



This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

A Publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC

May 21, 2021 Edition



“Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.”
-George Orwell, 1984-

In the News – New York State

NYS Adopts CDC Guidance on Mask Use and Social Distancing for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

Effective May 19th, New York adopted the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC)

["Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People"](#) for most businesses and public settings.

Pre-K to 12 schools, public transit including for hire vehicles, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and healthcare settings are exempt until more New Yorkers are fully vaccinated, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced.

CDC prevention measures continue to apply to all travelers, including those who are vaccinated. All travelers

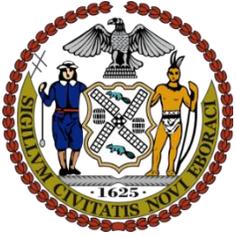
are required to wear a mask on all planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

Choosing Safer Activities

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html>

	Unvaccinated People	Examples of Activities	Fully Vaccinated People
		Outdoor	
Safest		Walk, run, wheelchair roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	
		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	
		Indoor	
Less Safe		Visit a barber or hair salon	
		Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	
		Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	
Least Safe		Go to an indoor movie theater	
		Attend a full-capacity worship service	
		Sing in an indoor chorus	
		Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	
		Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	

In the News – City



Mayor Signs Executive Order to Eliminate Hotel Room Occupancy Tax from June 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week signed an [Executive Order](#) eliminating the 5.875% hotel room occupancy tax rate for a three-month period, from June 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021. The relief provided by the tax rate reduction is designed to help accelerate the recovery of the hotel industry, which has been particularly hit hard by the pandemic.

“As our COVID rates continue to plummet and we continue to drive a recovery for all of us, tourists will be coming back to New York City in droves. We’re ready for them,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “By eliminating the hotel room occupancy tax for this summer, we’re accelerating our economic recovery, saving jobs, and providing relief for one of our hardest-hit industries.”

According to the Mayor, the dramatic decrease in tourism and business travel due to the pandemic has had a significant impact on the hotel industry. The stresses on the industry are evident in a number of key indicators, including substantial decreases in jobs, inventory, and occupancy rates. Revenue from the hotel room occupancy tax is down approximately 89% as compared with Fiscal Year 2020, further demonstrating the pandemic’s impact on the industry.

This Executive Order follows NYC & Company’s \$30 million “NYC Reawakens” marketing campaign, which seeks to bring back New York City’s tourism industry.

NYC & Company projects 36 million visitors to New York City in 2021. The tax rate reduction will complement the effort underway for a successful restoration of the leisure and hospitality sector, which has suffered the loss of approximately 257,000 jobs from March through December 2020.

Mayor de Blasio asserts that by eliminating the 5.875% hotel room occupancy tax, hotels could lower the cost of their rooms, which will increase demand, and recapture some of the lost ground on room occupancy.

Mayor de Blasio Calls on the State Legislature to Pass Community Hiring and MWBE Bills

New analysis from The New School shows how Community Hiring would use the City's purchasing power to create 200,000 jobs over 5 years for low-income people, NYCHA residents, and residents of low-income neighborhoods

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week called on the State Legislature to pass key bills for New York City's economic recovery: Community Hiring and legislation to increase opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs).

Armed with a new analysis from The New School Economist Dr. James Parrott, the Mayor explained that the City's Community Hiring plan would on average, involve about 16,000 construction workers a year and 24,000 service contract workers in a range of industries from human services, to maintenance and repair, to IT services. Over the next five years, this program could help as many as 200,000 economically disadvantaged workers and residents of high-poverty communities.

Under the program businesses working with the City would be required to hire low-income people, NYCHA residents, and people from high poverty communities. Specifics of the Community Hiring legislation include:

- **Expand job opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals:** Requires those who do business with the City on non-construction contracts such as software, or goods or consultants, to meet employment goals for low-income people. The goals would be tailored to each contract.
- **Authorize the City to require a minimum ratio of apprentices:** Allows the City to require that contractors use a minimum ratio of apprentices.
- **Enable the City to require contractors to work with workforce development programs to find qualified talent:** Such workforce development programs could potentially include ones that typically serve NYCHA residents, veterans, people with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, cash assistance recipients, immigrants, and NYCDOE and CUNY graduates.

To complement the Community Hiring Program, City officials are also calling for expansion of the City's MWBE program.

"Together, these pieces of legislation would allow the City to use its enormous purchasing power to strategically invest in communities," said Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Phillip Thompson. "The proposed Community Hiring and MWBE bills are really two sides of the same coin and show that City dollars can do more than get work done, they can lift people out of poverty. As we recover from this pandemic, we need the legal right to say that when government money is being spent, it is being spent to bring greater opportunity to those in need."

Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn and State Senator James Sanders Jr. have introduced legislation (S6270-A/A7266) which will:

- Increase City agencies' MWBE discretionary threshold to \$1 million.
- Authorize, for City or Prime Contractor, to consolidate insurance on construction contracts, thereby reducing overhead for subcontractors and the City.
- Allow bidders for City contracts that have policies which lead to diverse workforce practices to receive extra points on bids.

Briefs

NYS Launches 'Vax & Scratch' Program Providing Lottery Tickets for Prizes Up to \$5 Million

Governor Andrew Cuomo this week announced a new vaccination program that will provide free NYS lottery scratch-off tickets to individuals 18 and over with a grand prize of \$5 million.

The program will initially include 10 vaccination sites in the New York City, Long Island, Mid-Hudson, Central New York, Finger Lakes, Mohawk Valley and Western New York regions. The sites will be open from Monday, May 24 to Friday, May 28. All sites will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The ticket, which is sold by retailers across the state for \$20, will be provided free to individuals 18+ who take their first dose of Pfizer or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at one of the sites. The sites are open to both walk-ins and [appointments](#).

Public Service Commission Approves the Sale of Indian Point

The New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) this week approved the sale of the Indian Point nuclear power facility to Holtec International subsidiaries, clearing the way for decommissioning and remediation of the site.

The PSC approved a negotiated agreement by the State of New York, County of Westchester, local governments, Public Utility Law Project, Riverkeeper, Entergy (the former owner of Indian Point), and Holtec which provides for the transfer of the nuclear power facility to Holtec for a swift, complete and safe decommissioning and site remediation.

Under the agreement, Holtec is required to:

- Maintain a minimum balance of no less than \$400 million in the decommissioning trust fund for 10 years.
- Return 50 percent of the money it recovers from the Department of Energy for spent fuel management costs to the decommissioning trust fund.
- Conduct site restoration and remediation under an order on consent with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which will oversee the hazardous materials and residual radiation cleanup at Indian Point, including through the use of an on-site monitor.
- Provide funding towards state and local emergency management and response.

Excelsior Scholarship Application Open for New Applicants for 2021-2022

The [application](#) for the Excelsior Scholarship for new applicants for the 2021-22 academic school year is now open. The Scholarship, in combination with other aid programs, allows eligible full-time students to attend a SUNY or CUNY two-year or four-year college tuition-free.

To be eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship for the 2021-22 academic year, household federal adjusted gross income can total up to \$125,000. Student must also be on track to graduate on time with an Associate's Degree in two years or a Bachelor's Degree in four years and complete 30 credits per year towards their program of study. Recipients must also plan to live in New York State for the length of time they received the award.

In addition, students eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship under the [Senator José Peralta New York State DREAM Act](#) may also begin applications.

Applications will be accepted through August 31, 2021.

Standard & Poor's Global Rating Lifts NYC's Bond Credit Outlook

Standard & Poor's Global Ratings (S&P) revised its outlook to stable on New York City's general obligation (GO) bonds and affirmed the AA rating assigned to its outstanding GO debt. According to Mayor Bill de Blasio, the return to a stable outlook reflects "recognition of reduced uncertainty of pandemic-caused credit stress, robust federal stimulus, and the effectiveness of the City's financial planning in the face of severe budgetary stress."

Specifically, S&P based its revision on the city's successful vaccination efforts, receipt of more than \$15 billion in stimulus that is invested in the current financial plan, and budget actions including the restoration of \$1.6 billion in budget reserves through the Retiree Health Benefits Trust and the removal of unspecified labor savings in Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022. Further, the rating agency recognized that the most recent New York State Budget allocates long awaited Campaign for Fiscal Equity education funding to New York City.

Additionally, S&P affirmed its A+ rating on debt issued by the Hudson Yards Infrastructure Corporation.

NYC Construction Industry Lost 74K Jobs During Pandemic

The New York City construction industry lost 74,000 jobs and \$9.8 billion in activity last year during shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new study by an industry group.

The COVID-19 safety restrictions that closed job sites resulted in a loss of \$5.5 billion in wages and 8.3 percent in commercial real estate, mortgage recording, and transfer taxes to the city, the analysis conducted for the Building Trades Employers Association said in published reports.

The building and construction trade industry represents 20 percent of the city's economy, 10 percent of jobs and 5 percent of wages, the report said.

Mayor de Blasio Appoints Dan Gross as Executive Director of Citywide Events

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week announced the appointment of Dan Gross as New York City's Executive Director of Citywide Events Coordination and Management (CECM). Gross, who has served as Senior Advisor for Citywide Events since 2018, succeeds outgoing Executive Director Ellyn Canfield, who has served in the role since 2018.

Gross began his career as special assistant to Senator John Kerry and has served in various roles on three presidential campaigns. He joined the de Blasio administration and has held multiple positions in the administration, both at the Office of Citywide Events and in City Hall.

He is a graduate of Marshall University.

Coming Up

New York State

Monday May 24th

Assembly Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nyassembly.gov/>), 2 p.m.

Senate Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nysenate.gov/>), 3 p.m.

Tuesday May 25th

Assembly Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nyassembly.gov/>), tbd

Senate Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nysenate.gov/>), 3 p.m.

Wednesday May 26th

Assembly Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nyassembly.gov/>), tbd

Senate Session, NYS Capitol Building, (<https://www.nysenate.gov/>), 11 a.m.

New York City

Monday May 24th

Committee on Finance & Subcommittee on Capital Budget, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 2), 10 a.m.

Tuesday May 25th

Committee on Finance, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 2), 10 a.m.

Committee on Land Use, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1), 11 a.m.

Thursday May 27th

Committee on Finance, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1), 9 a.m.

Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1), 10:30 a.m.

City Council Stated Meeting, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1), 1:30 p.m.

NYC Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform, Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 2), 6 p.m.

**“We believe in the ideas of family, mutuality,
the sharing of benefits and burdens
for the good of all, feeling one another’s pain,
sharing one another’s blessing
recognizing that at the heart of the matter
we are bound to each other.”
-Mario M. Cuomo-**

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