



This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

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"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul

In the News-New York State



Governor Hochul Appoints Assembly Ways & Means Secretary Blake Washington as State Budget Director

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced the appointment of Blake G. Washington as New York State Budget Director. Washington will begin his tenure this summer.

"With years of public service and a deep knowledge of the budget process, Blake is the perfect leader to take the helm at the Division of the Budget," Governor Hochul said. "I'm grateful to my friend Bob Megna for his extraordinary work and sage advice this year and look forward to seeing his continued leadership at the Rockefeller Institute of Government."



Budget Director
Blake Washington

Washington currently serves as Secretary to the New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee, where he advises the Speaker and Assemblymembers on all budget and fiscal matters. He has worked for the Assembly Ways and Means Committee since 2002, previously serving as Director of Budget Studies, Deputy Director of Budget Studies and as a Legislative Budget Analyst. Washington earned both his Master's and Bachelor's degrees from UAlbany.

Megna will return to his position as President of the Rockefeller Institute of Government and Senior Advisor to the Chancellor. He joined the Hochul Administration earlier this year as interim Budget Director.

Following the Governor's announcement, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie appointed Philip Fields to serve as Secretary to the Ways and Means Committee and Matthew Golden to serve as Director of Budget Studies.

Fields, who has worked for the Assembly for more than 30 years, most recently served as Budget Director. Prior to that he served as Deputy Fiscal Director and Senior Transportation Analyst for the Ways and Means Committee. He earned his Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Economics from the University at Albany.

Golden most recently served as Principal Deputy Director of Budget Studies. As a Deputy Director, he has led the teams for education, higher education, housing, transportation and environmental conservation. He began at the Assembly as a Legislative Budget analyst for education. He earned a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University.



Comptroller DiNapoli: Emergency Rental Assistance Program Rebounds After Slow Start

As of May 2023, the federal- and state-funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) distributed nearly \$3.1 billion to approximately 250,000 applicants statewide, according to a report by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

New York City's residents received most of the funding (81.2%), followed by residents in Suffolk County (2.9%), Westchester County (2.7%), and Erie County (2.5%). For most eligible households, ERAP covered up to 12 months of back rent, utility bills, and some future rent payments. It also prohibited evictions for up to a year and waived late fees.

According to the Comptroller, the City chose to participate in the state-run ERAP program, and its residents received far more than the \$645 million they would have received if the City chose to run its own program. New York City received \$2.5 billion for the ERAP program, a quarter of which went to Brooklyn, the most for any county in the state. The funds have assisted about 190,000 households citywide as of June 2023.

Comptroller DiNapoli's report noted that as of May 2023, rental households in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) units had not received any funding from ERAP as they were given low priority in legislation authorizing the program. Specifically, Comptroller DiNapoli found that city ZIP codes with NYCHA housing represented 78.9% of unpaid ERAP requests in the city.

The program closed to new applications in January 2023. The state's enacted FY24 budget includes \$356 million for households with existing ERAP applications that had not yet received funding. NYCHA is expected to receive \$128 million of those funds. The state has also committed an additional \$35 million for rental arrears earmarked for NYCHA, though the amount falls short of recent estimates of need, according to the Comptroller.

In the News-New York City



Mayor Adams, DOB Commissioner Oddo Unveil Plan to Remove Sheds & Scaffolding From NYC Sidewalks

The Adams Administration this week unveiled *Get Sheds Down*, an overhaul of rules governing sidewalk construction sheds and scaffolding that will remove structures from city streets more quickly while redesigning and reimagining those that are needed.

According to Mayor Eric Adams, New Yorkers are “stuck” with [approximately 9,000 active, permitted construction sheds](#) with an average age of nearly 500 days and spanning more than 2 million linear feet, or nearly 400 miles, about 3 percent of the city’s sidewalk space.

The goal of the *Get Sheds Down* plan is to change that paradigm — incentivizing property owners to expedite façade repairs and remove sheds with expired permits from public sidewalks. At the same time, the program aims to make traditional sheds more visually appealing when they are necessary and, where possible, replace them with effective but less intrusive alternatives.

The initiative includes:

- **Expanding the Use of Safety Netting** – The Department of Buildings (DOB) will post an official agency Buildings Bulletin with specific rules governing the use of safety containment netting as an approved form of pedestrian protection that can, in certain circumstances, be used in place of a traditional sidewalk shed. Façade safety netting is currently allowed in the city but rarely used, in part because of the absence of a standardized design that can be easily replicated, according to the Mayor. The bulletin will be posted in 2023 and provide clarity to design professionals and building owners around how netting can comply with standard DOB specifications and provide adequate public protection.

The New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) will pilot the use of safety netting in place of a traditional shed for the ongoing façade work in front of Queens County Supreme Court at 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY. The shed at this site was first permitted by DOB more than six years ago on April 21, 2017.

- **Reimagining Sidewalk Sheds** – DOB will issue a public request for proposals by the end of summer 2023 to solicit new design ideas from architecture and engineering experts. The agency will select new, alternative shed, netting, and carbon fiber wrap designs that are less obtrusive, while simultaneously offering overhead protection from any potential hazards. In addition, the Adams administration will make immediate, interim changes to the existing plywood and pipe sidewalk shed design.

- **Legislation to Charge Building Owners for Occupying Public Space** – The Adams Administration will partner with Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine to push legislation implementing new monthly financial penalties to building owners for most sidewalk sheds located in the public right of way that are not directly related to new construction or demolition projects. These recurring penalties would start 90 days after a shed is first permitted and issued monthly to the property until the shed is removed.
- **Doubling Down on Central Business Districts** – The Adams Administration will work to impose additional financial penalties on building owners located in select business districts when they fail to meet façade repair requirements under the Façade Inspection and Safety Program (Local Law 11). As proposed, property owners could be assessed a \$10,000 penalty when a shed is in place due to an unsafe façade and the property owner fails to meet any of the following deadlines during the repair process: filing a repair application within three months, obtaining required work permits within six months, and fully completing repairs within 24 months. These three fees would supplement existing monthly penalties issued by DOB when owners fail to make progress on façade repairs required under the Program.

The program will begin in Midtown Manhattan; Long Island City, Queens; Downtown Brooklyn; and Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

- **Strengthening Oversight of Shed Permits** – The Adams Administration and the City Council will implement new fees for each renewal of a sidewalk shed permit and increase penalties for sidewalk sheds that remain in place when the relevant permit has expired. DOB will also move to reduce the duration of a shed permit from 12 months to 90 days, requiring property owners to renew permits four times per year to keep their sheds properly permitted. Additionally, DOB will no longer grant penalty waivers for expired shed permit violations, further encouraging property owners to keep shed permits up to date with the more frequent renewal schedule.
- **Targeting Longstanding Sidewalk Sheds** – DOB will expand its Long Standing Shed program, which targets property owners with sheds that have been up for longer than five years. Properties in the Long Standing Shed program receive additional DOB scrutiny, which can range from regular site visits from enforcement inspectors to potential criminal court actions or affirmative litigation if they continue to disregard orders to make repairs to their buildings. DOB will expand the program to include properties with sheds that have been in place longer than three years. Properties in the Longstanding Shed program are also eligible for penalty waivers if work is completed and a shed is removed within an allotted timeframe.
- **Assisting Property Owners** - The Adams Administration will partner with Borough President Levine to explore the creation of a low-interest loan program to provide financial support for small property owners.

Briefs

State Advances Plan for Affordable Housing Units in Lower Manhattan at World Trade Center Site

Governor Kathy Hochul applauded this week's Public Authorities Control Board's approval of a mixed-use development project at 5 World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan that will include approximately 1,200 units of housing — one-third of which will be permanently affordable and a portion of which will be offered for New Yorkers impacted by 9/11.

The program will be developed under the direction of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ). It will also include approximately 10,000 square-feet of non-profit community space to be occupied by the Educational Alliance, more than 190,000 square-feet of commercial retail and office space, and a connection to the nearby Liberty Park.

One-third of the development's approximately 1,200 housing units will be made permanently affordable with affordability levels ranging from 40 percent of the area median income to 120 percent of the area median income. In addition, 20 percent of the affordable housing units will be offered to individuals living and working in Lower Manhattan during the 9/11 attacks and the immediate aftermath.

Funding for the program includes \$60 million from the State (\$40 million from the Hochul Administration and \$20 million from the State Legislature) and \$5 million from the Battery Park City Authority's Joint Purpose Fund. In addition, the Port Authority is seeking approval from the Board of Commissioners on a short-term rent deferral to enable the transaction to proceed.

Attorney General James Secures \$300,000 from CareCube for Wrongfully Charging New Yorkers for COVID-19 Tests

CareCube to Fully Refund New Yorkers Who Were Wrongfully Charged for COVID-19 Tests and Pay Penalties

New York Attorney General Letitia James this week announced that her office [secured](#) full refunds plus interest for New Yorkers who were wrongfully charged by CareCube, a health clinic in New York City, for COVID-19 tests.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) received numerous consumer complaints about CareCube charging patients for COVID-19 tests that should have been covered by insurance plans. The agreement concludes OAG's investigation into CareCube and requires the company to retain an independent auditor to identify and refund all patients who were wrongfully charged for COVID-19 tests from March 2020 to July 2023. CareCube must also pay the State \$300,000 in penalties.

At the height of the pandemic, CareCube operated more than 20 COVID-19 testing sites in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. The OAG also found that CareCube improperly charged patients \$125 for COVID-19 tests for children under 18. The investigation concluded that CareCube also provided inaccurate information about billing for patients who were asymptomatic and who at the time should have also received free testing.

Mayor Adams Appoints Lisa Zornberg as City Hall Chief Counsel

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced that Lisa Zornberg, former chief of the Criminal Division at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, will serve as City Hall chief counsel. Zornberg will assume her role following the planned departure of current City Hall Chief Counsel Brendan McGuire in August.

In addition to serving as both Mayor Adams' and City Hall's counsel, Zornberg will oversee 10 agencies: the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary, the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the Mayor's Office of Risk Management and Compliance, the New York City Business Integrity Commission, the New York City Commission On Human Rights, the New York City Department of Records and Information Services, the Office of the Administrative Justice Coordinator, and the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

Zornberg was the chief of the Criminal Division at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, where she supervised approximately 170 federal prosecutors and oversaw the office's criminal investigations and prosecutions, including of corporate and securities fraud, cybercrime, health care fraud, criminal violations of U.S. sanctions, Federal Corrupt Practices Act and RICO violations, terrorism, public corruption, construction fraud, art fraud, violence, and drug offenses. Zornberg first joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in 1998. She graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College and cum laude from Harvard Law School.

Mayor Adams Announces Creation of Office of Community Hiring

Mayor's Office of Contracts Services Counsel Doug Lipari to Serve as Executive Director

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has formed the City Office of Community Hiring in anticipation of enactment of State legislation. According to the Mayor, Community Hiring will allow the City to leverage its purchasing power, set hiring goals across city procurement contracts, and build on existing project labor agreements and agency-specific hiring programs.

The legislation (S7387-B) was introduced by Senator Kevin Parker and AM Stefani Zimmerman. It was passed by both houses of the legislature during the closing days of the legislative session and awaits consideration by Governor Kathy Hochul.

The City Office of Community Hiring will work with contractors to identify talent and provide employment and apprenticeship opportunities for low-income individuals and those residing in economically disadvantaged communities. Once fully implemented, an estimated 36,000 jobs will be created annually for low-income individuals and impacted communities, allowing city contractors to leverage the full talent of the New York City workforce.

The Mayor appointed Doug Lipari, Deputy General Counsel of the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, as Executive Director of the Office. According to the Mayor, Lipari played an instrumental role in negotiating the city's recent Project Labor agreements, which cover several billion dollars of construction work, and established the City's community hiring goals for the construction trades. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Duquesne University and a Juris Doctor from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

Mayor Adams Notches Early Victories in War on Rats

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Sanitation Department (DSNY) Commissioner Jessica Tisch, and Director of Citywide Rodent Mitigation Kathleen Corradi released new data this week showing a 20 percent decrease in 311 calls about rat activity across the City over the last two months, as compared to last year.

The significant drop took place from May to mid-July, in the period since the City fully implemented new set-out times and a corresponding collection schedule that minimizes the time trash sits on the curb and increases the use of containers citywide.

Additionally, the City's four rat mitigation zones (Bronx Grand Concourse, Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant/Bushwick, and East Village/Chinatown) saw rat sighting calls decrease by an average of more than 45 percent.

Langones Give \$200M Gift to NYU Grossman Long Island School of Medicine

Continues School's Free-Tuition Pledge

NYU Grossman Long Island School of Medicine has received a \$200 million gift from Kenneth and Elaine Langone, funding designed to ensure generations of medical students continue to receive a tuition-free medical education that is focused on primary care. The gift extends the school's guarantee of full-tuition scholarships to every student, regardless of need, in perpetuity.

"By providing our future doctors with an affordable education, we are investing in a brighter and healthier future for all, particularly here on Long Island, where Elaine and I grew up," Langone, the co-founder of Home Depot and the chair of the NYU Langone Board of Trustees, said in a statement.

Established four years ago, the medical school offers an accelerated three-year MD curriculum, whereas most other medical schools have a four-year curriculum.

The school is focused on training primary care physicians and aims to attract “bright minds from diverse backgrounds,” according to the news release.

Eighty-five percent of the school’s graduates remain in New York for their training after graduation.

US Senate Approves Bill to Fund the World Trade Health Center Program until 2029

The US Senate approved a measure Thursday to provide \$676 million to fund the World Trade Health Center Program and others affected by the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Spearheaded by New York Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, the measure is expected to pass the House of Representatives and be signed by President Biden.

“Before the smoke even cleared on 9/11 – before the rubble even quit burning – our first responders, firefighters, our police officers, EMTs, FBI agents, construction workers, were just running to danger, trying to do their job and save lives, Senator Schumer said in his [speech on the Senate floor](#). “For their sacrifice, many first responders developed severe health complications from working in the aftermath of the attack, lifelong injuries, serious cancers. Many of them are no longer with us, some of them were friends of mine..We created the World Trade Center Health Program so that 9/11 responders could afford necessary health care, but we can’t let funding for the program dry up. We cannot fail to properly care for those who answered the call of duty.”

This measure provides \$450 million to the World Trade Center Health Program and over \$200 million for the military employees who rushed to danger at the Pentagon and in Shanksville, according to the Senator.

Coming Up

New York State

Wednesday, August 2nd

NYS Board of Elections

Public Campaign Finance Board Meeting followed by SBOE Commissioners Meeting

State Board Offices, 40 North Pearl Street, 5th Floor, Albany, Noon

New York City

Tuesday, August 1st

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions, 250 Broadway – Committee Room – 14th Floor, 10 a.m.

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – Committee Room – 14th Floor, 11 a.m.

Committee on Land Use, 250 Broadway – Committee Room – 14th Floor, 12 p.m.

Committee on Civil Service and Labor, Council Chambers - City Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday, August 3rd

Committee on Finance, Committee Room - City Hall, 10 a.m.

City Council, Council Chambers - City Hall, 1:30 p.m.

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