



Honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military, Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day, which began in the years following the Civil War. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May. The change went into effect in 1971. Memorial Day was named an official federal holiday in 1971.



The federal government declared Waterloo, NY as the birthplace of Memorial Day for starting Memorial Day traditions in 1886. In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, N.Y., the “birthplace” of Memorial Day. There, a ceremony on May 5, 1866, honored veterans who fought in the Civil War.

In The News-New York State



Comptroller DiNapoli Releases Report on State Spending to Implement Raise the Age Law

New York state has appropriated \$1.71 billion through State Fiscal year (SFY) 2025 to help counties implement the provisions of the “Raise the Age” (RTA) law enacted in 2017, with \$658.8 million disbursed so far, according to [a report released](#) by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

RTA changed the age of criminal responsibility as an adult from 16- to 18-years-old. The law was phased in over two years. As a result, most 16- and 17-year-old offenders are now adjudicated through procedures in family court, rather than the adult criminal justice system, and can no longer be detained in county jails with adults or in state prisons.

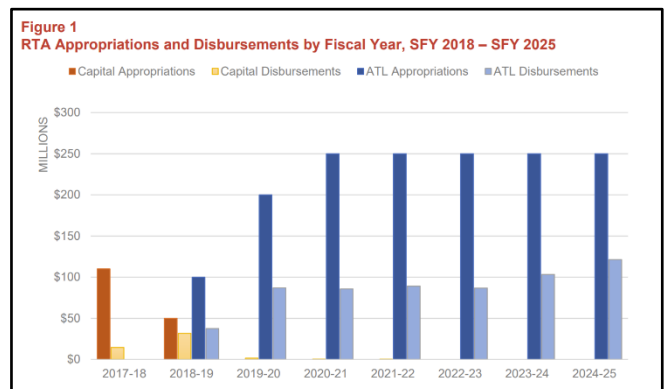
“Under the Raise the Age law, counties implement the law locally and are reimbursed by the state for costs,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “Our analysis shows a recent uptick in spending, as county implementation progresses.”

Counties are reimbursed by the state for all new and ongoing costs associated with implementation of RTA. To qualify for reimbursement, counties must adhere to the state property tax cap (or be granted a hardship waiver) and submit an annual RTA work plan that identifies eligible costs to be reviewed by the state Office of Children and Family Services and the state Division of Criminal Justice Services before review and approval by the Division of the Budget. New York City does not participate in the reimbursement program and was therefore not included in the analysis.

As of SFY 2025, state appropriations for RTA included \$160 million for capital expenses and \$1.55 billion in local aid. Of the \$160 million in capital appropriations, \$48 million has been spent on projects to improve existing facilities or build new juvenile detention facilities, mostly in SFYs 2018 and 2019.

Beginning in SFY 2019, the state provided a \$100 million appropriation to make local aid available to counties for reimbursable RTA expenses, including alternative to incarceration programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and other supportive programming designed to rehabilitate youth convicted of crimes. The Aid to Localities (ATL) appropriation increased to \$200 million in SFY 2020 and to \$250 million in each of the subsequent SFYs.

After the first two years, spending was comprised mostly of local grants to reimburse counties. Those funds totaled \$468.5 million through SFY 2025. In the aggregate, amounts counties have been approved to spend have been consistently below the level of annual appropriations. Reimbursements to counties grew from \$56.6 million in SFY 2019 to \$158 million in SFY 2024. In SFY 2024, the \$158 million in approved spending was 63% of the available \$250 million appropriation.



Social Services costs, which include personnel costs for case workers, RTA foster care, aftercare costs for RTA youth placements upon discharge, and other programming for certain rehabilitation and recidivism prevention costs, comprise the largest amount of spending in 44 counties.

Overall, detention costs are the largest category of spending, but expenditures are primarily concentrated in the six counties that operate a facility, including Westchester, Erie, Onondaga, Monroe, Nassau and Albany counties.



10 Days and Counting



The State Legislature returns on Tuesday, May 27th with 10 scheduled session days on the Legislative calendar. Even with talk of extending to June 17th, the Senate and Assembly have a great deal of work to do with little time.

To date, 170 bills have been passed by both houses of the Legislature. Of these, just under 100 are chapter amendments to 2024 bills which were signed with agreement of tweaks before implementation and 21 were budget-related (FY2026 spending plan plus temporary extenders). That leaves 50 “new” initiatives currently ready for gubernatorial consideration. Over the last three sessions, 805 (2024), 898 (2023), and 1010 (2022) have been passed by both houses of the Legislature.

Having included significant policy initiatives in the FY2026 budget, Governor Kathy Hochul, in published reports, has indicated that she is looking for “very little” in the waning days of the session.

“Hopefully they do very little, because I’m the one who has to end up with anywhere from 850 to 1,000 bills on my desk,” Governor Hochul said. “I know the Legislature has other priorities, and out of respect and deference to them, I’ll wait and see what those are.”

How 2026 stacks up to previous years in terms of volume is in the hands of the Legislature.

In The News-New York City



Adams Administration Advances 5th Avenue Redesign

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced that total investments of over \$400 million will fully fund the City and the Future of Fifth Partnership's plan to transform Fifth Avenue — between Bryant Park and Central Park — into a pedestrian-centered boulevard.

The FY2026 NYC Budget provides an additional \$250 million in new investments to build on the \$152.7 million initial investment Mayor Adams first announced in December 2024. The total \$402 million project represents the first major redesign in the Avenue's 200-year history.

The Adams Administration projects the redesign will “pay for itself” in less than five years through increased property and sales tax revenue. It is the culmination of the Administration’s *Holiday Open Streets along Fifth Avenue* project.

According to NYC Economic Development, Fifth Avenue is currently 100 feet wide, comprised of five lanes of vehicular traffic and two 23-foot sidewalks. Even though pedestrians make up 70 percent of all traffic on the corridor, sidewalks account for only 46 percent of the space. Each block serves approximately 5,500 pedestrians an hour on an average weekday and up to 23,000 people an hour during the holidays — the equivalent of a full Madison Square Garden plus 4,000 additional people. The current configuration can no longer accommodate this volume of foot traffic, especially given that only 15 feet on either side is unobstructed for walking; the rest is occupied by street infrastructure like signage, bus stops, lighting, and trash cans.

The redesign along this stretch of Fifth Avenue will expand sidewalks by 46 percent, shorten pedestrian crossings by a third, reduce the number of traffic lanes from five to three, and add plantings and lighting to make for a more walkable, greener, and safer avenue. The city will begin construction to update much-needed underground sewer and water main upgrades, which will enable underground and aboveground work to be done concurrently and efficiently.

The design nearly doubles the width of the sidewalks to 33.5 feet each, expanding clear pedestrian space to 25 feet on each side and adding another 8.5-foot-wide section for trees, planters, and an alternative pedestrian path. These changes will reduce crossing lengths by more than a third, boosting pedestrian safety along the avenue. Beyond rebalancing Fifth Avenue's space to reflect its usage, the new design also greens the corridor with more than 230 new trees and 20,000 square feet of planters, new seating and activation space, better lighting, and more.

Fifth Avenue is responsible for 313,000 direct and indirect jobs, which, in turn, generate \$44.1 billion in total wages and \$111.5 billion in total economic output each year. Since 2023, there have been more than 10 commercial real estate sales on Fifth Avenue, totaling \$3.9 billion.

In 2023, the Adams administration launched the Future of Fifth public-private partnership, which brings city agencies together with the Fifth Avenue Association, the Grand Central Partnership, the Central Park Conservancy, and the Bryant Park Corporation to further this project. The group selected firms Arcadis, Sam Schwartz, and Field Operations to lead the design and study, and schematic design is underway and slated for completion by the summer of 2025.



EDC Rendition



Tracking MTA's Shifting Revenue Streams

With Paid Ridership and Fare Collections Down, Taxes and Fees on Businesses and Consumers Are Paying a Growing Share of MTA's Operating Budget

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) pays for its operating budget from a wide variety of sources, but the decline in paid ridership since the pandemic and economic changes have contributed to significant shifts in those streams of income, [a new report](#) from State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli details.

“Understanding how the MTA pays for its day-to-day operations is crucial to improving its finances and the regional transit system,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “Keeping stations safe and clean, and trains and buses in good repair, relies on a patchwork of fares, tolls, taxes, and surcharges that has been shifting.”

Comptroller DiNapoli's report shows the change in funding sources for the MTA's operating budget from 2019 to 2024, including revenue from fares, tolls, dedicated taxes and fees, state and local subsidies, and other revenue.

Fare and Toll Revenues

In the years before the pandemic, fares and tolls covered 52% of the MTA's operating budget. In 2024 this revenue made up 39% of the operating budget. Straphangers took 30% fewer paid subway trips last year than in 2019, and paid ridership for NYC Transit buses was down 42% compared to 2019. Commuter rail ridership has made a stronger recovery, according to the Comptroller, but Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North ridership was still 17% and 22% below their respective 2019 levels. Bridge and tunnel crossings were up 2% and revenue was up 24% over 2019, but this was not enough to make up for the loss of revenue from the declines in mass transit ridership.

The MTA expects continued gradual ridership increases along with lower levels of fare evasion will bring ridership up to 74% of 2019 levels by 2026. With 4% fare and toll increases planned for August 2025 and March 2027, the MTA projects revenue from those combined streams will reach 2019 levels in 2027 and cover 41% of the operating budget. Fare revenue on its own, however, would still be 10% below the pre-pandemic amount, even with the increases.

Dedicated Taxes and Fees

The Comptroller found that the MTA gets an increasing share of its revenue from a variety of taxes and fees — on payrolls, real estate transactions, petroleum businesses, sales, and drivers. These revenues as a share of MTA operating revenue, which dropped from 37% in 2019 to 33% in 2020, increased to 40% in 2024 with the state approval of an increase to the payroll mobility tax (PMT) rate in NYC in 2023.

In 2024, 70% of the MTA's revenue came from taxes and fees on businesses and other employers, mostly from the PMT on employers in the MTA region and corporate surcharges. The PMT portion totaled \$1.8 billion in 2022. The 2023 PMT increase helped lift that amount to \$3.1 billion in 2024, making it the MTA's single largest tax source of operating revenue.

Another large business tax is the franchise surcharge on certain corporations — insurance, utility, transportation, and transmission companies. This surcharge brought MTA \$2.3 billion in SFY 2025.

Consumers in the MTA region paid 13% of MTA’s tax and fee revenue through sales taxes which rose to \$1.3 billion in SFY 2025 due to consumption growth and more recently, rising prices. Drivers paid 9% of MTA’s tax and fee revenue through dedicated motor vehicle fees, motor fuel taxes, and surcharges on taxis and for-hire rides. They also indirectly pay the Petroleum Business Tax (4% of total taxes in 2024), counted under business taxes for this analysis, which is largely passed on to drivers.

Real estate transaction taxes, which once made up 19% of the MTA’s tax and fee revenue, only accounted for 8% in 2024 due to a down real estate market.

Briefs

Trump Administration Allows New York’s Empire Wind 1 Offshore Energy Project to Proceed

The Trump administration this week lifted a stop-work order on Equinor’s Empire Wind I offshore energy project and will allow construction to resume, according to Governor Kathy Hochul.

“I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Burgum for lifting the stop-work order on Empire Wind 1 which will allow this transformative clean energy project to move forward as planned,” Doreen Harris, President and CEO, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority said. “Under the strong leadership of Governor Hochul, the commitment of Equinor, and the continued support of the Sunset Park community and the skilled tradespeople constructing this critically important project, Empire Wind 1 continues to be a cornerstone of New York’s energy transition.”

The offshore and wind energy project Empire Wind 1, off Long Island, is the first offshore wind project that would deliver electricity directly to New York City. It was approved by the Biden administration and stopped last month by the Trump Administration.

Equinor's work began last year with the goal of gearing up commercial operations in 2027, according to published reports. The Empire Wind 1 project is 30% complete. It will include 54 turbines, up to 910-feet tall, that will generate 810 megawatts of electricity for half a million homes.

Applications are Now Being Accepted for \$100 Million New York State Pro-Housing Supply Fund

***Cities, towns and villages can apply as well as county and municipally designated
non-profit economic development organizations***

Applications are being accepted for the new \$100 million Pro-Housing Supply Fund, supporting certified Pro-Housing Communities with financing for infrastructure projects, such as sewer, electrical and water system upgrades, that are needed to facilitate new housing developments.

Pro-Housing certified cities, towns and villages can apply as well as county and municipally designated non-profit economic development organizations whose project is located within a Pro-Housing certified community. Eligible applicants can apply for grants between \$2.5 million and \$10 million for eligible projects. Applicants must complete and submit a [Consolidated Funding Application](#) for review by NYS and the Regional Economic Development Council for the region in which the proposed project is located. Applications must be submitted by Thursday, July 31 at 4 p.m.

Funding must be used for infrastructure projects that directly support the creation of new housing units. Eligible uses include the installation, extension or reconstruction of road, water, sewer, electrical or other utilities; design, permitting or engineering costs directly related to the infrastructure project (limited to 20 percent of total project cost); acquisition of machinery and equipment required for the ongoing operational use of the infrastructure project; site preparation or demolition directly related to the infrastructure project; and other eligible capital uses as determined by Empire State Development.

Projects will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the [program guidelines](#) which include, but are not limited to, a demonstrated commitment to directly support a housing project based on infrastructure improvements, number of housing units to be supported, the degree to which the project supports the creation of new housing in areas with a demonstrated workforce and/or affordable housing need, project readiness, the amount of leveraged funding, demonstrated local government support and alignment with regional priorities and Smart Growth principles.

EDC Approves Office-to-Housing Conversion at 5 Times Square

The Empire State Development (ESD) Board of Directors this week voted to enable an office-to-housing conversion at 5 Times Square, transforming office space into a mixed-use development with up to 1,250 new homes, including up to 313 permanently affordable homes.

This project was made possible by FY2025 budget language to change 60-year-old state laws and lift the 12 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) cap on residential development in New York City. According to Governor Kathy Hochul, these statutes have blocked new housing development since 1961.

The vote this week by the ESD Board of Directors approved an amendment to the 42nd Street Development Project General Project Plan that will enable the conversion of 5 Times Square.

Five Times Square will repurpose nearly 1 million square feet of office space while preserving more than 37,000 square feet of retail space. The project will create up to 1,250 new homes — a mix of 1,050 studio and 200 one-bedroom units — with equal access to building amenities for all residents. The project will include over 300 permanently affordable homes for New Yorkers earning up to 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

The conversion addresses the building's high office vacancy rate of 77 percent, transforming an underutilized property into much-needed housing. Construction is anticipated to begin in Q3 of 2025, with the first phase anticipated to be completed in 2027. The building's configuration allows for a mixed-use program that can accommodate both residential and the existing commercial occupancy. The project is expected to create approximately 1,400 construction jobs and 830 permanent direct and indirect jobs. The project will also comply with the State MWBE and SDVOB policies, with an overall 30 percent MWBE participation goal.

DEC Alerts Adirondack Hikers to Avoid High Elevation Trails

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation issued an alert on Thursday, encouraging outdoor adventurers to postpone high-elevation activities due to unstable spring conditions.

Specifically, DEC asks hikers to avoid all trails above 2,500 feet in the Adirondacks, particularly those in the High Peaks. The agency also advises hikers and climbers to prepare for thinner snowpack on trails, deteriorating and variable snow depth alongside and off-trail, poor quality ice, slippery trails and high-water crossings.

Visit the DEC website for a great list of alternative, [low elevation hikes](#). Check the [Adirondack Backcountry Information](#) webpages for weekly updates on backcountry conditions and seasonal recreation information for the Adirondacks.

Mayor Adams Announces Full New York Knicks Postseason has Potential to Generate \$832 Million in Economic Activity From Home Games

The New York Knicks' 2025 National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs run has the potential to generate \$832 million in economic impact for the five boroughs if the Knicks play all potential home games in both the Eastern Conference Finals and the NBA Finals, according to the Adams Administration. To date, home playoff games played this year by the Knicks have generated an estimated \$195 million in economic activity.

NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) estimates each additional Knicks home game is expected to generate an estimated \$91 million for the city across the five boroughs. Between the Eastern Conference Finals and potential NBA Finals, the Knicks could generate up to an additional \$637 million, in addition to the \$195 million already generated from the first two rounds of playoffs.

NYCEDC's analysis accounts for direct impacts from visitor spending, including tickets, concessions, merchandise, transportation, and lodging for overnight, out-of-town visitors. It also accounts for indirect and induced impacts from additional spending by stadium companies and employees. The economic impact of each game is based on the average prices for tickets already available for the Eastern Conference Finals. Should the Knicks make it to the Finals, the ticket prices, and the estimated economic impact, could be subject to change.

Coming Up

Tuesday, May 27th

Senate Banks Committee, Room 710 Legislative Office Building, 10:30 a.m.

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

Senate Disabilities Committee, Room 708 Legislative Office Building, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Finance Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Civil Service and Pensions Committee, Room 123 State Capitol, 1 p.m.

Senate New York City Education Committee, Room 916 Legislative Office Building, 1 p.m.

Senate Internet and Technology Committee, Room 816 Legislative Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Senate Transportation Committee, Room 801 Legislative Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 28th

Senate Finance Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Labor Committee, Room 308 Legislative Office Building, 10:45 a.m.

Senate Elections Committee, Room 123 State Capitol, 11 am.

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

Senate Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee, Room 945 Legislative Office Building, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, Room 123 State Capitol, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, Room 123 State Capitol, Noon.

Senate Consumer Protection Committee, Room 804 Legislative Office Building, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Education Committee, Room 510 Legislative Office Building, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Health Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 12 Noon.

Senate Procurement and Contracts Committee, Room 816 Legislative Office Building, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Budget and Revenue Committee, Room 912, Legislative Office Building, 1 p.m.

Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 1 p.m.

Senate Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee, Room 511 Legislative Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Senate Insurance Committee, Room 123 State Capitol, 1:30 p.m.

Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee, Room 611 Legislative Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 29th

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

Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Room 124 State Capitol, 9:30 a.m.

Note: Assembly Committee Agendas were not released at time of publication.

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