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May 16, 2021

Dear Friends,

The pace of vaccinations has increased, and there are now numerous options for receiving your free vaccine. Visit the state [Department of Health website](#) for information on state or private vaccination locations. Fifty percent of adult New Yorkers have completed their vaccine series.

The vaccination rates have brought results. Last week, Governor Cuomo announced that the statewide COVID-19 positivity rate dropped to 1.08 percent the lowest since October 10.

Following the endorsement of the Centers for Disease Control of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents 12 to 15 years of age, New York State has authorized all providers enrolled in the NYS COVID-19 vaccination program to expand eligibility for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to people in the 12-15 age group. This age group can now go to state-run sites or local pharmacies to receive the Pfizer two dose vaccine.

This newsletter includes:

- Information on a **privacy roundtable** I will be co-hosting as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Science and Technology this Friday.
- An announcement of the 2021 round of the **Consolidated Funding Application process**. This is the application window for most state agency grants to assist local governments, businesses and not-for-profits. You should look into the CFA resource material links to see if there are any state grant programs that would be helpful to the work of your organization. There was no 2020 round because of Covid-19.

In last week's update, I indicated that **identity theft issues** had slowed the processing of unemployment insurance claims. The enormity of the broader identity theft challenge was further documented this week in a report by State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli available [HERE](#). The report indicated that identity thefts in New York surged during the pandemic with more than 67,000 complaints filed statewide in 2020, which was 85 percent more than the previous year and more than four times the annual total from a decade ago.

As always, if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,



I joined my colleagues in the legislature to celebrate funding we were able to include in the state budget to help ArtsWestchester's "Restart The Arts" initiative. The \$1M grant will be distributed by ArtsWestchester to local arts organizations in Westchester and Rockland counties.

Data Privacy Roundtable Will Focus on Legislative Choices

On Friday May 21st, I will be co-hosting an Assembly Roundtable discussion on the important issue of data privacy. The discussion is a joint meeting of the Assembly Science and Technology Committee, which I chair, and the Assembly Consumer Protection Committee. We expect to hear comments from tech industry representatives, privacy experts and consumer advocates. The goal of the meeting is to hear comments on the expanding topic of individual and consumer privacy as the technological issues and tools in this area continue to expand. Legislation on aspects of these issues are pending or have been passed in other states, Europe and in Congress. My hope is that New York can play an important role as we consider what kinds of laws we will adopt.



2021 NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) for State Grants

The CFA state grant process was developed to consolidate multiple applications from different state agencies into a single application format and serve as a single-entry point for most state grants funding. Having skipped a year due to Covid, it is likely there will be an increase in the number of applications submitted in most categories this year.

This year, approximately \$750 million in state funding will be available through the CFA process. Information and application guidance is available online on the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) website at www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov.

- [2021 Available Resources Guide](#) – This year there are over 30 programs available through nine state agencies.
- [2021 REDC Guidebook](#) – Learn more about the 11th round of the REDC initiative.
- [2021 CFA Program Webinars](#) – Find recorded webinars for all funding programs available in this year's REDC round.
- [2021 CFA Application Guide](#)

Grant opportunities include funding for community development (including the arts, parks, recreation and historic preservation), waterfront revitalization, energy efficiency projects, environmental improvements, sustainability planning and implementation, and workforce development. The Regional Economic Development Guidebook contains a broader overview of the CFA process. The Application Guide provides detail on the mechanics of submitting the online application.

The applications process opened on Wednesday, May 10th and concludes at 4:00 pm on Friday, July 30th. Applicants are again strongly encouraged to complete their applications in advance of the 4.00 pm deadline to avoid any issues. The CFA application is available online [HERE](#)

Assembly Passes Legislation Expanding Voters' Access to the Ballot

Legislation Includes Constitutional Amendments to Allow No Excuse Absentee Ballots and Same Day Voter Registration

The Assembly passed legislation to expand access to absentee ballot voting in New York by removing the constitutional barrier to "no excuse" absentee ballots and allowing voters to request absentee ballots online. A second constitutional change would permit the Legislature to allow voters to register and vote on Election Day. These measures would make it easier for voters to register and cast their ballots. This is second passage for both constitutional amendments, in the next step in the process they will go before New York's voters for approval.

The Assembly Majority today passed several bills that would reform the absentee ballot process in New York State and make it easier for New Yorkers to cast their ballots by mail. Under current New York State law, a voter must provide a specific reason for why they will not be able to vote in person in order to obtain an absentee ballot. A constitutional amendment passed today would eliminate that requirement, allowing for a "no excuse" absentee ballot ([A.4431](#)).

The Assembly also passed legislation that would allow voters to request absentee ballots electronically, increasing accessibility while maintaining the level of safety that is required due to the COVID-19 pandemic ([A.6046](#)). A third bill would make Election Day the last day an absentee ballot can be postmarked, consistent with the deadline for hand-delivered absentee ballots ([A.6047-A](#)).



All persons over the age of 12 are now eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine with many locations offering walk-in visits. To make an appointment visit your local pharmacy website or the state's website here:

NY State Covid-19 Vaccine Appointments
[Am I Eligible](#)

or by calling NYS Vaccination Hotline:
1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).



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