

Dear neighbors and community,

I hope you all are staying cool and hydrated in this heat and drought weather! Please make sure to check the weather forecast regularly in case of changing predictions and make sure you are prepared for a variety of weather outcomes.

As many of you may know earlier this year the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) laid off over 600 employees of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), including the National Weather Service (NWS). The OBBBA also [rescinded committed funds dedicated to NOAA](#).

Staffing cuts as well as operating budget cuts have led to escalating weather forecast inaccuracies. Budget cuts, for example, have reduced the number of daily weather balloon launches. Weather balloons - launched twice daily from roughly 100 locations - are essential for gathering upper-atmosphere data (temperature, wind, pressure, humidity). Cuts have resulted in a reduction or elimination of balloon launches in at least 11 U.S. locations. Launches that have been eliminated entirely include: Omaha (Nebraska), Rapid City (South Dakota), **Albany (NY)**, Gray (Maine), Kotzebue (Alaska). Launches with reduced frequency are occurring in Aberdeen (SD), Grand Junction (CO), Green Bay (WI), Gaylord (MI), North Platte (NE), Riverton (WY). Scientific experts, meteorologists, and emergency managers have highlighted reduced observational data, diminished modeling capacity, and understaffed local offices to be at the core of the degraded weather forecast accuracy affecting accurate reporting for storm warnings and modeling for hurricanes and floods.

In response to increasing catastrophic weather events including hurricanes, tornadoes, flash flooding, and record-breaking heat waves that have led to deaths in Kansas, Kentucky, Texas, Tennessee, Missouri, Virginia, West Virginia, Georgia, Arkansas, Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, and Arizona the administration has authorized the National Weather Service (NWS) to rehire employees to fill approximately 450 positions, including meteorologists, hydrologists, and radar technicians, to address staffing shortages and maintain critical weather forecasting services, particularly with hurricane season underway.

The proposed 2026 budget however includes a significant proposed cut of an estimated \$1.7 to \$2.2 billion to NOAA's overall budget for fiscal year 2026, a roughly 25% cut from the previous year's budget. The proposal also includes an estimated 74% cut to the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) and a streamlining of NOAA research functions, including the potential closing of weather and climate labs, grant programs, and OAR labs and Cooperative Institutes. Grant programs slated for cuts

include: the sea grant college program (funding, for example, important Cornell habitat preservation and Cornell Cooperative extension programs in the state), coastal zone management act grants, National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), regional climate centers and climate competitive research, species recovery grants, interjurisdictional fisheries grants, and pacific coastal salmon recovery grants, habitat conservation and restoration programs, grants for brownfield cleanup and environmental justice programs. There has been strong pushback from a bipartisan collective of members of Congress so it is yet unclear what NOAA funding will remain in the final budget. [Here is an interview](#) with a meteorologist on Fox News outlining the impact of these cuts on weather forecasting.

For those looking for an additional source of information a local meteorologist started [Finger Lakes Weather](#) to help us keep track of local weather patterns. He is doing the work (including the creation of an app that you can download from the website) on donations only so this is a labor of love in his spare time.

Warmly,  
Anna

## Legislative Update



### **Legislation to Protect Water Quality From Failing Septic Systems**

In July, Governor Hochul signed legislation to make it easier and more affordable for New Yorkers to upgrade failing septic systems. At the same time, she announced \$300 million in new funding for the [State Septic System Replacement Fund](#), which helps homeowners cover the cost of upgrades.

Aging or failing septic systems are a major source of water pollution across New York. They contribute to [harmful algal blooms \(HABs\)](#), which we've seen on Cayuga Lake and

smaller lakes in Cortland County. These blooms reduce water quality, release toxins dangerous to people and animals, damage local ecosystems and ruin a lot of fun afternoons planned at the park for kids and adults alike.

Older septic systems only remove a fraction of the pollution that passes through them (around 30%). The rest ends up in groundwater and lakes, where it fuels harmful algal blooms and damages water quality. Advanced septic systems, while often more expensive, filter out more pollution (around 50%) than conventional systems and also reduce [phosphorus and PFAS](#). Recent grants totaling [\\$30 million](#) have been awarded by the [New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation](#), in partnership with the [Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation](#), as part of this effort. While these systems can be expensive, the new law increases reimbursement levels:

- Up to \$10,000 (50% of costs) for a conventional system.
- Up to \$25,000 (75% of costs) for an advanced system.

Both [Tompkins](#) and [Cortland](#) Counties participate in the program and homeowners can apply through their county health departments to receive funding. This matters for our region because this program means cleaner drinking water, healthier lakes, and stronger protections for public health. It also makes advanced septic systems affordable for families who otherwise couldn't consider them

## **New Laws Taking Effect August 2025**

Here are a few highlights of additional new state laws that went into effect this month:

- [Budget bill A 3007 \(Part DD\) - Healthcare for Homeless Youth](#): Homeless youth can now consent to medical, dental, and behavioral health services without a parent or guardian.
- [Budget bill A3006 \(Partudicial Process\)](#): clarifies deadlines for evidence disclosure, tightening standards for Certificates of Compliance, enhancing protections for sensitive victim and witness information, and reinforcing due diligence expectations for prosecutors, while maintaining defendants' rights to timely and comprehensive discovery. These updates are supported by a \$135 million investment to help prosecution and defense offices build the staffing, technology, and infrastructure needed to meet the law's expanded requirements efficiently and equitably. [Here is a summary of these critical amendments to discovery reform including the human rights groups concerns](#).
- [Budget bill A3007 \(Part EE\) - Mental Health Services](#): Modifies [Kendra's Law](#) which established a form of court-ordered outpatient mental health care for adults with serious mental illness and a history of non-compliance or violence enabling renewal of court order up to six months after prior order expiration and expands

criteria of when orders can be made. The amendment also establishes the Behavioral Health Crisis Technical Assistance Center, imposes requirements for training and record-keeping, and some oversight requirements. [Here is a summary of Kendra's law and this budget amendment including concerns from human rights advocates.](#)

- [Consumer Protections](#): Online retailers must post refund policies clearly.
- [PA692 - Public Safety](#): Certain public places will be required to have EpiPens on hand, with trained staff available.
- [PA3005 - Public Campaign Financing](#): Updated rules expand small-donor matching to encourage grassroots participation.
- [A10565 - Hunting Licenses](#): Hunters can now carry electronic licenses as proof of tag for deer or bear.

## Federal News

On July 4th, the President signed a budget reconciliation act, a piece of legislation with tax, spending, and debt-limit provisions. The law makes cuts that will directly remove access to healthcare, housing, food assistance, and education assistance programs for millions of New Yorkers. According to the Center for American Progress the net impact of these changes [will shift costs to states and onto families, seniors, and students.](#)

### **Agriculture:**

The bill allocates nearly \$66 billion in agricultural support over the next decade. Over \$59 billion of that is directed toward several US farm safety programs, including [Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#), [Agricultural Risk Coverage \(ARC\)](#), [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#), and federal crop insurance enhancements. While the intent is to stabilize income and manage risk, many of these programs scale with production, meaning larger farms will receive a majority of the benefits compared to small or diversified operations.

- **Higher Reference Price for Major Crops**: Reference prices, the price thresholds that trigger federal government payments to farmers, are increased by 11-21% for major crops like corn, soybeans, wheat, and rice. This means the price point has been increased for these specific cash crops and if the market price falls below this higher reference price the federal government will step in and pay the difference. Larger farms with more acreage enrolled stand to gain the most from these adjustments.

- Automatic Enrollment in PLC or ARC-C) (2025 Only): Farmers will be automatically enrolled in the program, either PLC or county level ARC, whichever provides the higher payment in 2025. It is helpful for mid-to-large scale commodity producers who often have complex acreage decisions.
- Expanded Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC): The DMC program, a program the New York Dairy sector depends heavily on, now includes:
  - Higher coverage caps for milk production
  - A new production-based enrollment option
  - Broader eligibility for multi-farm owners
- Crop Insurance Enhancements: Federal crop insurance now comes with:
  - 3-5% higher premium subsidies, targeted to help risk-prone regions (e.g. drought, flooding, pests, disease, or price drops)
  - For some crops (predominantly staple cash crops and some selective specialty crops) and certain insurance plan types, farmers can now insure up to 95% from the previous 85% of their expected yield or revenue, reducing their financial exposure. Farmers will pay higher premiums for this expanded coverage, though the federal government subsidizes a portion. Large operations, which plant more acreage, stand to gain the most from the expanded safety net.
  - Improved access for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers by, for example, providing larger federal premium subsidies and streamlining applications and requiring less paperwork for farmers with limited records or short production histories.
- Tax Relief and Capital Investment Incentives: this bill also includes long-term tax provision designed to encourage capital investment and secure farm legacies.
  - [Section 199A Deduction](#) - A permanent 23% pass-through deduction remains in place for farm business income, reducing taxable income for many operations.
  - The estate tax exemption increases to \$15 million per individual (or \$30 million per couple).
  - Farmers can continue to fully deduct the cost of machinery and equipment through bonus depreciation and [Section 179 expensing](#). This favors farms making significant annual capital investment, which typically are larger operations.
  - More types of revenue now qualify as “farm income” including:
    - Agri-tourism activities
    - On-farm equipment sales
    - Direct-to-consumer marketing

In District 125 dairy farmers are seeing the most benefit to date from these changes. In Cortland County, 18 dairy farms received a combined \$3.9 million in modernization

grants to improve equipment and operational resilience. Regional enrollment in ARC and PLC programs for the 2025 crop year has reached 90%, indicating high interest in leveraging these safety nets.

While many of the HR1 OBBBA provisions offer broad agricultural support, larger farms with higher volumes of commodity production stand to gain the most. Programs like PLC and ARC reward scale; the more acres enrolled or milk produced, the greater the payout potential. Also the higher premium subsidies for crop insurance are most impactful for those with larger liabilities to cover.

Smaller farms may benefit more from expanded eligibility, flexible revenue definitions, and improved subsidies for beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers. However, without significant acreage or production, they may see only modest gains from the core safety-net increases outweighed by cuts in other areas of the HR1 OBBBA. Continued support for regional grant programs, technical assistance, and access to local markets will be essential in ensuring these farmers can remain viable under the new policy landscape.

### **Healthcare Access:**

Loss of healthcare coverage: More than a million New Yorkers are at risk of losing coverage under [new Medicaid restrictions](#).

- Starting January 1, 2027, the law imposes work or community engagement requirements: able-bodied adults aged 19–64 must complete at least 80 hours per month of work, volunteering, or school to maintain eligibility, with specific exemptions; states must also conduct eligibility redeterminations twice yearly instead of annually. The bill mandates that expansion states (states that chose to expand Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)) uniformly apply out-of-pocket charges, up to \$35 per service, for individuals earning between 100% and 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- It eliminates enhanced federal matching funds for emergency Medicaid services, meaning services rendered to noncitizens in emergencies will no longer benefit from increased federal reimbursement.
- Beginning October 1, 2026, it significantly narrows noncitizen eligibility for full Medicaid by excluding categories like asylum seekers, refugees, and humanitarian parolees, leaving only lawful permanent residents, certain Cuban/Haitian entrants, and Compact of Free Association (CFA) residents eligible.
- It requires a five-year waiting period for green card holders before they can access Medicaid and reduces retroactive coverage from three months to one.



- These new restrictions indirectly impact individuals with disabilities, especially those with “invisible” disabilities who may not qualify under stricter standards.

#### Cuts to safety-net hospitals:

- The law changes who qualifies for Medicaid and the Essential Plan by adding more paperwork and stricter eligibility checks. This means that around 1.5 million New Yorkers could lose their health coverage. Many of those people will still need care but won't be able to pay, leaving hospitals with an estimated \$3 billion more in unpaid bills each year. Rural hospitals and safety-net facilities, the ones that already care for more low-income and uninsured patients, will experience this the most.
- The Essential Plan, which helps hundreds of thousands of low- and middle-income New Yorkers, especially immigrants, will be cut significantly. Roughly 730,000 people are expected to be affected, with some pushed onto lower-paying Medicaid coverage and others becoming uninsured altogether. That means hospitals will either be paid less for the same services or will provide care without getting paid at all, further squeezing their budgets.
- The federal government is putting tighter limits on special state funding streams, called state-directed payments, that New York uses to keep safety-net hospitals afloat. These funds total about \$3.5 billion a year and help more than 70 hospitals statewide, including many in rural and low-income areas. Losing or shrinking that support will put those hospitals in serious financial risk.
- The bill limits New York's ability to use provider taxes to bring in federal matching funds. New York recently passed a managed-care organization (MCO) tax that would have funded about \$700 million a year in hospital payment increases, starting in 2026. With the OBBBA blocking those funds, that expected boost to hospital budgets will disappear.
- Disproportionate-share hospital (DSH) payments, another key funding source for hospitals that serve a high number of Medicaid and uninsured patients, are set to be cut again. If these reductions aren't delayed by Congress, New York hospitals could lose about \$1.4 billion a year in federal funds, further straining facilities that are already operating on razor-thin margins.
- The bill also takes aim at reproductive health providers, blocking some federal Medicaid payments to organizations like Planned Parenthood. This will push more patients into hospital emergency rooms and clinics, which are already under strain, particularly in areas with fewer providers.

All together, these cuts are expected to cost New York hospitals about \$8 billion a year, leading to tens of thousands of job losses and a major hit to the state's healthcare system, estimated at over \$14 billion in economic losses. The impact won't be evenly spread: hospitals in rural areas, along with urban safety-net facilities that serve the highest proportion of Medicaid and uninsured patients, will be hit the hardest. Regions such as the North Country, Southern Tier, Central New York, Finger Lakes, and Western New York are expected to face the deepest losses, with some hospitals at risk of cutting services or closing entirely. Centers that provide reproductive care, like [Planned Parenthood](#), will lose funding for all services including primary care, cancer screenings, STI testing and contraception. Any center that provides abortion care will lose access to all Medicaid coverage for any and all services they provide.

### **Public Benefits & Housing:**

The reconciliation bill includes sweeping budget reduction to core housing, nutrition, and support programs relied upon by thousands of New Yorkers, including families, seniors, and those with disabilities. These changes will raise costs for states and local governments, depriving them of vital resources needed to protect our most vulnerable residents. In Tompkins and Cortland Counties, where affordable housing is already limited, these cuts may trigger higher housing costs, reduced food assistance, and diminished services for elderly and disabled.

- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#)
  - Introduces expanded work requirements for certain adult recipients and tightens eligibility verification processes.
  - These provisions are projected to reduce the number of eligible households and lower overall program costs over the next decade.
  - Implementation of work rules begin now, with additional cost-sharing measures for states phased in by October 2027.
- [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) and Independent Living Supports](#)
  - Adds new administrative steps, such as pre-effectuation reviews, to the SSI application process, potentially increasing the time it takes to access benefits.
  - Adjust how retroactive payments are calculated, especially for back-dated benefit claims.
  - These measures are aimed at reducing improper payments and are scheduled for staged implementation by the Social Security Administration.
- [Federal Housing Programs \(HUD\)](#)
  - Reduces funding for several housing program by approximately 43% including:



- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
  - Public Housing Capital and Operating Funds
  - Project-Based Rental Assistance
  - Housing for the Elderly (Section 202)
  - Housing for Person with Disabilities (Section 811)
- Also discontinues funding for the Family Self-Sufficiency and [ROSS programs](#).
- These changes took effect upon enactment and may affect housing affordability and availability, especially in high-cost areas.
- [Community Development Programs](#)
  - Eliminates funding for two longstanding federal grant programs
    - [Community Development Block Grants \(CDBG\)](#)
    - [HOME Investment Partnerships Program](#)
  - These programs are used by states and municipalities to support affordable housing construction, infrastructure, and economic development initiatives.
  - The changes are effective immediately and will impact 2026 budget allocations.
- [Homelessness Assistance](#)
  - Reductions in funding for HUD's homeless assistance programs may affect services related to permanent supportive housing and rapid housing and outreach programs.
  - While core funding remains, the total available for new initiatives or expansions will be more limited starting in 2026.

### **Education:**

The bill also makes significant cuts to education

- College Access: Changes to [Pell Grant eligibility](#) - Students will now need to take 15 credits (not 12) to be considered full-time, and those enrolled less than half-time will lose eligibility entirely. This will disproportionately affect, for example, students who have to work part-time and students with dependents.
- K–12 Support: Cuts to nutrition and early childhood programs [target free and reduced lunch](#) for children and reduce access to pre-K programs.
- Classroom Resources: The [elimination of grant programs](#) includes cuts for specific K–12 populations, teacher training, and education research.

### **Seniors:**

The federal budget includes major changes that will increase costs and reduce services for older adults and people with disabilities. For seniors in Tompkins and Cortland

Counties, these cuts will mean fewer options for care, less income security, and higher health and housing costs.

- Healthcare Access: Medicaid changes will [shift more costs to states](#), which means higher out-of-pocket expenses for seniors. This threatens access to nursing homes, home health aides, and long-term care services.
- Income Support: Cuts to [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#) is expected to reduce benefits for more than 560,000 older and disabled New Yorkers, including children with disabilities who depend on these monthly payments for basic needs.
- Medicare Services: Reductions in [Medicare reimbursements](#) is expected to discourage providers from participating, leading to longer wait times and fewer care options for seniors on fixed incomes.
- Workforce Programs: The elimination of [Senior Community Service Employment Programs](#) will reduce job training and work opportunities that help older adults stay active and financially independent.

### **Additional Policy Changes:**

While the federal budget cuts into healthcare, housing, food, and education programs, it also directs billions of dollars toward military and defense spending, border security, and expanded use of public lands for resource extraction.

- Military Spending: \$25 billion for a [national missile defense shield](#), \$21 billion to increase ammunition stockpiles, and \$34 billion to expand the naval fleet.
- Border Security: \$5 billion allocated for new enforcement measures.
- Guns: [Repeals a 90-year-old](#) federal tax on gun silencers.
- Public Lands: [Expands leasing](#) for drilling, mining, and logging to generate corporate revenue.

# Around the District

[Discover Cayuga Lake Watershed Internship Program](#)



This summer, I had the joy of speaking with 13 interns in the [Cayuga Lake Watershed Internship Program](#) as part of the launch of their summer and joining them again at their end of the program “Love Your Lake” celebration.

This year’s interns spent their summer embedded with eight partner organizations [Discover Cayuga Lake](#), [Paddle-N-More](#), [Community Science Institute](#), [Sustainable Finger Lakes](#), the [Paleontological Research Institution](#), [OJI:SDA’ Sustainable Indigenous Futures](#), the [Cayuga Lake Watershed Network](#), and [The Soil Factory](#). Each of these organizations plays a vital role in protecting Cayuga Lake, which in turn sustains our drinking water, biodiversity, recreation, and local economy. Their projects showed just how interconnected our lives are with the lake. One group redesigned The Game of Life into a creative “Get the Water Home” board game where players were penalized for having too much [PFAS](#) in their toilet paper and rewarded for living sustainably. Another student, Sascha Bath, built an awesome diorama titled “A Land Without Water” which was a poignant visual reminder that without Cayuga Lake, there is no Ithaca as we know it. One student spent the summer doing education and outreach for the



Cayuga Lake is not just a beautiful resource. It is our community's drinking water, a habitat for wildlife, and the foundation of our local economy and tourism. Protecting the watershed is essential to the well-being of our region and the generations that follow.

The passion and creativity of these interns was inspiring! Their work reminds us that protecting Cayuga Lake is a responsibility we all share. By supporting programs like this and committing to watershed stewardship, we can ensure that our lake and community thrive for decades to come.

### **United Way Day of Action**



On July 25th, my office and fantastic summer interns joined volunteers for [United Way's Day of Action](#) at the [YMCA of Ithaca & Tompkins County](#). The YMCA is far more than a gym or pool, it is a lifeline for families. Through its [Financial Assistance Programs](#), the YMCA ensures that finances are never a barrier to wellness, childcare, youth programs, swim lessons, or summer camps. With sliding-scale support, families can access services at rates reduced by 10% to 80%, depending on income and household size.

Many in our community, including members of my own team, have relied on the YMCA for connection, childcare, and opportunity. It is one of the anchors of community wellness in Tompkins County, ensuring that no family is turned away for lack of resources.

The Day of Action was a reminder that the YMCA serves as a part of the foundation of community life in Tompkins County. Keeping it strong keeps our community strong.

# Community Resources

## City Federation of Women's Organizations Annual Grant Cycle is Open



City Federation of Women's Organizations Annual Grant Cycle is Open. CFWO has one primary grant cycle per year, with specific projects funded at a maximum level of \$15,000. Only projects serving women and girls in Tompkins County, NY are eligible for funding. Only non-profit organizations can apply; individuals are not eligible.

As of August 13th, 2025 the Annual Grant Cycle is now open. The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday, September 26th, 2025. An online information session will be Wednesday, September 3rd, 3-4pm. Grant applications, requirements, and guidelines are available at [www.womenbuildingcommunity.org](http://www.womenbuildingcommunity.org). For further information or questions, contact the CFWO's Grants Committee at [grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org](mailto:grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org).

Applicants will be notified in late November of the Board's decisions and grant funds will be distributed in December. Projects are funded for the period January 1 through December 31 and must be completed by December 31 unless approval is given otherwise. Full or partial funding may be awarded for new or ongoing projects.

The mission of CFWO (City Federation of Women's Organizations) is to act as a catalyst for the improvement of the lives of women and/or girls in Tompkins County, NY thus making a contribution to the entire community. Only projects serving women and/or girls in Tompkins County, NY are eligible for funding. Grants are awarded on the merit of the program, quality of the application, and available funds. For further information or questions, contact the CFWO's Grants Committee at [grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org](mailto:grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org). The CFWO has awarded \$600,000 in grants since 2013.

CFWO grants support women and girls regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including expression), sexual orientation, disability, age,

marital status, and socioeconomic status. Projects that are eligible for funding must improve the quality of life for women and/or girls in Tompkins County, New York.

Projects addressing the following priorities are encouraged: Community Development, Education, Gender Equity, Health, Human Services, Arts and Culture, and Social Justice.

### **Tompkins Build - Pathways to Apprenticeship is Now Recruiting for the Fall Cohort**



The Pathways to Apprenticeship program is an 11-week paid pre-apprenticeship training course that provides an introduction to careers in construction and the building trades. Participants receive certifications, hands-on training, and the opportunity to connect with local unions through the Tompkins-Cortland Building and Construction Trades Council.

The program includes multi-craft core curriculum (MC3) certification, OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR certification, hands-on training in several trades, blueprint reading, math skills for the trades, profession skills development, and field trips to job sites. More information, including details on information sessions, is available on the [Tompkins Build website](#) and sign up for an [information session](#).

The program to Apprenticeship program will run from September 29 to December 11 in downtown Ithaca, with training held Monday through Thursday from 3:00-8:00 pm. Participants are paid \$15.50/hour and receive in-person instruction and field experience. The [application deadline is September 11](#), with interviews and assessments notifications will be shared by September 22. Eligible applicants must be 18 or older, authorized to work in the US, demonstrate at least a 9th-grade level in reading and math, and have reliable transportation. The program is designed for those committed to pursuing a career in the construction trades and ready to enter a multi-year, paid apprenticeship with a union upon completion.



## City of Ithaca ED Strategy Business Owners Survey

The City of Ithaca asks business owners and managers to share their perspective as part of developing a new economic development strategy. This strategy will outline concrete action-oriented steps the City can take over the next several years to strengthen our local economy.

Ithaca's economy is shaped by its unique blend of small businesses, higher education, arts and culture, and tourism. The city wants to hear directly from those who operate here everyday, whether you own a shop in the Commons, run a restaurant, manage a start-up, or oversee a nonprofit, to ensure the strategy reflects the needs of the whole community.

The anonymous [online survey](#) takes about 8 minutes to complete and can be shared with other Ithaca-based businesses. Your input will help shape future policies and investments that affect our local business climate. Fill out the survey [here](#), for more information contact Tom Knipe, Deputy Director for Economic Development, at [tknipe@cityofithaca.org](mailto:tknipe@cityofithaca.org) or 607-274-6554.

## New York StateWide Senior Action Council: "Fraud of the Month"



[StateWide Senior Action Council](#), a nonprofit that has served New York's 2.5 millions seniors for over 50 years, published a "Fraud of the Month" to help older adults stay safe from scams. This month's warning is about caller ID spoofing. Scammers can now make it appear as though your doctor, Medicare, pharmacy, or even a local hospital is calling. Their goal is to gain trust and steal personal information.

Examples of what scammers might say:

- "This is your doctor's office. Please confirm your Medicare number for a back brace."
- "Your test results are ready, We need your Social Security number to proceed."
- "Medicare is updating your records, Can you confirm with a 'Yes' or 'No'?"
- "This is your pharmacy. We need your date of birth and insurance information to refill your prescription?"

How to protect yourself:

- Do not trust caller ID, scammers can fake it. Hang up and call back using a verified number (doctor's office, Medicare card, pharmacy website.)
- Never share personal information over the phone with unknown callers.
- Avoid answering "Yes" or "No," hang up instead.
- Regularly check your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) and Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) for suspicious claims.
- Remember: Medicare will never call you directly.

If a scammer or Medicare fraud is suspected, report it to the [NYS Senior Medicare Patrol \(SMP\)](#). Call their Helpline at 800-333-4374. The NYS SMP and its trained [counselors](#) help educate Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. To report Medicare fraud, errors or abuse anyone can call the NYS Medicare Fraud Helpline at 800-333-4374 or visit [www.nysenior.org](http://www.nysenior.org)

### Senior Farmers Market Coupons



Coupon booklets for the [Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) are now available through September 30. Eligible older adults can pick them up at the Office for the Aging (214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.) between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Booklets are distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, and outreach staff will also share them at sites throughout the county.

Each booklet contains \$25 in \$5 coupons, which can be used to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables from participating vendors at farmers markets and farm stands across New York State. Vendors who accept the coupons will have signs posted. Coupons are valid until November 30, 2025, and can be redeemed by a proxy if the recipient cannot travel to the market.

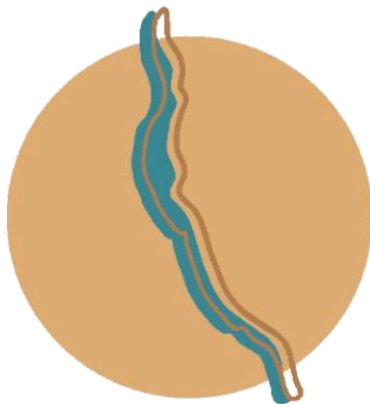
Eligibility Requirements:

- Age 60 or older

- Meet income guidelines:
  - 1-person household: \$2,413/month
  - 2-person household: \$3,261/month
  - 3-person household: \$4,109/month
- Each eligible older adult in a household may receive one booklet per season.

For more information, call the [Office for the Aging](#) at (607) 274-5482 or click the link for access to their [fact sheet](#).

### **Ithaca Region Therapist Group: Connect, Network, and Share Resources**



# Ithaca Region THERAPIST GROUP

The [Ithaca Region Therapist Group \(IRTG\)](#) is a network for therapists and mental health professionals across Ithaca and the Finger Lakes. The group provides space to connect, share resources, and support one another while also serving as a resource for the broader community seeking mental health services. Through the IRTG directory, individuals can [find a therapist](#), learn about [upcoming events](#), [access community resources](#), and explore a spotlight on [local providers](#).

IRTG works to strengthen the local mental health network and make it more accessible and easy for community members to connect with [therapists](#), nonprofits, and organizations offering support. If you have any questions or would like to reach email [info@irtg.org](mailto:info@irtg.org).

**Southern Tier AIDS Program - Call for Volunteers for the September 6th event**



## AIDS Ride for Life 2025

The [AIDS Ride for Life](#) began in 1995 as a powerful response to the AIDS crisis, a way to raise funds for AIDSWork (now the [Southern Tier AIDS Program](#)) and bring HIV/AIDS into public awareness. Twenty-seven years later, HIV & AIDS remain urgent public health issues. Despite medical advances, the disease continues to be underfunded and overlooked. The AIDS Ride for Life is the Southern Tier AIDS Program's largest annual fundraiser. It helps the organization fill in funding gaps where grants fall short, supporting their prevention programs, harm reduction efforts, criminal justice initiatives, and mental health services for those who are often underserved and stigmatized.

This year the Southern Tier AIDS Program is looking for volunteers, cyclists, fundraisers, donors, and passionate advocates to join them. Volunteers are needed to support in nearly every area of the Ride. Specific roles for volunteers they are looking for are serving lunch to riders, directing riders, keeping riders safe intersections, RN/EMT support, and helping prep and serve dinner. If interested in volunteering fill out the [form linked here](#).

The [2025 AIDS Ride for Life](#) will be happening September 6, starting at 7am at 1 James L Gibbs Dr. Cyclists from all over the community will gather at Stewart Park to ride around Cayuga Lake. There are a variety of routes to register for instead of the 90 or 100 miles around the lake, smaller routes range from 14 to 42 miles. Registering for the ride starts at \$30 dollars and will periodically increase as the event gets closer. Riders are asked to fundraise \$100. All registered riders will get their own fundraising page as well as some tools to help them fundraise. If interested in riding register by [clicking the link](#).

### Hospitality Employment Training Program

# HETP

## Hospitality Employment Training Program

The [Hospitality Employment Training Program \(HETP\)](#) is accepting applications for their fall cohort. HETP is a program that trains all participants to be work ready in the hospitality industry, office administrative, or other fields based on the participants' skill set, values, and desires. Anyone living in Tompkins County and over 18 years old is encouraged to apply.

If accepted, all participants will receive individualized coaching pertaining to each student's employment need and help working through barriers such as education, childcare, or transportation. Childcare is often a huge barrier to employment, the program works with participants to find childcare to ensure that everyone can make it to class and work daily. HETC also provides transportation services to help participants get where they need to be. All assistance with barriers is on a case-by-case basis to protect the integrity of the program.

Career services will also be offered to students, such as assistance with resumes, cover letters, job searching, interviewing, and networking opportunities. The program offers 60 hours of skill building during cohort sessions and up 120 hours of on-the-job training and coaching.

[Applications](#) are accepted on a rolling basis and can be submitted via mail, email, or in person. Click here for the [application link](#). For more information visit their [website](#) or contact the HETP program assistant, Kay Moore at [KMoore@cityofithaca.org](mailto:KMoore@cityofithaca.org) or call at 607-272-3622.

In good health,



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