



This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

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March 10, 2017 Edition



In the News – New York State

The One House Budgets Are Coming!! Take II

Senate and Assembly to Release One House Budget Bills Monday

Legislative Budget Conference Committee Meetings to Follow Budgets

12 Session Days Remain Before the Start of the New Fiscal Year

March - April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

 Indicates Session Day

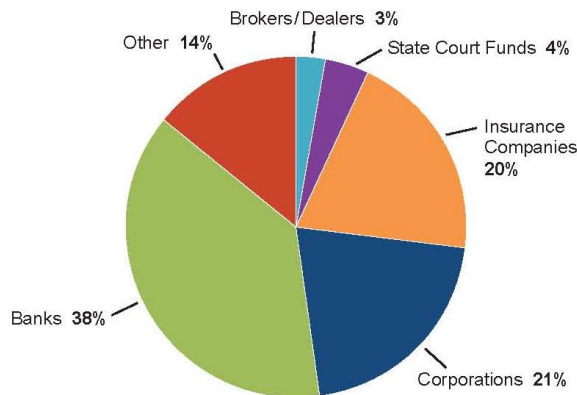
 Indicates Start of Fiscal Year

Comptroller DiNapoli: Office Has \$14.5 Billion in Unclaimed Funds; Urges New Yorkers to Claim Lost Money

Office Returned a Nationwide Record of \$452 million in SFY 2015-16

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli this week announced that his office has over \$14.5 billion in unclaimed funds and urged New Yorkers to see if any of it belongs to them. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015-16, Comptroller DiNapoli's office set a national record for the third consecutive year for the most unclaimed funds returned in one year totaling \$452 million.

Sources of Unclaimed Funds
SFY 2015-16



According to the Comptroller there are currently more than 35 million unclaimed funds accounts, some dating back to the 1940s. Excluding New York City, the majority of people who are owed money can be found on Long Island, where there is over \$326 million in 590,983 accounts owed to Nassau County residents and over \$240 million (524,316 accounts) for residents in Suffolk County. Westchester County has over \$250 million (448,529 accounts) owed to residents, followed by Erie County (over \$113 million owed to 241,221 accounts) and Monroe County (over \$82 million owed to 196,890 accounts).

In his annual [report](#) on unclaimed funds, Comptroller DiNapoli released regional data on the total amount of unclaimed funds paid by county in SFY 2015-16. Outside of New York City, Comptroller DiNapoli's office paid out the most to Long Island residents (over \$58 million to 69,551 accounts), followed by the Capital-Saratoga region (\$42.6 million to 15,283 accounts) and the Hudson Valley (\$31.6 million to 46,478 accounts).

The majority of unclaimed funds accounts stem from old bank accounts but also include stocks, life insurance, uncashed checks and gift cards. State law requires that abandoned money or securities be transferred to the Comptroller's office if there is no activity in an account for a period which is typically three years. Comptroller DiNapoli serves as the custodian of these unclaimed funds until they're claimed by the rightful owners.

In the News – New York City



\$1.4 Billion Vital Brooklyn Initiative to Transform Central Brooklyn

Governor Andrew Cuomo this week announced a \$1.4 billion initiative to rejuvenate the Central Brooklyn area. The program, “Vital Brooklyn,” will focus on eight integrated areas:

➤ Community-Based Healthcare	\$700 million
➤ Affordable Housing	\$563 million
➤ Open Space & Recreation	\$140 million
➤ Resiliency	\$23 million
➤ Comprehensive Education & Youth Development	\$1.2 million
➤ Community-Based Violence Prevention	\$800,000
➤ Economic Empowerment & Job Creation	\$692,000
➤ Healthy Food	\$325,000

“For too long investment in underserved communities has lacked the strategy necessary to end systemic social and economic disparity, but in Central Brooklyn those failed approaches stop today,” Governor Cuomo said. “We are going to employ a new holistic plan that will bring health and wellness to one of the most disadvantaged parts of the state.”

Most of the elements of the initiative are contained in the Governor’s proposed executive budget, or in previously released proposals. For example, the affordable housing initiative is part of the 10-year, \$20 billion affordable housing plan announced in last year’s State of the State address and health care proposal was passed as part of last year’s budget.

Community-Based Health Care (\$700 million)

According to the Governor, compared to the rest of the state, Central Brooklyn lacks access to primary care doctors and other critical mental health services. Current statistics show that there are only 55 primary care physicians per 100,000 people in Central Brooklyn. Also, there are 497 Emergency Room visits in Central Brooklyn for every 1,000 people. Under *Vital Brooklyn* the State will develop a 36-site ambulatory care network which will include partnerships with existing community-based providers.

This week the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) announced the availability of \$700 million in funds under the Health Care Facility Transformation Program: Kings County, established pursuant to Section 2825-a of the Public Health Law (see page 6 for details).

Affordable Housing (\$563 million)

Under *Vital Brooklyn* the State will build 3,000+ new multi-family affordable housing units at six State-owned sites. The program includes supportive services and housing for the developmentally disabled, seniors and formerly incarcerated.

Resiliency (\$23 million)

Under *Vital Brooklyn* the State will reduce energy costs for homeowners and businesses through 382 solar projects, new cogeneration projects, and the Advance the Clarkson Avenue Microgrid Project, linking Kings County Hospital, SUNY Downstate Medical Center and Kingsboro Psychiatric Center with a resilient source of on-site backup power.

Community-Based Violence Prevention (\$800,000)

Under *Vital Brooklyn* the State will expand violence prevention programs, create new opportunities for youth engagement and increase support for victims by including community-based SNUG initiatives that conduct outreach.

Economic Development & Job Creation (\$692,000)

Under *Vital Brooklyn* the State will be promoting new hires through the Brooklyn Unemployment Strikeforce, Green City Force AmeriCorps program, Unemployed Workers Training Program and increase training through CUNY's Workforce Development Initiative. In addition, the State will deploy Mobile Command Center to increase financial literacy.



9 New Ways to Generate Revenue

Independent Budget Office (IBO) this week released its annual volume of budget options to general review in New York City. This year's version, which was released as a web-based publication, includes over 90 budget options, nine of which are being presented for the first time.

As with past proposals, IBO neither supports nor rejects the budget options presented. Its role is to examine options and make estimates of potential savings or revenues.

Co-Locate New Charter Schools Within Department of Education Buildings: Currently, there are 101 DOE buildings with utilization rates less than or equal to 70 percent. Under this option, the DOE would return to primarily using available space in existing DOE buildings to house new charters.

Divert an Additional 10 Percent of Paratransit Trips to Taxis: IBO estimates that diverting an additional 10 percent of paratransit trips (a little over 600,000 trips annually) to taxis and livery vehicles would lower costs by \$13 million, and therefore reduce the city subsidy by an equivalent amount.

Replace Selected MTA Bus Company Service With Street Hail Liveries (Green Taxis): This option would reduce the city's reimbursement to MTA Bus by instituting a pilot project that would replace service on lightly traveled local bus runs in Queens with taxi service. In conjunction with the MTA, the city would identify 10 percent of bus runs with low passenger counts that could be replaced with taxis that agree to "cruise" the pilot routes. The City could reduce its subsidy payment to the MTA by \$20 million per year.

Use E-Learning When High School Teachers Are Absent for Just a Few Days: Under this option, high schools with a teacher who is absent fewer than three consecutive days would no longer use per diem substitutes but rather assign students an "e-learning" period for the affected class session. Use of per diem substitutes would decline, producing savings for the education department.

Consolidate Federal and State Primary Elections: To implement this option the city would need the New York State Legislature to shift the biennial state primaries to the same dates as the federal primaries. This would allow the city to save about \$10 million every other year.

Repeal the New York City Sales Tax Exemption On Interior Decorating and Design Services: IBO estimates that repealing the city sales tax exemption for interior design services could add \$20 million in revenue to the city budget annually.

Increase Fines for Drivers Who Receive Repeated Speed and Red-Light Camera Violations: If the city were to increase the fines for multiple speed and red-light camera tickets in the same year—for example \$100 for the second offense, \$200 for the third, and \$400 for the fourth and each subsequent offense—the city could increase revenue from speed and red-light camera fines by about \$5 million annually.

Modify License Fees and Increase Regulations for Sightseeing Buses: Assuming a 75 percent annual collection rate for fines associated with these violations, these additional regulations coupled with the new fee system could generate annual revenue of nearly \$2 million.

Start Fining Drivers for Idling Violations Without Warnings: IBO estimates that using existing resources, traffic enforcement agents could issue many more tickets to raise an additional \$985,000, while DEP agents could raise an additional \$80,000 through increased enforcement, resulting in just over \$1 million in new revenue.

Briefs

DOH and Dormitory Authority Funding for Brooklyn Health Care Facilities

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management (OPCHSM) and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) announces the availability of funds under the Health Care Facility Transformation Program: Kings County, established pursuant to Section 2825-a of the Public Health Law.

A total of up to \$700 million is available under this Request for Applications (RFA) to one or more health care providers located in Kings County that include general hospitals, residential health care facilities, diagnostic and treatment centers, primary care providers, and home care providers, in support of projects that replace inefficient and outdated facilities as part of a merger, consolidation, acquisition or other corporate restructuring activity intended to create a financially sustainable system of care.

To receive funding, Eligible Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed use of the grant is consistent with the recommendations for facility investments included in the study for restructuring health care services in central and northeastern Brooklyn. The recommendations were commissioned by the Department of Health and prepared by Northwell Health and titled “The Brooklyn Study: Reshaping the Future of Healthcare.” The final report is available online: <https://www.northwell.edu/about/our-organization/northwell-ventures/brooklyn-study>. The study includes recommendations that projects align with a holistic vision of health care which addresses social determinants of health through the integration and coordination of the services of the new health care system with programs that provide access to affordable and supportive housing, healthy food, exercise in a safe and supportive environment, and/or other programs that enhance a state of wellness in the community.

Applications must be submitted in Grants Gateway by 4:00 PM on Friday, May 5, 2017. For application information, visit the New York State Department of Health website at <https://health.ny.gov/funding/rfa/1701230306/index.htm> or the Grants Gateway website at <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>.

New York City Hits Record Low Unemployment, Adds 39,000 Private Jobs in January 2017

New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) this week announced that citywide unemployment dropped to a record low of 4.5 percent in January 2017, the lowest rate since 1976, which is the earliest available unemployment data from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL). The unemployment rate breaks the previous record of 4.6 percent in December 2006, and is down from 5.3 percent in January 2016.

Based on a seasonally-adjusted analysis, New York City added 39,000 private sector jobs in January 2017. Educational Services contributed to the majority of the job growth in January 2017, adding 12,900 jobs. Accommodation & Food Services and Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services had the next largest gains with 6,100 and 3,300.

New York Increases Reward for Information Leading to Arrest and Conviction of Hate Crime

New York State and New York City Jointly Offering \$20,000 Reward – Latest in Series of Comprehensive and Aggressive Actions to Root Out Hate Crimes and Anti-Semitism

To Report Bias or Discrimination Complaint, Call Toll-Free Hotline at (888) 392-3644, NYPD Crime Stoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS, or Text "HATE" to 81336

Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio announced an increase in the reward amount – from New York State’s current \$5,000 reward to a joint State-City \$20,000 reward – for any information leading to an arrest and conviction for a hate crime. The increased amount follows a significant uptick in reported hate crimes and anti-Semitism in New York City, New York State and across the nation – including a bomb threat earlier today at the Jewish Children’s Museum in Brooklyn and earlier this week at the Anti-Defamation League in Manhattan.

State Education Department Provides Military Spouses With Expedited Licensing Services

Expedited licensing services are now available for certain military spouses whose spouse is transferred to New York State, according to State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. These expedited licensing services include an accelerated application and qualification review, a 50-percent reduction in application fees, and if necessary, the issuance of a temporary practice permit.

Effective now, these services provide an expedited licensure process for military spouses who hold out-of-state professional licenses for which the requirements are substantially equivalent to those in New York State.

Interim Chairman of PSC Named

Governor Andrew Cuomo this week announced current Commissioner Gregg Sayre will become the interim chairman of the Public Service Commission. Commissioner Sayre has served on the PSC since 2012. Previously, he was an associate general counsel at Frontier Communications.

Commissioner Sayre’s appointment follows chairwoman Audrey Zibelman’s departure to become the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Energy Market Operator. His appointment is subject to Senate approval.

Top Ten Complaints Received by State AG

State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman released a list of the top ten consumer fraud complaints received by his office in 2016:

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
1. Internet (internet services & service providers; data privacy & security; consumer frauds)	4,605
2. Automobile (buying, leasing, repair, service contracts, rentals)	3,437
3. Consumer-Related Services (security systems; restaurant/catering services; tech repairs)	2,444
4. Landlord/Tenant Disputes (Security deposit releases, tenant-harassment)	2,005
5. Utilities (Wireless and Residential Phones; Energy Servicers & Suppliers; Cable and Satellite)	1,730
6. Credit (debt collection; credit card billing; debt settlement; payday loans; credit repair; credit reporting agencies; identity theft)	1,606
7. Retail Sales (any sale of goods: food, clothing, rent-to-own)	1,214
8. Home Repair/Construction (home improvement services not delivered or done poorly)	1069
9. Mortgage (mortgage modifications; mortgage and loan broker fraud; foreclosures)	921
10. Mail Order (purchases made online or from a catalog)	715

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, March 13th

Senate Public Meeting, Room 124, New York State Capitol Building, Albany, 10 a.m.

To examine the project delivery method known as design-build and examine executive budget proposals related to design-build

New York City

Monday, March 13th

Committee on Aging and Subcommittee on Senior Centers, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Aging and Senior Centers.

Committee on Governmental Operations, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Governmental Operations.

Committee on Public Housing, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Public Housing.

Tuesday March 14th

Committee Public Safety, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Public Safety.

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Land Use, Committee Room – City Hall, 10:30 a.m.

Committees on Land Use and Technology, Committee Room – City Hall, 10:30 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Land Use and Technology.

Wednesday March 15th

Committee on Housing and Buildings, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing-Housing and Buildings.

Committee Immigration, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
T2017-5716 Oversight- The Impact of New Immigration Enforcement Tactics on Access to Justice and Services.

Thursday March 16th

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

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