of the Second Avenue Subway Project, we can expect to see the resurfacing of sidewalks, and restoration of bus stops along Second Avenue. MTA officials reported that they are working closely with the Department of Health to cure any infestations that arose from the construction areas.

Repairing NY Roads and Bridges

This year's budget has a robust plan to repair New York's aging roads and bridges, as well as a thorough investment in the MTA's capital plan because growing New York's economy depends largely on the investments we make in public transportation and infrastructure. Assembly Member Seawright believes that much needed improvements to our local bus service are long overdue and will be meeting with local elected officials and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to discuss solutions.

Environment

Protecting New York's Water

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright's bill signed into law provides a three-year extension of New York State's subsidy for the cost of financing municipal projects pursuant to the federal Clean Water State Revolving Fund. "This law will allow for the continuation of valuable technological advances for the protection of New York's water. By making these projects more affordable for local governments throughout the state, we are putting to use New York's brightest minds in addition to supporting environmental innovations that will minimize human impact on our natural resources."

Continued the Fight against the Waste Transfer Station

As her first act in office, Seawright responded to the petition engaged residents circulated by introducing a bill to immediately stop construction of the dump, pending the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIT) and public hearings to address the community's concerns. Specifically, Seawright's bill amends conservation law by requiring that, upon the petition of residents, a SEIT will be necessary before New York City can renew certain expired permits.

Seawright introduced another bill in the Assembly that would prohibit the construction, location, relocation, or reactivation of marine solid waste transfer stations or facilities within 800 feet of public housing projects in cities of one million or more. She is actively working with Waste Transfer Station Community Advisory Group, advocacy groups, Senator Liz Krueger, who introduced this bill in the Senate, and other elected officials to send a clear message that this transfer station threatens the health, safety and well-being of our neighbors.

Funding for Our Seniors

Among others, Assembly Member Seawright allocated funding to organizations that serve our elderly:

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House: \$450,000 for heating, ventilation and air conditioning system

Carter Burden Center for The Aging: \$150,000 for renovation of the luncheon club

Robins Plaza: \$400,000 for infrastructure improvements.

Priority Project funding for the services for the elderly was allocated to:

- Health Advocates for Older People, Inc.
- Search and Care, Inc.
- Roosevelt Island Senior Center
- Roosevelt Island Disabled Association

This year, Assembly Member Seawright passed a bill that was signed by the Governor that allows for continued distribution of Public Purpose Funds on Roosevelt Island.

Assembly Member Seawright Fights to Increase Access and Eligibility for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program

The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption was established in 1970 to provide rent stabilized senior tenants with a rent freeze.

Assembly Member Seawright is co-sponsor of "SCRIE Rollback Act of 2013." Some seniors are unaware of the SCRIE program and do not apply until after their date of eligibility. Those seniors will miss out on freezing their rent. If passed, this bill will provide for a rent roll back enabling seniors to receive a rent reduction retroactive to their date of eligibility for SCRIE.

Seawright is co-sponsor of Assembly Bill 2856 which will change the definition of income in SCRIE requirements to exclude Social Security benefits and supplemental security income. This change would allow more seniors to be eligible for the benefit of a rent freeze. If you have a disability, you may be eligible for Disability Rent Exemption Rent Increase (DRIE).

Current requirements for SCRIE

- ✓ Must be at least 62 years old;
- ✓ Rent an apartment that is regulated by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) (i.e. rent controlled or rent stabilized apartments or hotel stabilized);
- ✓ Total annual household income of \$50,000 or less and;
- ✓ Pay more than one-third of the household's total monthly income for rent.

Current requirements for DRIE

- ✓ Be at least 18 years old;
- ✓ Rent an apartment that is:
 - Regulated by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) (i.e. Rent stabilized units, Rent controlled units, Rent regulated hotel units);
 - Owned by a Mitchell-Lama development, Limited Dividend housing company, Redevelopment company or Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) incorporated under New York State's Private Housing Finance Law;
 - Located in a building where the mortgage was federally insured under Section 213 of the National Housing Act.
- ✓ Be named on the lease or rent order or have been granted succession rights to the apartment;
- ✓ Have a total annual household income of \$50,000 or less;
- ✓ Spend more than one-third of your monthly household income on rent; and
- ✓ Receive Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disability pension or compensation, or Disability-related Medicaid if the applicant has received either SSI or SSDI in the past.

Please don't hesitate to contact my community office for more information on your rights as a tenant in New York City.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Monthly allotment of benefits through a debit card system for purchasing nutritious food items; dollar value depends on household size and income.

Eligibility

Based on income, family size and household composition.

Income Limits

Monthly Gross Income for Individuals: \$1,276.

Monthly Gross Income for Households with Elderly or Disabled Member and Households with Dependent Care Expenses: \$1,962

Resource Limits

None, unless anyone in the household has been sanctioned or disqualified from SNAP, then resources may not exceed \$2,000.

Note: clients may own one vehicle of any value.

Government Agency

NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance: 311

1-800-342-3009 and press "1" for SNAP

Human Resources Administration, 718-557-1399

otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/#eligibility

Lifeline Telephone Service

Reduces the cost of basic telephone service to as little as \$1 a month.

Eligibility

Persons with an income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or who are eligible to receive assistance benefits from at least one of these programs: Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, HEAP, Section 8, Veterans' non-service related Disability Pension and Veterans' Surviving Spouse Pension, TANF or Head Start.

Income Limits/Resource Limits See eligibility.

Government Agency

Federal Communications Commission: www.fcc.gov/lifeline

Visit www.lifelinesupport.org or call the customer service line for your local phone company.

Access-A-Ride (AAR)

Provides transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use public bus or subway service for some or all of their trips. It offers shared ride, door-to-door paratransit service. Provides "feeder service" – trips to and from fixed-route MTA

NYC Transit bus stops – for people able to walk or wheel between 1 and 5 blocks. MTA NYC Transit administers AAR; private carriers under contract to NYC Transit to provide service.

Eligibility

Disabled riders. Eligibility is determined on a periodic basis, after review by independent medical professionals in consultation with disabled riders' medical provider.

Income Limits/Resource Limits None

Government Agency

MTA NYC Transit: 877-337-2017, 718-393-4999 or 511

http://nyc.gov/html/mopd/html/resources/trans_aar.shtml

<http://web.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm>

School Tax Relief (STAR) Exemption

Note changes to the program: For those who have already received Basic and Enhanced STAR, eligibility and application requirements will remain the same. New applicants will receive an income tax credit via a check-off box on the New York State income tax return instead of an exemption. A separate form will be available for those who are not required to file taxes.

Note for Basic STAR only: All homeowners receiving a Basic STAR exemption must register with the New York State Tax Department in order to receive STAR exemptions.

Benefits Provides property tax exemption (also known as the homestead exemption) for all NYS homeowners.

Eligibility Must own home (includes one-, two- and three-family homes and home must be primary residence).

Enhanced STAR: Persons who are 65+ by December 31 of the year in which the exemption will begin.

Income Limits Basic STAR: \$500,000 or less combined household income.

Enhanced STAR: \$84,550 or less for all owners, and owner's spouse residing at property.

Resource Limits None.

Government Agency

New York City Department of Finance: 311

<http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/index.htm>

New York State Elder Abuse Hotline

To report adult abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or self-neglect call 1-844-697-3505.

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EVENTS/DEADLINES

Upcoming Elections: Voting and Registration Deadlines

ABSENTEE VOTING DEADLINES FOR STATE AND LOCAL PRIMARY ELECTION • September 13

Date	Deadline Information
Sept. 6	Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.
Sept. 12	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
Sept. 12	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Sept. 20 th .
Sept. 13	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (<i>by someone other than the voter</i>).

FOR GENERAL ELECTION • November 8

Date	Deadline Information
Nov. 1	Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.
Nov. 7	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
Nov. 7	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Nov. 15 th . Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 21 st .
Nov. 8	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (<i>by someone other than the voter</i>).

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

November 8, 2016- General Election

MAIL REGISTRATION (NY Election Law Section 5-210(3))

Applications must be postmarked no later than October 14th and received by a board of elections no later than October 19th to be eligible to vote in the General Election.

IN PERSON REGISTRATION (NY Election Law Sections 5-210, 5-211, 5-212)

You may register at your local board of elections or any state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act, on any business day throughout the year but, to be eligible to vote in the General Election, your application must be received no later than October 14th.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS (NY Election Law Section 5-208(3))

Notices of change of address from registered voters received by October 19th by a county board of elections must be processed and entered in the records in time for the General Election.