



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



Excelsior: Ever Upward

Governor Kathy Hochul this week celebrated New York’s full economic recovery from the pandemic following the release of New York State Department of Labor (DOL) data showing a total statewide private-sector job count of 8,346,200 jobs. According to the Governor, this job count is the State’s highest ever.

New DOL data shows New York gained 47,000 private-sector jobs in January 2024 with Private Education and Health Services, Leisure, and Hospitality, and Professional and Business Services driving job growth. Overall, the state has recovered 1,935,600 private-sector jobs since the height of the pandemic in April 2020 when statewide jobs reached a 30-year low of just 6.4 million jobs.

Governor Hochul cited her signature programs to help businesses and workers recover from the pandemic – including a \$1 billion Small Business Rescue Plan and \$450 million “Bring Back Tourism, Bring Back Jobs” recovery package.

Private sector job growth was distributed across New York State from January 2023 to January 2024 with the highest rates of growth in Ithaca (6.4 percent), Watertown-Fort Drum (5 percent), Kingston (4.1 percent) and Glen Falls (2.5 percent). New York City’s total private sector job count also increased by 1.7 percent to 4,091,700 and private-sector jobs on Long Island rose by 1.8 percent to 1,129,100.

New York State Gains Private Sector Jobs Over the Year
Over-the-Year Change in Total Nonfarm & Private Sector Jobs, January 2023 – January 2024

	Over-the-Year Change in Total Nonfarm Jobs		Over-the-Year Change in Total Private Sector Jobs	
	Net	%	Net	%
United States	2,938,000	1.9%	2,337,000	1.8%
New York State	154,100	1.6%	119,500	1.5%
Albany-Schenectady-Troy	7,700	1.7%	5,300	1.5%
Binghamton	2,000	2.1%	1,800	2.4%
Buffalo-Niagara Falls	10,400	1.9%	7,000	1.5%
Dutchess-Putnam	3,200	2.3%	2,800	2.4%
Elmira	700	2.0%	600	2.1%
Glen Falls	1,000	2.0%	1,000	2.5%
Ithaca	3,600	6.2%	3,200	6.4%
Kingston	2,000	3.5%	1,800	4.1%
Nassau-Suffolk	24,300	1.9%	19,500	1.8%
New York City	76,800	1.7%	67,300	1.7%
Orange-Rockland-Westchester	6,300	0.9%	4,500	0.7%
Rochester	8,900	1.7%	6,500	1.5%
Syracuse	6,700	2.2%	5,100	2.1%
Utica-Rome	1,800	1.5%	1,300	1.4%
Watertown-Fort Drum	1,500	3.9%	1,400	5.0%
Non-metro counties	5,200	1.1%	4,100	1.2%

Note: The sum of sub-state area job estimates will usually differ from the New York State total. This is because the State total is calculated separately from the sub-state areas and is estimated based on an independent sample.

“With jobs at an all-time high across the state, New York’s economy hasn’t just recovered – it’s been completely transformed,” Governor Hochul said. “... New York is back, and with our historic recovery and record-breaking 8.3 million jobs, my administration is moving full-steam ahead to keep creating good-paying jobs that help New Yorkers build a future here in our state.”



Governor Hochul Announces Five-Point Plan to Protect New Yorkers on the Subway

Governor Kathy Hochul this week initiated a five-point plan to use state resources to protect New Yorkers on the subways. The Governor also called on judges to use their expanded discretion to set bail to keep repeat offenders off the streets.

“My number one priority is the safety of all New Yorkers,” Governor Hochul explained on Thursday’s FOX 5’s Good Day New York. “If people are anxious in any aspect of their lives, particularly the lifeblood of our region – Downstate does not function without a healthy subway system that people have confidence in. I have to do this for them.”

Point #1: “Surging” State personnel to assist NYPD bag checks. To supplement the NYPD’s enhanced baggage checks at heavily trafficked areas, Governor Hochul is deploying 1,000 members of State personnel to assist the NYPD. This includes 250 members from the New York State Police and the MTA Police Department, and 750 members of the National Guard currently deployed on Joint Task Force Empire Shield.

Point #2: Program legislation to allow transit bans for individuals that assault other passengers. Under the legislation, judges would be allowed to ban people convicted of an assault within the system from using MTA services as part of sentencing. There is currently a provision that allows a transit ban as a term of sentencing for individuals who assault transit workers, and under Governor Hochul’s plan, this same provision would be extended to include assaults of anyone within the system.

Point #3: Adding new cameras to protect conductor cabins. Building on Governor Hochul’s announcement that MTA is accelerating the installation of cameras inside customer areas of trains, she announced the installation of new cameras focused on conductor cabins to protect workers. The MTA was directed to rapidly deploy these cameras throughout the system.

Point #4: Increasing coordination between District Attorneys and law enforcement. To improve coordination between law enforcement, transit personnel and district attorneys, Governor Hochul will initiate regular meetings between stakeholders to coordinate information sharing regarding holding dangerous, repeat offenders within the system accountable.

Point #5: Increasing the number of Subway Co-Response Outreach (SCOUT) teams. The SCOUT team pilot program was launched in January to address the most severe cases of mental health crisis within the subway system. Governor Hochul is directing \$20 million to rapidly scale this pilot.



Comptroller DiNapoli: New York's Public and Private Colleges and Universities Face Significant Challenges in Years Ahead

A [new report](#) by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli highlights the challenges New York's higher education sector is facing, including a looming enrollment cliff, growing costs of attendance, and rising student debt.

"New York has a robust higher education sector that attracts students and investment to our colleges and universities, which benefits our state and local economies," Comptroller DiNapoli explained. "Declining enrollment over the last decade has already hurt the finances of several public and private institutions, forcing a few to downsize or close their doors. New York's future depends on our institutions of higher education staying competitive by ensuring they are affordable, are diverse, and nurture a spirit of innovation and community in their students."

Falling Enrollment and Looming Enrollment Cliff

Comptroller DiNapoli found that attracting potential students has become more competitive, and New York's share of enrollment has decreased. In Fall 1970, New York's higher education institutions enrolled about 1 in 11 students nationally; in Fall 2010, when enrollment peaked nationwide, it was 1 in 16. New York's share of national enrollment remained stable at 6.2% between 2010 and 2020.

In Fall 2022, there were 896,000 students enrolled across all postsecondary institutions in the state. This was the lowest total enrollment over a 15-year period, a decline of approximately 73,000 full-time students, or 7.6% since Fall 2008. The decline was led by the nearly 14% drop in enrollment at public institutions, driven by decreases at community colleges that began in 2011.

In Fall 2023, 367,542 students were enrolled at the State University of New York (SUNY), its first year-over-year increase since Fall 2010. Most of the growth (nearly 75%) occurred at community colleges. Total enrollment was lower than in Fall 2021 and not all SUNY institutions experienced increases.

The college-age population that drives enrollments at postsecondary institutions has been dropping as a share of the total population nationally and is forecast to undergo a "precipitous" drop beginning in 2025 – a looming "enrollment cliff," according to the Comptroller.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment declined in 2020 and 2021. The Comptroller posited that social distancing restrictions and a strong job market as the economy recovered may have played a role. The pandemic also spurred a rise in student transfers and withdrawals, or "stop-outs," and declines in the upward transfer of community college students to higher degree programs, particularly for disadvantaged students.

Degrees and Return on Investment

Outcomes related to earning a degree, including salaries upon graduation, are more positive for New York's college students than those in other states, according to the Comptroller's report. Collectively, New York's institutions exceed the national performance in enrolled students completing their degrees (69.1% compared to 62.3%).

However, completion rates at community colleges are also lower than at four-year schools. Less than half of the students in public two-year colleges who began in Fall 2016 completed their coursework by June 2022. Declining enrollment and low completion rates resulted in 3.4% fewer associate degrees awarded in academic year (AY) 2020-21 than in AY 2009-10.

Comptroller DiNapoli explained that research has consistently demonstrated that individuals with a college degree earn more than those with only a high school diploma. Median earnings for bachelor's degree holders in the state are higher than for those in peer states, including California, Florida and Texas and neighboring states like New Jersey and Massachusetts. Overall, earnings in New York increased from 2010 to 2022 at a rate greater than nationwide and higher than the median.

Tuition & Student Loan Debt

For AY 2020-21, New York's public and private average undergraduate charges were both higher than the national average, particularly for in-state costs at two-year public institutions, the report found. Private four-year tuition, fees, room and board of \$58,423 in New York was 26% higher than the national average of \$46,313. Public two-year, or community college, in-state tuition and fees of \$5,576 in New York were 59% higher than the national average of \$3,501. Public four-year out-of-state tuition and fees were 26% below the national average of \$27,091.

Growing college costs nationwide have led to unprecedented growth in student loan debt in New York and the country. Federal Reserve Bank of New York data indicates that in the third quarter of 2023 New York's per capita student loan debt was \$5,830, higher than the national average (\$5,370) and peer states like Texas (\$5,170) and Florida (\$4,960).

In the News-New York City



City Planning Commission Approves “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” Proposal

The City Planning Commission this week voted in favor of the [“City of Yes for Economic Opportunity.”](#) a set of citywide zoning changes that the Adams Administration put forth to fuel New York City's economic recovery. The 18 proposed changes aim to help businesses “find space and grow,” support entrepreneurs and freelancers, boost growing industries, and enable more “vibrant” streetscapes and commercial corridors.

The *City of Yes* will now go to the New York City Council for a public hearing and a final vote in the coming months.

“Today's City Planning Commission vote in favor of ‘City of Yes for Economic Opportunity’ is an important step towards creating a more dynamic and prosperous future for New York City,” said Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce Maria Torres-Springer.

“The zoning of 1961 is not serving the needs of 2024, and replacing outdated regulations with clear and sensible rules will help boost small businesses, growing industries and commercial corridors...”

The proposal includes 18 policy changes:

- Double the space available for clean manufacturing, allowing small producers, such as microbreweries, apparel makers, and ceramic shops, to open and grow in commercial corridors in all five boroughs.
- Create new zoning tools to allow more than 17,000 businesses in industrial areas that are currently prevented from adding space to grow their businesses.
- Expand the number of businesses able to open in ground- and upper-floor spaces.
- Eliminate rules that prohibit dancing, comedy, and open mic nights in restaurants and venues in commercial areas, and instead govern venues by size and volume.
- Create a process to allow new corner stores in residential areas, as approximately 265,000 New Yorkers currently live in areas where a new corner store could not be located within a quarter mile of their home.
- Update 1960s-era rules that limit where amusements are allowed.
- Modernize how zoning regulates laboratories so life sciences research can develop in offices and near universities and hospitals.
- Remove restrictions on indoor urban agriculture.
- Allow a wider range of businesses, including barbers and interior designers, to be based in homes.

Prior to the CPC’s approval, *City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* received positive recommendations from 21 community boards, as well as from the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens borough presidents.



Bills Passed by the City Council

Introduction 1-B, sponsored by **Speaker Adrienne Adams**, would designate the Animal Care Centers of NYC facility in Queens as the Paul A. Vallone Queens Animal Care Center

Introduction 4-A, sponsored by Council Member Alexa Aviles, would alter the terms of the contract between the City and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to require EDC to compel cruise terminal operators to mandate cruise ships with shore power capability to connect to available shore power systems when docked. EDC would also be required to create and regularly update community traffic mitigation plans in the neighborhoods around each terminal, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, the Police Department, and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. The plans would outline strategies to reduce pollution, noise, and other disruptions from passenger movements to and from cruise terminals.

Introduction 17-B, sponsored by Council Member Justin Brannan, would require the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) in open parking lots and parking garages with 10 or more spaces that are licensed by the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), and future requirements for all other lots and garages with 10 or more spaces.

Introduction 172, sponsored by Majority Leader Amanda Farías, would amend Local Law 33 of 2024 to clarify that any driver of a for-hire vehicle with an approved tablet in their vehicle would receive a minimum of 25 percent of the gross revenue generated by such tablet in their vehicle. It also would set the fee for the interior advertising company license at \$500.

Briefs

MTA Signs ‘Equity in Infrastructure Project’ Pledge to Support Underutilized Businesses

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) this week signed the ‘Equity in Infrastructure Project’ Pledge to further its commitment to inclusion when awarding contracts for construction projects.

The pledge affirms the MTA will ensure participation on at least \$1 billion of work by Minority- and Women-owned (MWBE) or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms every year, award larger contracts to small businesses, as well as expand the pool of MW/DBE firms the MTA works with. In addition, it will increase discretionary contracts for design and engineering MWBE firms by 20 percent over the next five years.

Last year, the MTA awarded over \$813.5 million in contracts across more than 500 MWBE firms accounting for approximately 37 percent of overall contracts. That is in addition to the \$392.3 million paid to DBE firms, and \$16.7 million to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The MTA has awarded nearly \$70 million to small businesses through its Small Business Development Program.

SUNY to Phase Out Use of Single-Use Plastics on Campuses

The State University of New York system will phase out the use of single-use plastics like bags, beverage bottles, food service products, utensils, plastic wrap and packaging films, SUNY Chancellor John King announced this week.

The SUNY system will work with the [SustainChain](#) public service platform to create a plastics-free solutions hub with access to resources on how to achieve the new requirement.

The SUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution in 2022 to form a task force on the elimination of single-use plastics. The task force included faculty, staff and students across SUNY institutions with representation from facilities, hospital operations, auxiliary services and academics.

Dining Out NYC Portal Opens

Restaurants Must Apply To Participate In New York City's Outdoor Dining

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week opened applications for restaurants to apply for and participate in Dining Out NYC — the city's permanent outdoor dining program.

The online application portal will serve as an access point for restaurants to apply to participate in the program, understand the guidelines that the program establishes, and download sample blueprints from the [Dining Out NYC Set-Up Menu](#).

The administration launched an online portal to streamline the application process for restaurants to participate in Dining Out NYC. A restaurant currently participating in the temporary program must apply to be a part of the permanent program by August 3rd to continue operating throughout the approval process. Restaurants participating in the temporary program that do not apply by August 3 must remove their current outdoor dining setups. A restaurant's outdoor dining setup must comply with the program's design requirements within 30 days of their application approval.

NYC and Labor Partner to Build Workforce Housing in NYC

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York and Vicinity (BCTC) President Gary LaBarbera, and Cirrus Workforce Housing Advisors, LP (Cirrus) today announced a partnership to build workforce housing in New York City designed for essential workers.

Pension funds affiliated with BCTC members and other Building Trades unions, along with Cirrus, have pledged more than \$100 million in an initial fundraising stage to invest in a series of multi-family workforce housing development and redevelopment projects in New York City at levels their members can afford. Cirrus expects to raise a total of over \$400 million for this initiative.

To support the new effort, the City of New York has signed a memorandum of understanding with BCTC and Cirrus to facilitate the development of affordable housing, including workforce housing.

BCTC — in partnership with Cirrus — is pooling pension funds from eleven union funds. The goal is to invest in New York City-based housing projects that will deliver affordability at 80 to 140 percent area median income, and that is located near transit, that advances sustainable building goals, and that will be constructed under a negotiated project labor agreement with BCTC.

Coming Up

New York State^(*)

Monday, March 11th

New York State Assembly, Assembly Chamber, 2 p.m. (Tuesday through Thursday time is TBD)

New York State Senate, Senate Chamber, 3 p.m. (Tuesday through Thursday time is TBD)

Tuesday, March 12th

Commissioners Meeting, NYS Board of Elections, 10 a.m.

Judiciary Committee Meeting, NYS Senate, NYS Capitol, Room 124, 10 a.m.

Elections Committee Meeting, NYS Senate, NYS Capitol, Room 123, 10:30 a.m.

Environmental Conservation Committee Meeting, NYS Senate, NYS Capitol, Room 124, 11 a.m.

Racing, Gaming, and Wagering Committee Meeting, New York State Senate, Legislative Office Building, Room 810, 11 a.m.

Codes Committee Meeting, New York State Senate, NYS Capitol Building, Room 124, 11:30 a.m.

Higher Education Committee Meeting, New York State Senate, Legislative Office Building, Room 912, 11:30 a.m.

Civil Service & Pensions Committee Meeting, New York State Senate, NYS Capitol Building, Room 123, 12 p.m.

Health Committee Meeting, New York State Senate, Capitol Building, Room 124, 12 p.m.

Wednesday, March 13th

Alcoholism & Substance Use Disorders Committee Meeting, NYS Senate, Legislative Office Building, Room 813, 10:30 a.m.

Friday, March 15th

NYS Commission on Lobbying & Ethics in Government, Bimonthly Lobbying Filings Due

(*) NYS Assembly Committee agendas for the week of March 11th were not available at time of publication.

New York City

Monday, March 11th

Committee on General Welfare, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – General Welfare

Committee on Housing and Codes, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Housing and Buildings

Committee on Standards and Ethics, 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th Floor. 3:30 p.m.
Oversight – Meeting Pursuant to Council Rule 10.80

Tuesday, March 12th

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

Committee on Small Business, 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th Floor, 11:30 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Meeting – Small Business

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, Council Chambers
– City Hall, 12 p.m.

Committee on Public Housing, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Public Housing

Thursday, March 14th

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Transportation and Infrastructure

Committee on Oversight and Investigations, 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th Floor 11:30 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Oversight and Investigations

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Friday, March 15th

NYC Clerk, Bimonthly Lobbyist Filing Due

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Fire and Emergency Management

Committee on Civil and Human Rights, 250 Broadway – Committee Room 16th Floor, 11:30 a.m.
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Civil and Human Rights

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions, , 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 14th
Floor 12:45 p.m.

Committee on Land Use, , 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 14th Floor 1 p.m.

Committee on Economic Development, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

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