



“No Man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hour of labor short enough so that after his day’s work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community, to help in carrying the general load” Governor Theodore Roosevelt.

In The News-New York City



New York Launches Public Awareness Campaign to Educate New Yorkers on Access to Behavioral Health Treatment

‘Real Care, Real Access to Behavioral Health Services’ Campaign Educates Consumers About Their Rights Under New York’s Network Adequacy Rules

Governor Kathy Hochul announced the launch of a public awareness campaign to educate New Yorkers on regulations that improve access to mental health and substance use disorder care.

The ‘Real Care, Real Access to Behavioral Health Services’ campaign highlights regulations that give New Yorkers with qualifying health plans access to initial outpatient appointments for behavioral health care within ten business days of the request and require insurers to help insured individuals access care. The campaign also includes [a new website](#) with information about patient rights and how to file a complaint if those rights are violated.

“Every New Yorker deserves to have access to the care they need, and it is crucial now more than ever that the State continues to expand services,” Governor Hochul said. “By launching this public awareness campaign, more people across the state will be able to know their rights when it comes to behavioral health treatments and find more affordable options for providers.”

Led by the State’s Department of Financial Services and Office of Mental Health, the statewide public education campaign is aimed at encouraging more New Yorkers to access in-network mental health and substance use disorder care and understand their rights under these rules. Through June, multi-lingual ads will be featured on multiple digital and out-of-home platforms, including [social media](#); transportation signage and digital kiosks; traditional television and radio; and on other digital platforms, including search and streaming services.

The campaign includes raising public awareness of the State’s regulations requiring:

Timely Appointments

New Yorkers covered by individual and group health insurance policies that are subject to New York law, including policies purchased through the New York State of Health Marketplace, Medicaid Managed Care, Child Health Plus, and the Essential Plan, are entitled to see a mental health or substance use disorder provider within ten business days for initial outpatient visits, or seven calendar days for a follow-up after being discharged from a hospital or emergency room.

Help Finding Providers

Health plans must post on their websites an accurate and up-to-date directory of their health care provider network, including the provider's city/town and zip code, telehealth options, languages spoken if the provider is a health care professional, any restrictions concerning the conditions treated or ages served, and any affiliations the provider has with participating facilities, among other information. The regulations also require health plans to have dedicated employees who can help their insureds find an in-network provider that treats the insured's specific behavioral health condition. Additionally, the health plans must provide a list of in-network providers available to treat the insured's specific behavioral health condition within three business days, following the request of an insured or the insured's designee.

Out-of-Network Care

If an insured is unable to schedule an appointment with an in-network behavioral health care provider within certain specified wait times because there is no such provider available, then the insured, or the insured's designee, may submit an access complaint to the health plan. The health plan has three business days from receipt of the complaint to locate an in-network provider and is able to meet the appointment wait times.

If no in-network behavioral health care provider is available after an insured or the insured's designee files an access complaint, the health plan must approve care from an out-of-network provider that can meet the appointment wait times. If an out-of-network provider is approved because in-network care is not available, the insured only must pay the in-network copay, coinsurance, and deductible.



Attorney General James Leads Lawsuit to Stop Trump Administration's Latest Tariffs

New York Attorney General Letitia James this week led a coalition of 21 other attorneys general and the governors of Kentucky and Pennsylvania in [suing to stop the latest attempt by the Trump administration to impose tariffs](#).

Shortly after the Supreme Court [ruled in favor of Attorney General James and 11 other attorneys general](#) who sued to stop the president's tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the President issued a new proclamation imposing tariffs on a range of countries and goods using Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Attorney General James and the coalition argue in their lawsuit that the tariffs do not meet the requirements of Section 122 and violate the Constitution's protection of the separation of powers. Attorney General James and the coalition are seeking a court order declaring the tariffs imposed under Section 122 unlawful and ordering the federal government to issue refunds to states for the tariff costs that they paid as a result of the President's proclamation.

According to the Attorney General, no president has ever attempted to impose tariffs using Section 122. The Attorney General asserted that the law is specifically designed to allow limited tariffs to address certain monetary crises, including a significant “balance of payments” deficit – a distinct economic problem that can occur in a fixed-rate exchange system like the gold standard. However, the U.S. abandoned such an exchange system half a century ago. As a result, balance of payments problems no longer occur. Attorney General James and the coalition assert that the president’s primary rationale for imposing these tariffs – the country’s trade deficit – is not a legitimate reason for imposing tariffs under Section 122. In fact, the administration admitted during the lawsuit against the president’s IEEPA tariffs that trade deficits “are conceptually distinct from balance of payments deficits.”

In addition, the lawsuit asserts the president’s tariffs violate other requirements in Section 122. The law requires new tariffs to be applied consistently in several ways, including that they are not applied discriminatorily. Yet the new tariffs exempt many goods from Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. They also include 84 pages of specific product exceptions.

The lawsuit seeks an order from the United States Court of International Trade declaring the Section 122 tariffs illegal and preventing them from being implemented, as well as an order to refund the states the costs of these tariffs while they were in effect.

Joining Attorney General James in filing this lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the governors of Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

In The News-New York City



NYC Office of the Mayor

Mayor Mamdani and Governor Hochul Announce First Four Communities to Receive Free 2-K Seats

Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Governor Kathy Hochul announced the first four communities that will receive free 2-K seats this fall. The program will launch with 2,000 free seats and expand to full universality within four years.

Earlier this year, Gov. Hochul committed more than \$1.2 billion to support early childhood care and education in New York City, including \$73 million to fund the first set of free 2-K seats. That investment will grow to \$425 million next year. By fall 2027, 2-K is expected to serve approximately 12,000 children across all five boroughs, with the goal of reaching every two-year-old in the city at full implementation.

The initial four communities were selected based on economic need, projected child care demand, existing access gaps, provider capacity and readiness. These first 2,000 seats are designed to serve families in high-need neighborhoods while ensuring programs launch responsibly and sustainably, with inclusive access for children with disabilities and families in temporary housing, including shelters.

The four initial communities are:

- **School District 6:** Washington Heights, Inwood and Hamilton Heights as well as parts of Manhattanville.
- **School District 10:** Fordham, Belmont, Norwood, Marble Hill, Morris Heights, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, Van Cortlandt Village and Kingsbridge as well as parts of Kingsbridge Heights, Bedford Park, Mount Hope, Claremont- Bathgate & East Tremont.
- **School Districts 18 and 23:** Canarsie, Rugby-Remsen Village, Brownsville and Ocean Hill as well as parts of East Flatbush- Farragut and Prospect Lefferts Garden-Wingate.
- **School District 27:** Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Howard Beach and Rockaways as well as parts Lindenwood and Springfield Gardens North.

Services will begin in September 2026, with rolling enrollment throughout the fall to accommodate children turning two at different points in the year. In the coming days, the City will begin planning efforts with child care centers and family child care providers in these four communities. Additional details on participating providers will be released in the weeks ahead.

Briefs

Governor Hochul Announces Two Agency Appointments: Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services & Higher Education Services Corporation

Governor Kathy Hochul this week nominated Terry O’Leary to serve as Acting Commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), and Doris B. González to serve as Acting President of the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC). Both will serve in acting roles until confirmed by the State Senate.

Prior to being nominated as Commissioner, O’Leary has served as Executive Deputy Commissioner of DHSES for a decade. In addition to overseeing the Division’s day-to-day operations, he has helped lead New York’s response to natural disasters, including Tropical Storms Isaias, Ida, Fred and Debby, flooding on Lake Ontario and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, he served as the Deputy Secretary for Public Safety for the New York State Executive Chamber where he was responsible for overseeing the policy and operations of the State’s public safety agencies, including DHSES, the New York State Police, the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, and the Division of Criminal Justice Services. O’Leary began his career with New York State as the Director of the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement within the Department of Health.

Prior to his time with New York State, Mr. O’Leary served as an Assistant District Attorney in the New York County District Attorney’s Office between 2001 and 2011, where he was assigned to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor.

González originally joined HESC as the Executive Vice President in August 2023. Before joining HESC, she served as the Director of Delivery Management with Kyndryl Holdings, Inc., a multinational information technology infrastructure services provider. González also previously served for 25 years in numerous leadership roles in corporate philanthropy at the IBM Corporation.

New York Law Requiring Landlords to Accept Section 8 Vouchers Ruled Unconstitutional

New York’s state Supreme Court Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department released a ruling Thursday that the current Section 8 voucher program is a violation of landlords’ constitutional rights and, therefore, unconstitutional.

“As a consequence of this law, landlords are now forced to consent to governmental searches of their rental properties and records,” according to the Court. “Given that, for the reasons that follow, the source-of-income discrimination law violates landlords’ Fourth Amendment rights to be free from unlawful searches, we are constrained to conclude that the law is unconstitutional on its face.”

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, the chair of the state Assembly Committee on Housing, called the decision “dreadful” that has the “potential to upend New York’s social safety net”

"While many landlords have and will continue to do the right thing, this dreadful decision has the potential to upend New York's social safety net," said Assemblymember Rosenthal. "As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing, I urge Attorney General James to appeal this devastating decision on behalf of New Yorkers."

The decision is under review in State Attorney General Letitia James’s office.

“Every New Yorker deserves access to safe and dignified housing regardless of their income or background," Attorney General James said. "Housing vouchers help thousands of New Yorkers stay in their homes, make ends meet, and raise their families. My office has always fought to protect New Yorkers’ right to housing. We are reviewing today’s decision.”

Governor Hochul Announces Nominee for Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced her intention to formally nominate Dennis M. Walcott to the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government.

The current President and CEO of the Queens Public Library, Walcott previously served as the state-appointed monitor of the East Ramapo School District and as Chancellor of the New York City Department of

Education. He also served as Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development during the Bloomberg Administration and as the President and CEO of the New York Urban League for over 12 years.

He graduated from the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut with a bachelor's degree and a master's in education in 1973 and 1974, respectively. In 1980, he received his master's in social work from Fordham University.

In accordance with the Independent Review Committee's procedures, the public will have 21 business days to provide comments on the nominee. The nominee will then be presented to the Independent Review Committee, comprised of the deans of New York's law schools, for review of his qualifications to serve on the Commission.

The NYS Office for New Americans Expands New Americans' Hotline

The New York State Office for New Americans (ONA) announced an expansion of the New York State New Americans Hotline (1-800-566-7636) which will now assist callers on Saturdays and Sundays from 9am to 5pm (EST). The hotline has also expanded its hours of operation Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm (EST).

The New Americans Hotline is managed by Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of NY under a grant with the New York State Office for New Americans. The hotline is staffed by multilingual call operators as well as a full-time immigration attorney.

All information provided by the hotline is free and anonymous. Assistance is available in over 200 languages. Representatives from the hotline can assist with making referral to individuals in immigration detention who are seeking free legal services. The hotline can also provide information on available community workshops and training, including Know Your Rights and family preparedness. Callers to the hotline can also report cases of immigration fraud.

Since January 2025, the hotline has answered 21,159 calls and made 42,207 referrals.

Mayor Mamdani Appoints Commissioner of Small Business Services

Mayor Zohran Mamdani this week appointed Kenny Minaya as the Administration's Commissioner of Small Business Services.

Minaya has served as the First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) since 2022, after joining the agency in 2016 as Deputy Chief of Staff. Before joining City government, Minaya worked at Catholic Migration Services and Make the Road New York, where he represented immigrant tenants in Brooklyn and Queens.

NYC Council Forms Animal Welfare Caucus

City Council Speaker Julie Menin and Council Member Harvey Epstein announced the formation of the Council's Animal Welfare Caucus, dedicated to advocacy for the humane treatment of animals in the city and advancing legislation to make pet ownership more affordable.

“The creation of the Animal Welfare Caucus ensures that responsible ownership and pet care affordability have a clear and consistent voice within the Council,” Speaker Menin said. “At a time when veterinary costs and pet care expenses are rising, we must advance policies that protect animals while also supporting the families who love them. I’m proud to partner with Council Member Epstein and advocates across the city to build a more compassionate, animal-friendly New York.”

Staten Island District Attorney Calls for Increase in NYPD staffing

Staten Island saw a 12% decrease in NYPD officers since February 2025, with 87 fewer officers patrolling the borough, according to District Attorney Michael McMahon. In mid-late February 2025, 717 uniformed officers served on Staten Island. As of February 2026, that number was reduced to 630.

District Attorney McMahon asserts that Staten Island needs a minimum of 850 officers, according to published reports.

“You don’t have cops out in patrol cars, you don’t have police officers on the street and so that sense of prevention, that presence is lost and investigations are delayed...” District Attorney McMahon said in article in *Advance/SILive*. “Not only do we see a decrease from last year to this year but looking at the last four or five Februaries in a row, we are now at the lowest number in, you know, half a decade.

According to the District Attorney’s office, the number of uniformed officers deployed to Staten Island were:

- February 2021 - 780
- February 2022 - 743
- February 2023 - 693
- February 2024 - 752
- February 2025 - 717
- February 2026 – 630.

In February, Mayor Zohran Mamdani released his [Financial Plan Detail for 2026–2030](#) which called for “discontinuing the phased hiring of 5,000 additional police officers” as approved under the Adam Administration in October 2025.

“They’re not out there creating work for themselves, they’re doing what is necessary and you need the right personnel to do that,” District Attorney McMahon explained. “...we saw, you know, 25 years ago, that 40,000 is the right number.”

According to the *Advance/Silive* report, an NYPD spokesman indicated the NYPD anticipates assigning officers from the graduating academy class in March to Staten Island.

“Staten Island is feeling the effects of our citywide staffing problem, which is the result of ongoing high attrition,” PBA President Patrick Hendry told the *Advance/SILive* in a statement. “The NYPD needs to have enough police officers to provide adequate coverage in every neighborhood of every borough. To do that, we need our city leaders to work with us to improve police officers’ pay, benefits and quality of life to help keep them on the job.”

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, March 9th

New York State Board of Regents Meeting, 89 Washington Ave – Room 217 – Albany, 9 a.m.

Senate Insurance Committee Meeting, 124 Capital, 11:30 a.m.

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber, Albany, 3 p.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

Tuesday, March 10th

Senate Aging Committee Meeting, 904 Legislative Office Building, 9 a.m.

Senate Children and Families Committee Meeting, 804 Legislative Office Building, 9:30 a.m.

New York State Board of Regents Meeting, 89 Washington Ave – Room 217 – Albany, 9:45 a.m.

Senate Local Government Committee Meeting, 904 Legislative Office Building, 10 a.m.

Senate Agriculture Committee Meeting, 124 Capital, 10:39 a.m.

Senate Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee Meeting, 912 Legislative Office Building, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Higher Education Committee Meeting, 124 Capital, 11 a.m.

Senate Civil Service and Pensions Committee Meeting, 123 Capital, 1:30 a.m.

Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee Meeting, 611 Legislative Office Building, 12 p.m.

Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Meeting, 124 Capital, 12:30 p.m.

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber, Albany, 3 p.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

Wednesday, March 11th

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber, Albany, 3 p.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

Thursday, March 13th

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber, Albany, 11 a.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

New York City

Monday, March 9th

Committee on Housing and Buildings, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Immigration, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

Committee on Civil Service and Labor, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 1 p.m.

Committee on General Welfare, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, March 10th

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10 a.m.

Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10:45 a.m.

Committee on Finance, Committee Room – City Hall, 11 a.m.

City Council Stated Meeting, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 11th

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 11 a.m.

Thursday, March 12th

Committee on Aging, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 12:30 p.m.

Committee on Rules, Privileges, Elections, Standards and Ethics, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

Friday, March 13th

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Civil and Human Rights,
250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 11:30 a.m.

Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 12:30 p.m.

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