



NEWS FROM

Speaker of the Assembly **Carl E. Heastie**

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well. I'm happy to report that the 2024-25 state budget was recently passed, and I'm confident it will deliver vital resources where they are needed most, strengthen our education system and help ensure a bright future for the Bronx.

In this newsletter, I'd like to share with you some of the major progress we have made in this fiscal year's spending plan. As the legislative session progresses, I will continue to do everything I can to ensure measures that will support and improve our neighborhoods come to fruition.

If you have questions or concerns about the new state budget, or if I can be of assistance with any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office. We're here to serve you!

With Love and Hope,

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly



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SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES

Speaker Heastie Secures Funding to Assist Families with Vital Resources

Community assistance programs are lifelines to families in need of vital resources, from food to health care to heat and air conditioning. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps eligible New Yorkers heat and cool their homes, as well as delivers emergency benefits. This year's budget continues HEAP funding to ensure that we can keep providing for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Supporting New York's 2-1-1 System

Our 2-1-1 hotline system is a vital resource that connects New Yorkers to essential services for everything from health care and food assistance, to aiding in response to natural disasters and other emergencies. To keep this system open 24/7/365, this year's state budget **delivers \$2.4 million to 2-1-1 New York**, ensuring that the dedicated call response specialists on the other end of the line are properly supported as they handle an increased volume of calls.



KEEPING THE BRONX AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

Caring for our children is the highest priority. As we continue to combat rising costs statewide, the Assembly Majority is doing everything it can to save New York families money.

- Provisions for family planning and support for new parents have also been included in this year's budget, helping to give New Yorkers the resources they need at all stages of family development. This plan requires private employers to provide employees with 20 hours of paid prenatal personal leave and both private and public employers to provide time for breast milk expression – an important journey for parents.
- The budget includes **\$1.5 million** for National Diaper Banks and **\$2 million** for cribs for low-income families.



Putting New York's Families First

- This year's budget creates a new **supplemental Empire State Child Credit that provides \$350 million** to help lift the financial burden from the shoulders of parents and guardians statewide.
- The budget also includes \$150 million to create the New York Housing for the Future Program, **\$140 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)**, **\$200 million for the Mitchell-Lama program** and \$75 million for public housing authorities outside of New York City.



PUBLIC SAFETY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Tenant and Homeowner Protections

The 2024-25 state budget continues the fight to protect tenants and homeowners alike across New York. Included in this budget are new tenant protections that will prohibit the removal of a tenant from their home without good cause or reason. By explicitly defining 'good cause' for eviction proceedings, which have now come to include nonpayment of rent, illegal activities and nuisances, and recovery of property for personal use, both tenants and homeowners are protected by this law. Those landlords with a portfolio of 10 units or less are exempt from good cause.

Property ownership is a major investment for communities, and vagueness in the laws can make it difficult for homeowners to assert their rights and protect their property. This budget includes new provisions to state housing law that:

- strictly define a squatter under the law, increasing the ability to act against those who access private property without the right or permission; and
- protect against deed theft.

Combatting Illegal Cannabis Businesses

New York City has seen an increase of illegal cannabis stores across the five boroughs. To combat this phenomena, Speaker Heastie ensured the inclusion of provisions to cut down on the illegal sales of cannabis while giving the Office of Cannabis Management power to padlock operations found to be operating in an illegal manner.

A Greener NY

With climate change causing more problems every year, there's no time to waste. That's why this year's state budget invests **\$2.5 billion in the health and preservation of our environment**, including \$400 million for the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Also, \$500 million will be used to support New York's clean water infrastructure.

This funding will aid in maintaining our parks, safeguarding our water and air, protecting our environment from pollution and much more.

Speaker Heastie Provides Essential Investments Into Health Care and Mental Health Services

Health care services are crucial in our communities as they ensure access to quality medical care, while enhancing the overall well-being of families. The enacted budget makes critical investments in health care and mental health services to continue to prevent and manage disease and improve quality of life for individuals and families.

Enacted 2024-25 State Budget Health and Mental Health Investments Include:

- \$800 million in funding for financially distressed and safety-net hospitals;
- \$350 million in funding for hospital, nursing home and assisted living rate increases;
- \$31.1 million to fund critical programs to help individuals involved in the criminal justice system and diagnosed with a mental illness to get the care and services they need; and
- A cost-of-living increase of 3.2% for OPWDD (human health services) workers.

Cracking Down on Retail Theft

The enacted 2024-25 state budget includes a five-point plan to fight retail theft:

- An increase in criminal penalties (from a misdemeanor to a felony) for anyone who assaults a retail worker;
- A \$40.2 million allotment for dedicated Retail Theft Teams within the State Police, district attorneys' offices and local law enforcement to fight retail theft;
- A \$3,000 tax credit for any small business that spends at least \$4,000 on theft prevention measures;
- Creation of a law to make it illegal if a person uses any website or physical location to sell stolen goods; and
- Giving prosecutors discretion to combine the value of stolen goods from all stores when the thefts were all part of the same criminal scheme, providing a higher larceny threshold when filing charges.



ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FROM PRESCHOOL TO COLLEGE

Supporting New York's students means investing in our children from start to finish. These investments allow young people to achieve and reach their greatest potential. Speaker Heastie secured a budget that provides **\$35.9 billion in funding** to the General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) and provides **\$24.9 billion in Foundation Aid**, a \$934.5 million increase over the 2023-24 School Year (SY).

\$28 million in funding will be directed to the My Brother's Keeper Programs (MBK), for a total of \$172 million in funding since the program's creation.

"A great education is key to giving our children and young adults the strongest possible start in life."

Higher Education

- \$20.7 billion will be invested into higher education with \$1.3 billion to the State University of New York (SUNY) and \$858 million to the City University of New York (CUNY).
- The minimum TAP award will increase from \$500 to \$1,000 and part-time TAP awards are expanded to proprietary college students.



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NEWS FROM

Speaker
Carl E. Heastie

"The state budget has been enacted, but my work is far from finished. As we enter the last leg of this year's legislative session, I will continue to fight to make life better for Bronx families."

— Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie

