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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



State of the State Address 2025

[State of the State Fighting for your Family Book](#)

Governor Kathy Hochul delivered her *Fighting for your Family* 2025 State of the State Address on Tuesday afternoon, laying out an agenda of over 200 initiatives aimed at putting money back in people's pockets, keeping New Yorkers safe, and ensuring the future of New York is a place where all families can thrive.

“Your family is my fight — and I will never stop fighting for the people of New York,” Governor Hochul said. “New Yorkers expect results and that’s why I fight day in and day out to make New York safer, healthier, cleaner, more affordable for you and your family — and that is what we’re doing with the initiatives announced as part of my 2025 State of the State.”

Over the course of her 129-page message, Governor Hochul outlined her blueprint for 2025. The details of this blueprint will be provided in her FY2026 Executive Budget next week.

“A state of the state address can be full of flowery rhetoric but fail to address the needs of the people,” Governor Hochul explained. “I believe it must be more than just words. It should be a concrete blueprint that will deliver actual results that New Yorkers will feel....”



Governor Hochul Delivers the 2025 State of the State Address.

Governor Hochul’s State of the State address prioritized the following initiatives:

Affordability:

Personal Income Tax Cut: Cutting rates across five of the State’s nine tax brackets for tax payers earning up to \$323,200 per year in personal income for joint filers.

Inflation Rebate: Providing joint tax filers who make less than \$300,000 a \$500 payment and all single New York taxpayers who make less than \$150,000 a \$300 payment.

SALT Deduction: Committing to working with New York’s congressional delegation to restore full SALT deductibility.

Universal Child Care: Putting New York on the path to universal child care and investing \$110 million in child care capital funding.

Universal Free School Meals: Providing Universal free school meals across every school in the state.

Housing Affordability: Investing \$100 million to support housing infrastructure; creating a revolving loan fund to spur mixed-income rental development outside of New York City; proposing legislation to crack down on landlords using price-fixing algorithms to drive up housing costs; and restricting private equity purchases of single and two-family homes.

Criminal Justice/Public Protection:

Right-size the Connection between the Discovery Law and the Speedy Trial Act: Eliminating the incentive to delay discovery challenges and to ensure that a discovery error is addressed in a manner proportional to the discovery error itself rather than as a technical mechanism to have an entire case dismissed.

Modernize occupational standards to expand pathways for qualified candidates: Raising the New York State Police retirement age to 63 and removing the 35-year-old maximum age restriction for law enforcement recruitment, as well as allowing non-New York residents to apply for correctional officer positions.

Enhance Safety for Work Zones and Transportation Workers: Making the Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement program permanent and expanding it to include MTA Bridges and Tunnels and New York State Bridge Authority properties; and introducing legislation to enhance penalties for assaults against transportation workers, extending protections similar to those provided to many MTA and retail workers.

Safer Subways: Increasing NYPD presence on platforms and trains, expanding the NYC Department of Homeless Services 24/7 ‘Welcome Center’ model, and cracking down on fare evasion. (see page 7).

Strengthen Drugged Driving Laws: Proposing legislation to close critical loopholes, such as expanding the universe of prosecutable substances, authorizing penalties for refusal to participate in testing, enabling prompt license suspensions for drugged driving, and broadening the circumstances under which chemical tests can be compelled.

Reduce Reoffending Through Innovative Justice Initiatives: Expanding training programs for incarcerated individuals in green energy and sustainable industries and enhancing positive incentive programs like merit time to improve reentry success.

Health/Mental Health:

Improving New York’s Mental Health Care System: Addressing gaps in the standards for involuntary commitment and strengthening Kendra’s Law, which governs Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) for individuals with serious mental illness.

Promoting Kids’ Mental and Physical Health: Launching ‘Unplug and Play’ to help New Yorkers get off of their phones and stay active. Unplug and Play establishes NY BRICKS and NY PLAYS while expanding NY SWIMS – three grant programs to help communities offer kids active alternatives to scrolling.

Safety Net Hospitals: Allocating additional resources to the Safety Net Transformation Program.

Update and Improve Health Insurance Network Adequacy Requirements: Directing the Department of Health to undertake a comprehensive review of New York’s network adequacy standards, including considering regional variations, and increasing enforcement of plan compliance through monitoring and penalties.

Labor

Wage Theft Judgment: Advancing legislation to expand Department of Labor (DOL)’s enforcement power to include the authority to levy liens, seize financial assets, and issue a stop work order following an unpaid wage theft judgement.

Support Workers Displaced By Artificial Intelligence: DOL will require businesses submitting notices of worker layoffs to its Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) system to convey whether a layoff is related to a businesses' use of AI. Any impacted worker will be able to access the broad array of workforce training programs and supports offered by DOL or local partners.

Worker's Compensation: Advancing legislation codifying the Department of Financial Services (DFS) issued legal guidance directing health insurers to cover medical treatment for injured workers while the workers' compensation claim is being contested.

Strengthen the Workers with Disabilities Employment Tax Credit: Increasing the Workers with Disabilities Employment Tax Credit from \$2,100 to \$5,000 and simplifying the process to increase the number of businesses hiring employees with disabilities.

Climate Investment

"Single-largest program of climate investment in the history of the State budget": Investing \$1 billion in climate initiatives "across different sectors of our economy and across the State's geography," including: 1) Retrofitting homes and incentivizing the installation of heat pumps; 2) Ensuring our public infrastructure can serve as hubs of sustainability, including building out thermal energy networks at SUNY campuses that can model a pathway towards the next generation of energy infrastructure; and 3) Expanding green transportation options across the state and supporting businesses of all sizes in their decarbonization journey.

Launch the New York Nuclear Energy Master Plan: Developing a Master Plan for Responsible Advanced Nuclear Development that will guide any nuclear projects.

Public Power for Public Entities and Creating Clean Energy Union Jobs: Directing state agencies and the New York Power Authority to enter into contracts in pursuit of achieving 100 percent renewable energy for state agencies by 2030, in line with Executive Order 22. These contracts will result in at least 500MW of renewable energy while creating clean energy development, 9,000 union jobs, and reduced emission.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams applauded the Governor's initiatives and looks forward to working with his partners in Albany.

"Governor Hochul's State of the State address showed her commitment to making New York a safer, more affordable city for working-class families," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said in [prepared comments](#) following the Governor's Address. "...At a moment when our state faces a historic affordability crisis, Governor Hochul understands this bold action would make a meaningful difference for hundreds of thousands of our city's residents."



Comptroller DiNapoli: State Tax Receipts Continue to Outpace Projections Through December

State tax receipts totaled \$79.9 billion through the first three quarters of State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25, \$1.2 billion higher than estimates released in the Division of the Budget's (DOB) Mid-Year Update to the Enacted Budget Financial Plan. On a year-over-year basis, collections were \$5.5 billion higher than those through December 2023, according to the [State Cash Report](#) released by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

"Strong financial markets and economic growth have propelled the state's revenues through December," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "However, recent volatility in the markets and persistent inflation are cause for concern. In addition, the direction of federal tax policy under the new administration could potentially have an impact on state revenues."

Personal income tax (PIT) receipts totaled \$40.7 billion and were \$719.3 million above DOB's financial plan projections and \$4.4 billion higher than the same period in SFY 2023-24, reflecting, in part, the impact of wage and financial market growth over the course of the year.

Year-to-date consumption and use tax collections totaled \$17 billion which were 2.1%, or \$353.8 million, higher than the same period last year but were \$53 million lower than DOB's mid-year estimate. Sales tax receipts, the largest share of these taxes, increased by \$320.8 million, or 2.1% over last year. Business taxes, which include collections from the pass-through entity tax (PTET), totaled \$20.2 billion, \$1.3 billion higher than through December in the prior fiscal year and \$530.4 million higher than financial plan projections.

All Funds spending through December totaled \$172.3 billion, which was \$8.7 billion, or 5.3%, higher than last year for the same period, primarily due to higher costs in non-Medicaid public health and public welfare. All Funds spending through December was \$1.2 billion lower than DOB projected, primarily due to lower than anticipated spending from state capital projects funds. State Operating Funds spending totaled \$91 billion, \$7.2 billion, or 8.7%, higher than last year but \$2.6 billion lower than DOB projected.

The state's General Fund ended December with a balance of \$55.2 billion, \$7.8 billion higher than DOB projected and \$4.2 billion higher than last year at the same time primarily due to higher than anticipated tax collections and lower than anticipated spending.

In The News-New York City



Mayor Adams Releases \$114.4 Billion FY 2026 Preliminary Budget Highlighted by Investments in Public Safety, Affordability, & Education

New York City Mayor Eric Adams yesterday released the City's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Preliminary Budget, continuing to work toward his goal to make New York City the best place to raise a family.

The spending plan prioritizes affordability, housing, mental health, and public safety initiatives while avoiding cuts that have accompanied the previous budgets. It comes in at approximately \$2 billion more than New York City's last enacted budget.

"Because we set the table for success, we were able to ensure the continuity of critical programs as well as make strategic new investments in public safety, affordability and quality of life that benefit working class New Yorkers," the Mayor explained.

Major initiatives for 2026 include:

- Meeting Mayor Adams' 2025 State of the City commitment to give homeless New Yorkers the help they need (\$137 million in FY26) including adding 900 Safe Haven beds and deepening 24/7/365 citywide street and subway outreach.
- Enhancing New York City Department of Correction (DOC) recruiting efforts to help fill vacant positions and security and investing in DOC facility improvement to increase increasing safety for staff and people in custody.
- Launching the \$63 million "Axe the Tax for the Working Class" proposal to eliminate and reduce New York City personal income taxes.
- Continuing support for the Summer Rising academic and enrichment programming, as well as Learning to Work, which helps re-engage students to prepare for college and careers.
- Expanding New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) second shift cleaning to 100 more hot spots at 64 parks.

Mayor Adams also plans to invest \$170 billion in City's largest-ever 10-year Capital Plan to improve infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, water and sewer facilities, libraries, and transportation systems in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. The city will commit to using project labor agreements and community hiring goals on capital construction projects.

Investments would include:

- \$36.5 billion for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York City Department of Sanitation.
- \$32.1 billion for transportation.
- \$24.5 billion for affordable housing.
- \$23.6 billion for schools.
- \$15.9 billion for DOC, courts, and the New York City Police Department.
- \$37.4 billion for other city services, including: \$10 billion for NYC Parks and \$2.8 billion for cultural institutions and libraries.

The FY26 Preliminary Budget maintains \$8.5 billion in reserves, including \$1.2 billion in the General Reserve, \$5 billion in the Retiree Health Benefits Trust Fund, \$250 million in the Capital Stabilization Reserve, and \$2 billion in the Rainy-Day Fund. In addition, the plan has budget gaps of \$4.2 billion in FY27, \$5.4 billion in FY28, and \$5.1 billion in FY29, which are all lower than at the November 2024 Financial Plan Update.



Governor Hochul Announces New Initiatives to Protect Subway Riders and Transit Workers by Increasing Police Patrols & Safety Measures

Governor Hochul this week announced new steps to increase law enforcement presence and strengthen mental health policies to make the transit system safer for New Yorkers.

These new measures include partnering with New York City officials to:

- Increase NYPD patrols on subway platforms and trains; installing new protective barriers on subway platforms to protect riders.
- Upgrade fare gates and delaying egress on exit gates to help crack down on fare evasion;
- Add LED lighting throughout stations to increase visibility.
- Strengthen key mental health laws to ensure that New Yorkers with severe mental illness are connected with care instead of being left to languish on subway trains and platforms.

“Keeping New Yorkers safe is my top priority — and that means making sure our subways feel safe and are safe for every single rider and worker.” Governor Hochul said. “No one should be in fear that they’ll be a victim of crime as they commute to work, go to school or enjoy a night out — that is why we’re partnering with law enforcement, improving our infrastructure and ensuring that New Yorkers struggling with mental illness get the support they need.”

The Governor’s plan will increase New York Police Department (NYPD) presence on platforms and trains by temporarily surging patrol levels in addition to the National Guardsmen that have been re-deployed into the transit system. Approximately 750 NYPD officers will be stationed across New York City with an additional 300 in the train cars themselves. The increase in enforcement will prioritize 30 subways stations and transit hubs that account for 50 percent of crime in the transit system.

The Governor will also work with New York City to increase police patrols on every overnight train for the next six months. NYPD officers will work from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., and there will be a uniformed officer onboard every subway train in service during those hours.

The State will provide the funding to install platform edge barriers at more than 100 additional stations by the end of 2025. The selection of stations for the installation process will prioritize feasibility, including stations with standard car-stopping positions in segments of the trains. Among these train lines, stations with higher ridership levels and island platforms will be prioritized.

To address fare evasion, Governor Hochul will invest in modern fare gates in more than 20 stations across the system in 2025, and an additional 20 stations in 2026. Additionally, exit gates will delay egress at 150 additional stations in an effort to reduce fare evasion. At the Governor's direction, the MTA will prioritize stations with higher ridership traffic, accessibility features and those with high fare evasion. Initial installation is scheduled to begin at 42 St-Port Authority, Delancey St-Essex St and Roosevelt Av-Jackson Heights.

Briefs

MTA Releases Preliminary Traffic and Transit Data from First Work Week Under Congestion Relief Program

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) this week released data on traffic volumes, travel times, and transit ridership from the first week of the nation's first congestion relief program which took effect on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025.

Preliminary data shows that traffic was down 7.51 percent last week, compared to the same time last year and approximately 219,000 fewer vehicles entered the Central Business District in the first week the program launched. Drivers saw faster and more reliable trip times, and many express bus riders benefitted from shorter commutes.

"The early data backs up what New Yorkers have been telling us all week – traffic is down, the streets feel safer, and buses are moving faster," said MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber. "Positive change wasn't guaranteed, and it's exciting to hear commuters – including drivers – talking about how much time they are saving since the program kicked off a week ago."

According to the MTA, the first-week takeaways include:

- In the first five weekdays of the program, CBD entries were down ~8% from the MTA's January estimated weekday baseline.
- Travel times were 30-40% shorter on inbound river crossings, and 20-30% improved in the PM on most crosstown streets and the excluded roadways. Results were more mixed on North/South avenues.
- Many MTA Express Bus riders saw shorter commutes thanks to less traffic, and we're seeing slightly higher ridership on some express bus routes. No meaningful uptick in transit ridership or crowding has occurred.

Mayor Adams Appoints Camille Joseph Varlack as Deputy Mayor for Administration, Tiffany Raspberry as Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Affairs

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced that Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack has been elevated to the role of deputy mayor for administration, and that Director of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) Tiffany Raspberry will serve as deputy mayor for intergovernmental affairs.

Deputy Mayor Varlack will also continue to serve in her role as chief of staff, while adding oversight of the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services and co-chairing the New York City Performance Cabinet. Deputy Mayor Raspberry will oversee City Hall intergovernmental affairs, coordinate and direct intergovernmental affairs teams across all city agencies, and work closely with the business community to advocate for priorities at the city, state, and federal level.

Sheriffs Launch Blue Envelope Program Statewide

The New York State Sheriffs' Association this week announced the statewide implementation of the Blue Envelope program, intended to help drivers with autism during encounters with law enforcement officials.

The program provides drivers with a light blue envelope to hold a photocopy of their license, vehicle registration, insurance information and contact information for a support person. The envelope alerts law enforcement officers that the driver has autism and to adapt how they approach the interaction.

The program aims to streamline communication and reduce anxiety during traffic stops. It also offers drivers guidelines on what to do and expect during traffic stops to make the interaction less stressful and safer for all involved.

Some areas across New York, including Saratoga County, previously launched the program and similar efforts exist in Vermont, Arizona and Massachusetts.

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, January 21st

New York State Senate Session,

Senate Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany, 3 p.m.

New York State Assembly Session,

Assembly Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany, 3:30 p.m.

Senate Finance Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11 a.m.

Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Health Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 12 p.m.

Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 1 p.m.

Senate Children and Families Committee Meeting, 804 LOB, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22nd

New York State Senate Session,

Senate Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany, 11 a.m.

New York State Assembly Session,

Assembly Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany

Senate Social Services Committee Meeting, 410 LOB, 10 a.m.

Thursday, January 23rd

Public Hearing – The Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Program,

Hamilton Hearing Room B, LOB, 2nd Floor, Albany, 9 a.m.

Public Hearing – Roadway Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Infrastructure,

Roosevelt Hearing Room C, LOB, 2nd Floor, Albany, 10 a.m.

New York City

Tuesday, January 21st

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Council Chamber – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22nd

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management,

250 Broadway – Committee Room, 14th Floor, 10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans, 250 Broadway – Committee Room, 14th Floor, 1 p.m.

Thursday, January 23rd

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

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

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