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COVERING NEW YORK & 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



Safer Subways: Subway Crime on Track to Reach Lowest Levels in 16 Years

Governor Kathy Hochul yesterday announced that the New York City Subway is on track for its safest year in a generation.

With two weeks left in 2025, overall major crime in the transit system is down 5.2 percent from 2024 and 14.4 percent from 2019. Accounting for increases in ridership, there have been 1.65 major crimes per million riders in 2025, down roughly 30 percent from 2021 and comparable to pre-pandemic lows.

In 2022, Governor Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams committed to keep subway riders safe, and in each of the following four years, the rate of crime per rider has fallen. This year is on pace to be the second safest non-pandemic year in the subway system's history, eclipsed only by 2009, according to the Governor.

This reduction in crime comes as subway ridership continues to climb. On Thursday, December 11, the subway broke its post-pandemic ridership record, with 4.654 million customers, MTA figures show. Subway ridership is up nearly eight percent this year, with over 1.2 billion rides taken to date. Governor Hochul committed to further safety investments in 2026, including an additional \$77 million for enhanced NYPD subway patrols.

"Crime is down and ridership is up on subways thanks to major investments to keep New Yorkers safe and run better, more reliable transit," Governor Hochul said. "By supporting safety and mental health programs and upgrading transit service and infrastructure, we're making our subways safer for millions of daily riders and tens of thousands of transit workers. I am deeply grateful for the work of the men and women at the NYPD who keep riders safe and remain committed to advancing public safety efforts that have successfully driven down crime on subways across New York City."



Attorney General James Sues UPS for Cheating Seasonal Workers Out of Millions of Dollars

UPS Allegedly Underpaid Thousands of Seasonal Holiday Workers Through Systematic Campaign of Off-the-Clock Work, Inaccurate Timekeeping, and Wage Theft

New York Attorney General Letitia James this week [filed a lawsuit against United Parcel Service, Inc. \(UPS\)](#) for "repeatedly and persistently" stealing wages from thousands of seasonal delivery workers across New York state.

"UPS built its holiday business on the backs of workers who were not paid for their time and labor," said Attorney General James. "UPS's seasonal employees work brutal hours in the cold to deliver the holiday packages families across the country count on. Instead of compensating these workers fairly for their labor, UPS has played the Grinch. I am fighting to get these workers their money back and stop UPS from continuing its cruel and unlawful wage theft."

An investigation by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) found that for years, UPS has shortchanged seasonal workers by failing to record all hours worked, requiring widespread off-the-clock labor, and manipulating timekeeping systems to reduce paid hours. Attorney General James alleges that these unlawful practices deprived workers of millions of dollars and is asking the court to order UPS to pay restitution for current and former seasonal workers whose wages were unlawfully withheld.

"Joint Council 16 thanks the Attorney General's office for continuing to uphold the rights of working New Yorkers," said Thomas Gesualdi, President of International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 16. "Too often, we see corporations getting away with the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable workers. Teamsters, alongside Attorney General Letitia James, will always fight back against corporate greed and malfeasance. We are proud to stand together and bring UPS into compliance with the law. Wage theft is theft."



NY's Energy Planning Board Approves State Energy Plan

Plan Provides Pragmatic Approach for Energy-Related Decision Making

The State Energy Planning Board (Board), chaired by New York State Energy Research and Development Authority President and CEO Doreen Harris, voted unanimously this week to approve the State Energy Plan (Plan).

The [Plan](#) includes recommendations, which are based on findings from more than a year-long assessment of current systems and future energy needs through 2040, that will guide the State's energy-related decision making. According to NYSERDA, the Plan advances multiple objectives of the State including ensuring affordable, abundant, reliable, and clean energy while supporting economic development, equity, and a healthy environment. The plan supports the State's commitment to renewables while also noting that a variety of energy sources, like advanced nuclear and natural gas, will be needed to help New York meet its energy needs over the next 15 years.

“It is my opinion, and an opinion echoed in the plan, that an all-of-the-above energy approach isn't simply a choice, it's our reality,” said Rory Christian, chair and CEO of the Public Service Commission.

The state Energy Plan “takes into account the realities of the day, the realities of an assault by the federal government, certainly, but also the realities around the opportunity to advance technologies like advanced nuclear that are part right of a diverse clean and affordable energy system,” said NYSERDA CEO Harris.

More than 80,000 jobs are projected to be added in the energy sector during the next 15 years under the plan.

The plan cites five primary planning goals and associated actions:

- Delivering abundant, reliable, resilient and clean energy through a diverse mix of resources and supply infrastructure, while supporting energy efficiency and load flexibility.
- Providing affordable energy to households and equitable benefits – with a focus on reducing the upfront costs of efficiency and clean energy choices to help cut spending and lessen the burden for lower-income households.
- Supporting economic growth and competitiveness by investing in workforce development, meeting the needs of large energy users, and attracting new industry, including clean energy leaders.
- Strengthening partnerships across New York's innovation ecosystem to foster economic development, create jobs, and provide greater leverage for State investments.
- Continuing progress toward decarbonization and a clean energy economy.

Fact sheets summarizing the analyses are available on the State Energy Plan [website](#) .

In The News-New York City



Mayor-Elect Continues to Build His Team

Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani this week announced two more appointments to his Administration.

Sherif Soliman, the Chief Financial Officer at The City University of New York, has been named the incoming director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Soliman previously served as the Chief Policy and Delivery Officer in the Office of New York City Mayor Eric Adams and as the Director of the Mayor's Office of Policy and Planning.

Prior to his appointments in the Adams administration, Soliman was Commissioner of the Department of Finance under Mayor Bill de Blasio. In addition, he was previously Chief of Staff for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations, a senior adviser to the First Deputy Mayor, and Executive Director of the New York City Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform.

Mayor-elect Mamdani also announced Jahmila Edwards as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. Since 2015, Edwards has served as the associate director of District Council 37, the largest public employee union in New York City. She previously held positions at the Department of Education and the New York City Public Advocate.



Got Stuff Done: Adams Administration Leaves Behind a Safer, More Affordable City for New Yorkers

The Adams Administration celebrated its four-year tenure this week, recounting its accomplishments including “creating a safer, more affordable City.” Mayor Eric Adams recounted his “... four years of responsible, common-sense leadership, as the Adams administration leaves behind a city where working-class New Yorkers can still get ahead.”

The Mayor commemorated his accomplishments with a time capsule buried near City Hall. The time capsule — which includes objects selected by each senior leadership team to represent their work over the last four years — will be opened in a decade. Inside this capsule, New Yorkers in 2035 will find:

- ***A miniature key*** - placed by the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce team - to memorialize their historic "City of Yes for Housing Opportunity" initiative and all they did to create, preserve, and plan over 433,000 homes.
- ***A miniature trash container*** - placed by the Deputy Mayor for Operations Team - to memorialize their efforts moving trash bags off the streets and into container bins and bringing rat sightings down.

- ***An identification card from The Roosevelt Hotel*** - placed by the Deputy Mayor for Administration and Chief of Staff team - to memorialize their work to shelter, feed, clothe, educate, vaccinate, and support over 245,000 migrants from over 160 countries who arrived in New York City in a matter of years seeking support.
- ***A onesie and baby hat*** - placed by the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services team - to memorialize their work on maternal health, homelessness, and all they did to ensure no child is born in a shelter.
- ***A graduation tassel*** - placed by the Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives team - to memorialize the launch of their universal after-school program, investments in early childhood education programs, and efforts to support young people across the city.
- ***A padlock*** - placed here by the Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Affairs team - to memorialize their new powers secured from the state Legislature to close down over 1,600 illegal smoke shops.
- ***A piece of a drone*** - placed here by the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety team - to memorialize their work using new technology and innovation to keep New Yorkers safe.
- ***A miniature Staten Island ferry*** - placed by the Chief Counsel team - to memorialize their work closing union contracts with 99 percent of city workers, including the Staten Island Ferry officers who had gone without a new contract for 13 years.
- ***An e-bike speedometer*** - placed by the First Deputy Mayor team - to memorialize their work navigating this new form of transit and bringing a sense of order to city streets.
- ***A prism*** - placed here by the Deputy Mayor for Communications team -to symbolize how, like light shining through a prism, their work “reflected and refracted” across the city through different mediums to reach different communities, including via text message, newsletter, a podcast, a radio program, new social media platforms, ethnic and community media outlets, and more.
- ***A vinyl record*** - placed by Mayor Adams - to memorialize how his Administration’s work broke multiple records over the course of his term.



Bills Approved by the City Council

Introduction 570-B, sponsored by **Council Member Gale A. Brewer**, would create a New York City land bank, pending state approval, to acquire and manage vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, and foreclosed properties.

Introduction 902-B, also known as the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), sponsored by **Council Member Sandy Nurse**, would give qualified nonprofits, or joint ventures between qualified nonprofits and other entities, a first opportunity to submit an offer and purchase certain residential properties when an owner plans to sell the property before it is placed on the open market.

Introduction 910-B, also known as the Construction Justice Act, sponsored by **Council Member Carmen De La Rosa**, would require housing developers of certain city-funded projects to pay their workers a minimum combined wage and essential benefits package of at least \$40 per hour, with no less than \$25 for

wages. It would also require developers to engage in best efforts to ensure that at least 30% of workers on these projects are New York City residents.

Introduction 958-A, sponsored by **Speaker Adrienne Adams**, would approximately double the production of affordable homeownership opportunities financed by the City by requiring that at least 4 percent of all newly constructed affordable units be for homeownership.

Introduction 994-A, sponsored by **Council Member Lincoln Restler**, would require that, by June 1, 2030, owners of tenant-occupied buildings provide cooling systems capable of maintaining 78 degrees Fahrenheit in rooms in which tenants sleep, upon the request of the tenant.

Introduction 1120-B, sponsored by **Majority Leader Amanda Fariás**, would set timelines for decisions regarding the sale of co-op apartments, requiring the co-op to acknowledge receipt of application materials within 15 days and provide notice of whether it has consented to the sale within 45 days after the application is complete.

Introduction 1433-A, sponsored by **Council Member Eric Dinowitz**, would require that, starting July 1, 2027, at least 25% of rental affordable units financed by the City be two-bedroom units and 15% be three-bedroom units.

Introduction 1443-A, sponsored by **Council Member Sandy Nurse**, would require that, starting July 1, 2027, 50% of newly constructed rental units financed by the City be affordable for very low-income households, and at least 30% for extremely low-income households.

Briefs

NYS Gaming Commission Approves Three NYC Casinos

The state Gaming Commission this week approved licenses for three New York City casinos, paving the way for gaming facilities in the Bronx and Queens. Licenses were approved for Bally's Corporation doing business as Bally's Bronx, Queens Future, LLC doing business as Hard Rock Metropolitan Park, and Genting New York, LLC doing business as Resorts World New York City.

In The Bronx, Bally's Corporation will build a 3-million-square-foot Ferry Point resort that includes a 500,000-square-foot casino, a 500-room hotel, and a 2,000-person event center. The facility is projected to open in 2030.

Hard Rock Metropolitan Park plan includes 286,208 square feet of gaming space, a 5,650-person theater-style venue, and 25 acres of public green space. It is also scheduled to open in 2030.

Resorts World — which operates a “racino” with electronic-only gambling at Aqueduct Racetrack — will expand its operations to include a 7,000-seat entertainment venue and a 500,000-square-foot casino. The first phase of its expansion is slated for next year, with the second phase completed in 2030.

All three projects will be subject to an independent monitor.

“The three approved casinos will generate billions of dollars for the MTA and education, create tens of thousands of jobs and deliver real benefits to their surrounding communities,” Governor Kathy Hochul said. “Each of the projects made significant commitments to their communities and to New York State, and the Gaming Commission was clear that they will hold these projects accountable and make sure they keep their promises. That is what New Yorkers expect and what they deserve.”

Mayor Adams Announces Reappointments and Appointments to Rent Guidelines Board

New York City Mayor Eric Adams yesterday announced four appointments and reappointments to the Rent Guidelines Board. Arpit Gupta has been reappointed as a public representative while Christina Smyth has been reappointed as an owner representative. Additionally, Lliam Finn has been appointed as a public representative and Sagar Sharma has been appointed as a tenant representative.

Arpit Gupta is associate professor of finance at New York University Stern School of Business and holds a B.S. in mathematics from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in finance and economics from Columbia Business School. Gupta was previously appointed to the Rent Guidelines Board in 2022 and is being reappointed as a public representative.

Christina Smyth, Esq. is the founder and owner of Smyth Law PC, a real estate law practice that represents multifamily residential building owners, operators, and management companies throughout Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. She is also an adjunct instructor at the New York University Real Estate Institute and holds a B.A. in political science from Fordham University and a J.D. from St. John’s University School of Law. Smyth was previously appointed to the Rent Guidelines Board in 2022 and is being re-appointed as an owner representative.

Sagar Sharma is the deputy director at Legal Services NYC. Sharma earned a B.A. in political science from The City College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and a J.D. from CUNY Law School. He has been appointed as a tenant representative.

Lliam Finn is a senior financial advisor with Merrill Lynch. Finn received his M.B.A. from Fordham University and earned a B.S. in economics from the United States Naval Academy. He has been appointed as a public representative.

September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Updates “Work-Life Expectancy” Definitions

The September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) has updated the “Work-life expectancy” section of [Policies and Procedures Section 2.3](#), which details the methodology used to calculate lost earnings. These updates took effect December 17, 2025.

The update clarifies the distinction between the victim’s age at disability/death onset and the work-life expectancy date calculated by the model. Although the threshold to award lost earnings is age 70 or younger (age 65 in the case of a reclassification), the VCF calculates the lost earnings award through the default work-life expectancy calculated by the model, even if it extends past age 70.

In Policies and Procedures Section 2.2c and 2.3(4), the VCF has removed language that certain issues, such as extending the work-life expectancy date, are best addressed at an appeal hearing. Submitting complete information to support your claim at the outset, such as providing a roadmap or memorandum containing relevant evidence and any supporting documentation, helps ensure a full review and minimizes the need for appeal hearings.

Please note that the VCF is converting pending appeals involving economic loss to amendments if they can be resolved without an appeal hearing. If this applies to you, you will be notified accordingly.

N.Y. National Guard Members who Responded to 9/11 Attacks Can Apply for Disability Benefits

Members of New York's military force who served on state active duty responding to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in Manhattan can now register to file for potential disability benefits.

Former members of the Army and Air National Guard, New York Naval Militia and New York Guard involved in the rescue, recovery or cleanup operations at the World Trade Center site between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 11, 2002, and have not been reimbursed through the federal September 11 Victim Compensation fund, are eligible to register for the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs World Trade Center Benefits Program.

They have until September 11, 2026, to file paperwork, which would enable them to receive state-funded pension benefits if they develop an eligible 9/11-related illness. Registering preserves the right of service members to file a claim in the future if they develop certain illnesses.

The pension benefit was approved by the state Legislature and added to state Military Law in 2023, according to the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs. Survivors of guard personnel who die as a result of a 9/11-related condition may also be eligible for benefits.

Qualifying conditions, according to the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs, include:

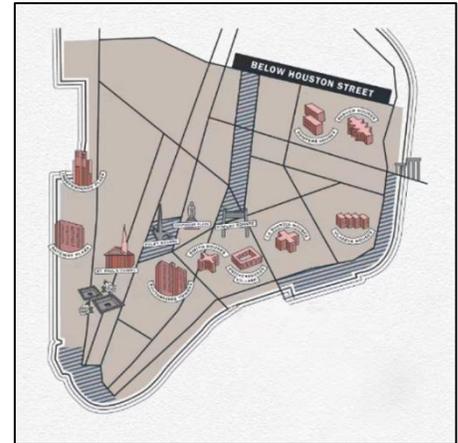
- Upper respiratory tract (rhinitis, sinusitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis, vocal cord disease, upper airway hyper-reactivity and tracheobronchitis, or a combination of such conditions)
- Lower respiratory tract (bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, reactive airway dysfunction syndrome and various forms of pneumonitis - hypersensitivity, granulomatous, or eosinophilic)
- Gastroesophageal tract (esophagitis and reflux disease)
- Psychological (post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or any combination of these conditions)
- Skin (conjunctivitis, contact dermatitis or burns, infectious, irritant, allergic, idiopathic or non-specific in nature, caused by exposure or aggravated by exposure)
- New onset diseases (resulting from exposure, as such diseases may occur in the future, including cancer, asbestos-related diseases, heavy metal poisoning, musculoskeletal disease and chronic psychological diseases)

Approximately 12,000 members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia and Guard responded to the attacks between September 11, 2001, and September 11, 2002. To file for the benefit, or to submit the application of notice, can be found online [here](#).

9/11 Solidarity Network Helps Claimants Obtain Vital Documentation for 9/11 Compensation Fund Claims

It is becoming increasingly difficult for some claimants to find documents to prove their presence at an eligible location so many years after the attacks. In fact, earlier this year, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) went to the State Legislature for assistance in verifying its members' 9/11 service. On September 10th, Governor Kathy Hochul signed chapter 390 of the Laws of 2025 which establishes a presumption that a New York City Police Pension Fund member participated in the rescue, recovery, and clean-up operations at the World Trade Center, unless their employer proves the contrary by competent evidence.

The 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) understands this challenge and encourages individuals who were present in the exposure zone to gather and save their proof of presence documents now, even if they aren't currently ill or planning to file a claim.



9/11 Exposure Zone

To help members of the general public verify their 9/11 service, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC's affiliate [Pitta & Baione LLP](#) is developing the 9/11 Solidarity Network, a system where members can act as witnesses for one another in verifying 9/11 service. The network utilizes sworn *Witness Presence Statements* from people who can attest to a claimant's presence which are accepted as secondary evidence by the VCF when primary documentation is unavailable.

By participating, individuals can provide the crucial testimony a fellow member might need while also securing potential support for their own future claims. This initiative formalizes the collective memory of its members to help ensure no one is left to prove their presence alone.

For more information regarding the 9/11 Solidarity Network, please contact Pitta & Baione at 844-901-1262.

Coming Up

New York State

There are currently no meetings scheduled at the time of this publication

New York City

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