



# NEWS FROM

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



Dear Neighbor,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well. I am pleased to inform you that the 2025-26 state budget has recently been approved. I am confident that it will allocate vital resources to the areas that require them most, strengthening the numerous systems that ensure a prosperous future for the entirety of our great state.

In this newsletter, I'd like to share with you the many budget wins that will continue to make New York a better place for families as well as the many small businesses that call it home. Despite the challenges, we successfully achieved our objectives and made it across the finish line. As the legislative session progresses, I will continue to put you at the forefront, passing measures that will support and improve our neighborhoods.

If you have questions or concerns about this year's enacted budget, or if I can be of assistance with any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office. We are here to serve you!

With Love and Hope,

Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly

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## Investing in our Future

### Environmental Protections

The 2025-26 state budget continues to make critical investments to preserve the environment, including:

- **\$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund**, an increase of \$25 million
- **\$1 billion for the Sustainable Future Program**, which will fund projects across the state to reduce emissions and invest in sustainable infrastructure, particularly in disadvantaged communities, which have historically been negatively impacted by environmental pollution.

### Investing in New York's Aging Infrastructure

New York's aging infrastructure has negatively affected the state's residents, from deteriorating roads to outdated water systems. As such, the recently passed spending plan makes direct investment into programs:

- **\$100 million** more over two years in the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS); and
- **\$500 million** to support New York's clean water infrastructure programs under the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA).

## Preserving Affordability in the Wake of Inflation



Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie joins Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, State Senator Jessica Ramos, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, Assemblymember Alex Bores, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest, Assemblymember Steven Raga and New York City Councilmember Gale Brewer for the unveiling of the first-in-the nation prenatal leave law and elimination of insulin co-pays on state regulated insurance plans.

The 2025-26 state budget invests directly into the people of New York during a time of high economic uncertainty in our country's history. As we continue to combat rising costs statewide, the Assembly majority is actively advocating for the support of our small businesses and making investments in necessary resources to create programs that will continue to heighten the potential of families and the children they are raising. These measures are a step in the right direction.

### Putting New York's Families First

- This year's budget enhances the **Empire State Child Credit by increasing the maximum credit to \$1,000 for children under four years** old for 2025 to 2027, and \$500 for children aged four to sixteen for 2026 and 2027. This will result in \$800 million in tax relief for New York families.
- The budget also includes a phased in 0.2 percent tax cut on individuals making under \$323,000 beginning in 2026, **which will provide another \$1 billion in tax relief for low- and middle-income New Yorkers** once fully implemented.
- The 2025-26 state budget also includes **automatic inflation refund checks geared toward helping everyday New Yorkers maneuver their day to day**. Single earners with income up to \$75,000 will receive \$200, and those making between \$75,000 and \$150,000 will receive \$150. Those filing jointly with income up to \$150,000 will receive \$400, and those making between \$150,000 and \$300,000 will receive \$300.
- Provisions for family planning & support for parents have also been included in this year's budget. The budget has invested **\$2.2 billion in childcare, including \$400 million to ensure that the state's localities have the resources they need to keep the childcare subsidy enrollment open**.
- The enacted budget establishes the **BABY Benefit pregnancy allowance**, which will invest in New York families by providing **\$1,800 to pregnant mothers receiving public benefits**. Additionally, the spending plan includes \$1.5 million for National Diaper Banks.



Speaker Heastie alongside Walter McNeil, TA President of Edenwald Houses and other stakeholders following a walk through of the NYCHA Edenwald reconstruction/upgrade.

### Making Housing Affordable

Critical investments have been made into affordable housing across New York State. The 2025-26 state budget includes:

- **\$50 million to establish the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)**, a rental assistance program that will help individuals and families facing or at risk of facing housing insecurities, a road to secure permanent housing, assisting to transition them out of shelters or unsustainable housing situations.
- **\$1 billion for NYC's City of Yes for Housing Opportunity Program**, an initiative (zoning text amendment) focused on addressing NYC's housing deficit.

#### To support the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity Program in New York City, the budget provides:

- ✓ **\$500 million** for new construction and preservation of affordable housing;
- ✓ **\$200 million** for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA);
- ✓ **\$80 million** for Mitchell-Lama Preservation;
- ✓ **\$50 million** to establish a mixed-income revolving loan fund;
- ✓ **\$30 million** for supportive housing for adults, youths or young adults exiting the justice system;
- ✓ **\$30 million** for mold and asbestos rehabilitation;
- ✓ **\$25 million** for the New York Housing for the Future Co-Op program;
- ✓ **\$25 million** for the New York Housing for the Future Rental program;
- ✓ **\$20 million** for lead abatement;
- ✓ **\$20 million** for supportive housing for the elderly; and
- ✓ **\$20 million** for the preservation of existing affordable or supportive rental developments regulated by municipal, state or federal housing agencies.

## Keeping New Yorkers Safe

During this year's negotiations, the safety of the state's communities was paramount, while also prioritizing the needs of New Yorkers.

### Improving Involuntary Commitment

To help people in crisis, the state budget improves involuntary commitment and assisted outpatient treatment by clarifying when a person may be committed, particularly when someone poses a danger to themselves or others. These improvements will empower hospitals to provide more people with needed treatment and care.

### Reforming Discovery Laws

By collaborating with our District Attorneys, significant modifications will be implemented to discovery regulations. These changes will safeguard cases from being thrown out on technicalities and reduce case dismissals over minor oversights, which have adversely affected survivors of serious and severe crimes. The state budget invests:

- **\$10 million** in funding for discovery implementation to prosecutorial entities, for a total of \$90 million
- **\$5 million** in funding for discovery implementation to entities providing defense services, for a total of \$45 million

## Small Businesses are the Backbone of Our Neighborhoods

Small businesses are vital to our neighborhoods, driving the growth of local economies by creating jobs and creating communities. **During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than a million people lost their jobs through no fault of their own, causing the Unemployment Trust Fund to go into more than \$10 billion of debt.** The small businesses we know and love were struggling to keep their doors open.

The 2025-26 state budget includes **\$8 billion to repay the debt.** This means:

- Lower rates and reduced penalties for small businesses
- Enhanced UI benefits for New Yorkers that lose their jobs
- Increased payments, ranging from \$504 per week to a maximum of \$869 per week



## Speaker Heastie Provides Essential Investments into Healthcare and Mental Health Services

Healthcare services are crucial in our communities as they ensure access to quality medical care, while enhancing the overall well-being of families. **The enacted budget makes critical investments in health care and mental health services** to continue to prevent and manage disease and improve quality of life for individuals and families.

The 2025-26 state budget includes:

- **\$500 million** in funding for financially distressed hospitals;
- **\$30 million** in additional funding for nursing home rates;
- **\$25 million** for Federally Qualified Health Centers and the SOMOS Value Based Payment Innovation Fund; and
- **\$8 million** for Daniel's Law pilot programs, so communities can develop and implement behavioral health crisis response systems to respond to individuals in crisis.

**Women's reproductive health is healthcare, making provisions to protect the well-being of women essential.** This year's budget includes language that would require

hospitals to provide screening and stabilizing treatment. It would also ensure that iatrogenic infertility treatment is covered by Medicaid and establish a grant program that would fund uncompensated infertility services.



Speaker Heastie, Cristina Contreras CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln, Assemblywoman Septimo unveiling a check for the creation of a recovery center at Lincoln Hospital.

# Ensuring High Quality Education from Preschool to College

Supporting New York's students entails investing in our children from birth to adulthood. This investment made in the SFY 25-26 spending plan will empower young people and give them the ability to not only achieve, but to attain their goals. Speaker Heastie secured a budget that provides **\$26.4 billion in Foundation Aid**, a \$1.4 billion increase over the 2024-25 School Year (SY).

Students who are well fed, have better concentration and academic performance, as such, the New York State Majority fought to include **\$340 million** for expanded universal school meals.

**\$28 million** in funding will be directed to the My Brother's Keeper Programs (MBK), for a total of almost \$200 million in funding since the program's inception.



Speaker Heastie conversing with students from Harry S. Truman High School in the Bronx, the high school he so proudly attended.

## Restricting Cell Phone Usage in School

The enacted budget includes **\$13.5 million to support the purchase of phone storage devices for New York State's schools as we move toward a "bell to bell" restriction of smartphones or other internet-enabled personal devices in K-12 schools.** This total restriction ensures students are not distracted with personal devices during instruction hours and can focus on learning and socializing with their classmates.

## Higher Education

- **\$23.3 billion** will be invested into higher education including \$209 million in opportunity program funding;
- **\$47 million** for the New York Opportunity Promise Scholarship, to provide financial support for tuition, books and fees for students 25-55 enrolled in specific high demand fields at SUNY and CUNY community colleges.

*"A great education is key to equipping our children and young adults with the essential skills for the strongest possible start in life."*

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## NEWS FROM

Speaker  
**Carl E. Heastie**

*"The state budget has been enacted, but I know my work is far from complete. As we near the conclusion of this year's legislative session, I will continue to work toward making life better for the people of New York."*

**– Speaker Carl E. Heastie**

