



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This week we passed the Assembly State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25 Budget resolution. We are in the early stages of negotiations now that our house has set its agenda with the passage of the Assembly Budget resolution. During the next couple of weeks negotiations will take place down to the wire of an April 1 deadline for the adoption of the state budget. Enclosed in this report are some of the highlights included in our Assembly's budget. Let us know what you consider a top priority for our New York State budget.

In celebration of Women's History Month, please consider nominating a woman in your community to receive special recognition from the New York State Assembly for their contributions to our neighborhood, city and state. Nominations can be submitted here through Wednesday, March 20.

Please join us for any of the upcoming events our office is pleased to sponsor:

- **Freeze Your Rent Enrollment Clinic**- Wednesday, March 20, from 10:30am to 1:30pm at the Office of Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, 1485 York Avenue (78/79 Streets). RSVP by calling 212-288-4607 or email SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov.
- **No-Cost Thursday Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Giveaway**- Thursday, March 21, from 12:00pm-2:00pm at the Office of Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, 1485 York Avenue (78/79 Streets).
- **No-Cost Screening Mammograms**- Wednesday, April 10, from 9:00am to 5:00pm. The mammogram bus in partnership with the American Italian Cancer Foundation will be in front of the Office of Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, 1485 York Avenue (78/79 Streets).

More information on upcoming events, my work in Albany and our community is enclosed in this report. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our community office if we can be of assistance.

Phone: 212.288.4607

Email: SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Seawright

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

**Seawright Passes Resolution Proclaiming March 2024 as
Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**



**Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine Dr.
Robert Harrington Welcomes Seawright to Campus to Discuss
State Budget Priorities**



Assembly Member Seawright met with Dr. Harrington to discuss the medical school's budget priorities including the NYFIRST program. The NYFIRST medical school grant program is designed to encourage the recruitment and retention of exceptional life science researchers and world-class talent at the state's medical schools to accelerate translational research.



Dr. Vivien L. Yap, Medical Director of the Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Department, Dr. Sallie Permar, Chair of the Pediatrics Department, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright and Daniel C. Pollay, Jr., Executive Director of Government and Community Relations.



Assembly Member Seawright toured the construction site of the new Weill Cornell medical student residence on East 74 Street and York Avenue expected to accept students as soon as the Fall of 2025.

New York State Assembly Budget Highlights

Ensuring our students have access to a high-quality education

Proposes a new \$2 billion Smart Schools Bond Act

- Zero-emission school bus charging stations and energy-efficiency projects would be allowable

Increases school aid by \$1.8 billion over the 2023-24 school year (\$1.1 billion over the executive budget)

- Increases Foundation Aid by \$818.6 million over the executive proposal (\$1.3 billion increase over the 2023-24 school year)

Supporting community libraries as vital cultural spaces

Increases funding for libraries to the statutory level of \$104.6 million, an increase of \$2.5 million over the executive budget

Provides an additional \$34 million in library capital funding for a total of \$68 million

Restores \$1 million to the Summer School for the Arts program

Keeping our higher education institutions affordable

Supporting CUNY:

- Provides a total of \$976.2 million in capital funding for CUNY, an increase of \$535 million over the executive budget, including:
- Provides \$124 million in additional operating funds for CUNY Senior Colleges
- Restores \$2.3 million for the School of Labor and Urban Studies for a total of \$5.9 million
- Restores \$1 million for CUNY expansion of nursing programs for a total of \$3 million
- Restores \$1 million for mental health programs for a total of \$2 million

Supporting SUNY:

- Provides a total of \$2.1 billion in capital funding (\$820 million over the executive)
- Provides \$186.5 million in additional operating funds
- Forgives SUNY hospitals' debt service payment for 2024-25, saving them \$79.1 million
- Restores \$1 million for the SUNY High Needs Nursing Program for a total of \$2.7 million
- Restores \$1.7 million for Cornell Cooperative Extension for a total of \$6.1 million
- Restores \$1 million for mental health programs for a total of \$2 million

Increases the Tuition Assistance Program income threshold from:

- \$80,000 to \$125,000 for dependent students, certain independent students and students who qualify as an orphan, foster child or ward of the court; this brings the maximum income level up to the same level as the Excelsior Scholarship
- \$40,000 to \$60,000 for independent married students who have no other tax dependents
- \$10,000 to \$30,000 for single independent students who have no tax dependents

Raises the minimum TAP award from \$500 to \$1,000 per student

Allows for a fifth year of TAP eligibility

Ensures the inclusion of SUNY and CUNY in the executive budget's appropriation of \$250 million in capital support to establish the Empire AI Consortium

Increasing affordable housing

Provides additional funding that will assist low-income and working-class families with rental and homeownership assistance, including:

- \$250 million for the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)
- \$40 million for the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP)
- \$25 million for First-Time Homeowner Assistance
- \$10 million for land banks

Provides:

- \$500 million for Mitchell-Lama Preservation and Home Ownership
- \$500 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- \$150 million for public housing outside of New York City for rehabilitation, replacement and new construction
- \$7 million for the Small Rental Housing Development Initiative
- \$7 million restoration for the Housing Opportunities Program for the Elderly (including the RESTORE program) for a total of \$8.4 million
- \$2 million increase for Access to Home for a total of \$3 million

Establishes the Office of Civil Representation to provide education, legal consultation and legal representation for individuals at risk of losing their housing in eviction actions

Easing the tax burden on families and providing inflation relief

Creates a one-year supplemental child tax credit estimated to save taxpayers \$300 million

Expands the EITC to those with an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN), estimated to save taxpayers \$70 million

Improving care and services for aging adults

Increases the New York State Office for the Aging (SOFA) funding by \$56.5 million

- Provides \$75 million to maintain the Nursing Home Vital Access Provider Assurance Program, which helps fund operational improvements for struggling nursing homes
- Provides \$60 million to maintain the Managed Care Quality Pool
- Provides \$51.75 million to maintain the Managed Long Term Care Quality Pool (MLTC)

Fighting the opioid crisis and treating drug addiction

Appropriates \$63.7 million from opioid legal settlement receipts, won in court against pharmaceutical companies, to be used to fund various programs to address the opioid crisis

Helping address the growing mental health crisis

Provides \$43 million for specialized residential housing programs

Provides \$37 million for 75 Transition to Home Units (THUs)

- THUs adopt a multidisciplinary approach to teaching life management skills and sessions to help those who are homeless and those dealing with mental health issues

Provides \$25.9 million for various services to support those in the criminal justice system with mental illness

Provides \$22 million to support the opening of 125 new state-operated psychiatric in-patient beds, including adding \$3 million for an additional 15 beds for children

Require OMH to establish a statewide grant program to develop peer-to-peer mental health programs for first responders

Expanding opportunities and services for people with developmental disabilities

Increases the cost-of-living adjustments for Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) employees by 3.2%, a 1.7% increase, or \$83.8 million over the executive proposal

Provides \$45.1 million in wage increases for staff at voluntary not-for-profits licensed under OPWDD

Provides \$15 million to support the development of residential independent living opportunities for people with disabilities

Provides \$6.8 million for the Disability Advocacy Program (DAP)

Provides \$6.7 million to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Making New York energy more affordable

Restores \$200 million for the Energy Affordability Program to ensure that enrollment in the program can continue to grow and to reduce costs for ratepayers

Provides \$50 million for the Empower Plus Energy Affordability Guarantee, which ensures an income-based cap of 6% on energy bills for low-income New York residents who have electrified

Provides an additional \$100,000 in funding for the Public Utility Law Project (PULP) for total funding of \$1.5 million

Enhancing Medicaid and investing in the health facilities of the future

Provides \$3.1 billion in state funding for the Medicaid program

Provides \$1 billion for health care facilities' capital needs

- Restores \$200.4 million to the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), which provides essential care to chronically ill or disabled individuals, to ensure wage parity for CDPAP workers
- Rejects the executive budget proposal to use unallocated Long Term Care Insurance savings and CDPAP rate repayments reduction to achieve \$200 million in savings

Adds additional capital support to SUNY Downstate would be used to maintain existing facilities

Supporting anti-poverty initiatives for at-risk New Yorkers

Provides \$112 million to establish a supplemental basic grant for public assistance, intended to address the insufficiency of benefits that have not been adjusted in years

- This would include covering the local share of Safety Net costs for this increase through County Fiscal Year 2024

Provides \$15 million in additional funding, for a total of \$50 million, for Eviction Prevention Legal Services to provide statewide support for legal assistance for eviction proceedings, including supplementing the New York City program

Increases Cash Assistance Grants for basic needs, including utility assistance, for families and individuals receiving public assistance

Improving our communities through public health initiatives

Provides \$1.1 billion in funding for public health, including:

- \$1 billion in capital funds to support the needs of health care facilities
- \$25 million for Nourish NY to connect struggling farmers to food-insecure households
- \$22 million to restore funding for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition

Assistance Program

Provides \$100 million for the Non-profit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program to support capital projects for eligible non-profit human services organizations

Provides an additional \$2 million for the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) for a total of \$5.5 million

Adds language to include prenatal care in the Paid Family Leave Program by including such leave in the existing sick leave requirement

Caring for families and New York's future generations

Provides \$500 million for Child Care Provider Wage Enhancements, an increase of \$220 million over the executive proposal

Restores \$5 million for the Advantage Afterschool program, for a total of \$105.8 million, and ensures that existing contracts are extended until a new grant process is established

Provides a \$5 million increase to the Summer Youth Employment Program for a total of \$55 million

Provides \$43.1 million to restore the state's child welfare reimbursement to localities from 62% to 65%

Helping small businesses and our economy thrive

Provides \$100 million to support infrastructure improvements for produce, meat, farmers markets and other food hubs

Provides \$10 million to create a dedicated venture capital fund for early-stage Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) tech startup companies

Supporting local governments and bolstering economic development

Adds \$100 million to Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) funding

Provides \$100 million in support for various capital improvements to municipal, educational institutions and other not-for-profit-owned sports facilities

Provides \$100 million for public and private museums and gardens used for scientific research, including botanical gardens

Provides \$25 million for another round of NY FIRST grants to encourage recruitment or retention of researchers at the state's medical schools to accelerate research

Protecting our environment and investing in green energy

Allocates \$500 million for clean water infrastructure – rejecting the executive budget proposal of a \$250 million lump sum appropriation including \$50 million for projects to protect the New York City watershed

Provides \$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund

\$750,000 for Grow NYC Food Access Sites

Investing in the MTA

Accepts the executive proposal of \$7.74 billion for MTA Transit Operating Assistance

Includes \$559.1 million for non-MTA downstate transit operating assistance, an increase of \$8.3 million above the executive proposal, which reflects a \$36.8 million, or 7.2%, increase from last year

Provides \$90 million for MTA bus services, including \$45 million for the fare-free bus pilot program and \$45 million for the additional bus service, including Express Bus service

Extends the MTA free bus pilot program by one year and expands the program to three free routes in each borough, up from the current one in each borough

Provides an additional 10% discount on monthly LIRR and MNR passes for trips within New York City

Provides \$127.5 million to expand the MTA Fair-Fares program

Community Activist Felicia Stein Honored by Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright on the Occasion of Her Milestone Birthday



Todd Stein, Harley Neiditz, and Felicia Stein.

Harley Neiditz, District Office Liaison presented Felicia Stein with a proclamation on behalf of Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright. Ms. Stein is a native New Yorker and longtime Upper East Sider who was a PTA leader at PS183. She also advocated for the betterment of St. Catherines Park.

On Equal Pay Day Assembly Member Seawright Highlighted the Critical Need for Pay Equity for Direct Support Professionals

NY ASSEMBLYMEMBER REBECCA SEAWRIGHT

“As Chair of the Assembly People with Disabilities Committee, I have observed the harmful wage disparities affecting New York’s female direct support professionals (DSPs). While women serve as most DSPs, they do not earn pay equivalent to their male counterparts, creating a large gap between work and wage satisfaction.... Due to low pay, nonprofit providers face substantial workforce vacancies and high turnover rates. This has created an urgent I/DD (intellectual and developmental disability) workforce crisis. We cannot expect services from DSPs, the majority of whom are women, without demanding just compensation that corresponds to their vital work for people with disabilities.”

[SEE THE POWHERNY YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOR FULL VIDEO STATEMENT](#)



#EQUALPAYNY



Nominate a Woman of Distinction



Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright
is seeking nominations for the

2024 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS



Nominations must be submitted by **03/20/24**.

To request a nomination form, contact my office at **212-288-4607**
or seawright@nyassembly.gov.

[Click here to nominate a Woman of Distinction](#)

Consider Our Office A Resource

Filing taxes should be free and simple. This tax season, New York State is offering a new, free way to file their returns!

FileYourStateTaxes is a new, no-cost option to help eligible New Yorkers directly e-file their state tax returns. The program, built in partnership with Code for America, is integrated with the IRS' Direct File pilot program, allowing a seamless experience to file both federal and state taxes.

As one of the first states to participate in the Direct File pilot, New York is taking a major step to streamline and modernize the tax filing process and give New Yorkers more choice when it comes to filing their taxes.

Check your eligibility- <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/direct-file/>

Access the direct file tool here- <https://directfile.irs.gov/>

Spot an IRS Scam

IRS-related scams typically increase during filing season, so be on the lookout.

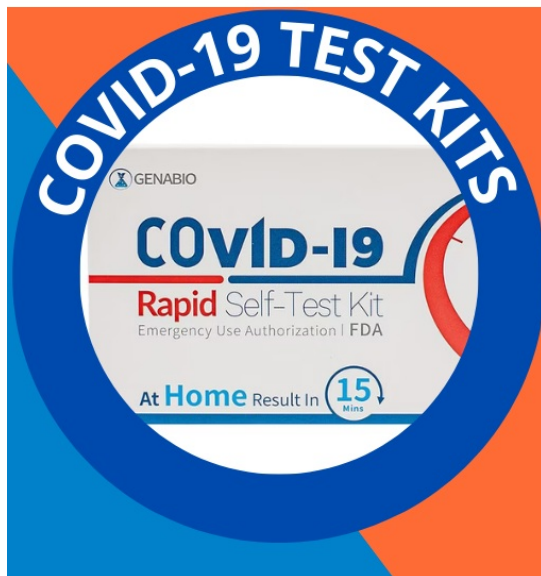
It's important to remember the IRS:

- generally will **NOT** contact you by phone.
- will **NOT** request payment using an iTunes gift card, prepaid debit card, money order, or wire transfer.
- will **NOT** request personal or financial information by email, text, letter, or social media.

To learn more about how to protect yourself or to report a scam, visit <https://www.tigta.gov/irs-scam-resources>.

**Rebecca
Seawright**
ASSEMBLYMEMBER

**NO-COST
THURSDAY
PPE
GIVEAWAY**



12:00PM - 2:00PM

**COMMUNITY OFFICE
1485 YORK AVENUE
(78/79 STREETS)**

212-288-4607

**SEAWRIGHTR
@NYASSEMBLY.GOV**

NYC Aging expanded its free meal delivery program! Starting this summer, deliveries to older New Yorkers (ages 60+) will include holidays and options will include halal dishes.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/programs/meals-for-seniors.page?emci=a1176bb1-c9dc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&emdi=54c1db0b-cfdc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&ceid=13869182>

The Summer Rising application is OPEN. Available to all NYC students in grades K-8, this FREE program provides an unforgettable summer of enrichment, field trips, and fun. Get your application in before the deadline on March 25.

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/summer/summer-rising?emci=a1176bb1-c9dc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&emdi=54c1db0b-cfdc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&ceid=13869182>

The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs funded grants for more than 1,000 cultural nonprofits!

The \$52.2 million will support organizations across the five boroughs, including performance troupes, community centers, and youth engagement programs.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/02/23/dcla-cultural-development-fund-2024-grants?emci=a1176bb1-c9dc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&emdi=54c1db0b-cfdc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&ceid=13869182>

You may qualify for discounted subway rides?

The Fair Fares program lets hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers use public transit for half off and ride the NYC Ferry for \$1.35. You or someone you know may be able to enroll in this incredible program — check your eligibility now.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/fairfares/index.page?emci=a1176bb1-c9dc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&emdi=54c1db0b-cfdc-ee11-85fb-002248223794&ceid=13869182>

Upcoming Events

SATURDAYS

April 27, 1-4 pm - Gene Casey and the Lone Sharks

May 11, 1-4pm - French Cookin' Blues Band

June 11, 1-4 pm - Special Guest Band

FREE ICE CREAM

Esplanade Friends Spring 2024 Concerts!

Live Music



Kids Activities by Craft Studio



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**FRIENDS
OF THE
EAST
RIVER
ESPLANADE**

**60th Street &
The East River
Esplanade
at the
Waterfront**
Rain Date: June 10



EsplanadeFriends.org



EastRiverEsplanade@gmail.com



/EsplanadeFriends



@EsplanadeFriend

DONATIONS



SCAN ME

**FREEZE YOUR RENT
ENROLLMENT CLINIC**

WED. MARCH 20

10:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

**1485 YORK AVENUE
(78/79 ST.)
TO RSVP**

**CALL 212-288-4607
OR EMAIL**

SEAWRIGHT@NYASSEMBLY.GOV



Who is eligible:

- Are 62 years old +
- Live in a rent regulated apartment
- Have a household income of \$50,000 or less
- Spend more than 1/3 of your income on rent

Document checklist:

- Government issued ID
- Federal or state income tax returns with all schedules and 1099s.
- Current and prior leases, signed by you and your landlord.

**Rebecca
Seawright**
ASSEMBLYMEMBER

NO-COST SCREENING MAMMOGRAMS

The Mammogram Bus



American-Italian
CANCER FOUNDATION

**will be at your District Office
1485 York Avenue**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024
9:30am to 4:30pm**

For an appointment please call
212-288-4607

Eligibility:

- Open to women age 40 to 79
- Living in New York City
- No Mammogram in the past 12 months
- All insurance plans are accepted
- Bring your insurance card with you
- Co-payments and deductibles are waived
- No-cost for uninsured women

**Funded by a grant from NYS Cancer Services Program
Additional funding provided by the generous support of the NBCF, NYC Council,
NYC DOHMH, NYS Senate, RAR Foundation,
and individual patrons**



Manhattan Community Board 8 Calendar

The Manhattan Community Board 8 (CB8M) represents the Upper East Side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island. CB8M is comprised of 50 volunteer members who serve as advocates and service coordinators for the community and its residents, as well as help citizens resolve municipal service delivery complaints.

CB8M reviews and makes recommendations on various issues, including applications for Zoning Text Amendments, building variances and special permits, liquor licenses, sidewalk cafes and street fairs, changes to landmarked buildings or buildings in historic districts, traffic and transportation issues, and more.

Each month, CB8M committees meet to discuss and resolve issues in the community.

Full Board Meeting - 3rd Wednesday
Land Use Committee - 2nd Wednesday
Street Life - 1st Tuesday
Transportation - 1st Wednesday
Housing - 1st Thursday
Parks - 2nd Thursday
Landmarks - 3rd Monday
Social Justice - 4th Monday
Zoning and Development - 4th Tuesday
Youth and Education - 4th Thursday

[Read More](#)

In Case You Missed It: Past Editions Of Our Community Update

[Community Update: March 8, 2024](#)

[Community Update: March 1, 2024](#)

[Community Update: February 23, 2024](#)

[Community Update: February 16, 2024](#)



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