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91st Assembly District  
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

October 7, 2021

Dear Friends,

This newsletter provides new information on a number of the issues challenging Westchester: FEMA opening the application process for governmental flood mitigation projects, news on Covid-19 booster shots and announcement that Governor Hochul has signed legislation I co-sponsored to give SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients more options for accessing benefits.

This week is National Digital Inclusion week. I will be participating in a press conference in Yonkers and a webinar in Mamaroneck to talk about the importance of digital inclusion programs in bringing digital literacy to those most often deprived of digital access based on economics, race or age. My proposal to create a NYS Digital Inclusion Grant program was included in the adopted 2021-22 state budget.

We also received good news on the reopening of the Ridge Street Elementary School in the Blind Brook School District. Senator Shelley Mayor and I worked closely with the State Education Department to assist the school district in completing the work needed for the required inspection. Details are included below.

I am also continuing my work on clean water with the upcoming Clean Water Infrastructure Grant workshop.

Inside this newsletter you will find:

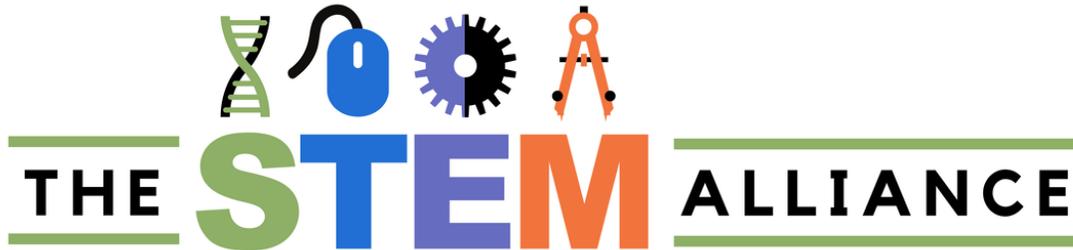
- Digital Equity in Westchester Free Webinar
- Clean Water Infrastructure Grant Workshop and Funding Information
- Ridge Street School Reopens
- State Applications for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance
- New SNAP recipient legislation

- Covid-19 vaccine booster updates

My staff and I are always available to assist residents on any issues that may arise. If I can be helpful, please call my office at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,

*Steve*



Thursday, October 7th @7:30pm

## Digital Equity in Westchester

AN URGENT CALL FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION AS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & RECOVERY

### PANELISTS

**Jordan Cormier**  
Director of Programming, Youth Shelter of Westchester

**Grace Battaglia**  
Director of Marketing & Community Relations  
Open Door Family Medical Center and Foundation

**Dr. Fenix Arias**  
Chief of Operations, Yonkers Public Schools

**Assemblyman Steve Otis**  
New York State District 91

**A Free Webinar**

Hosted by  
The STEM Alliance

**Digital Equity in Westchester - A STEM Alliance Webinar**

In celebration of National Digital Inclusion week, join a Free Webinar about [Digital Equity in Westchester](#)

**Thursday, October 7, 2021 @ 7:30pm**

[Register](#)



New York State  
Assemblyman Steve Otis  
*invites you to a*

## **NYS CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT WORKSHOP**

**NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation  
A Special Workshop on EFC's Water Infrastructure Grant Programs and  
Other Clean Water Financing Opportunities.**

**Wednesday, October 20, 2021  
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  
Jay Heritage Center – Carriage House  
210 Boston Post Road, Rye, NY 10580**

*Admission is free, but registration is required.  
[Register: NYS Clean Water Grant Workshop](#)*

*Covid-19 protocols to be observed: Proof of vaccination and masking required for this event.*

**EFC's Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) Grants:** EFC is providing \$400 million in competitive grants for projects that fund water quality infrastructure for wastewater and drinking water projects that protect or improve water quality and public health. Municipalities may submit applications for multiple projects, including wastewater, sewer and drinking water projects.

**Intermunicipal Water Grant (IMG) Program:** EFC provides grants to assist municipalities that are working together on water quality infrastructure projects. Grants are available for both drinking water and sewage treatment works, also referred to as clean water projects that serve multiple municipalities, such as a shared water quality infrastructure project or the interconnection of multiple municipal water systems.

**Networking opportunities with informational tables available to learn about local sustainable initiatives throughout the Lower Hudson Valley.**



[Register](#)

### **Blind Brook Elementary School School Re-Opens Following Inspection**

Senator Mayer and I were pleased that the inspection last week of the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School yielded a positive result, and that the school was able to re-open earlier this week following the issuance of a temporary certificate of

occupancy. Unquestionably the delayed September school opening for in-person learning had been extremely concerning to parents, educators, community members and us. We are encouraged that children can now return to classrooms, engage directly with their teachers and be with their peers in the very near future.

We want to acknowledge and recognize the many parents and community members who spoke out as well as those who reached out to us directly asking for assistance during this time. We heard you and we facilitated the productive working relationship between the State Education Department and the school district with the urgency needed to move this building project forward.

We want to thank Commissioner Betty Rosa and the leadership of the State Education Department for their commitment to the students and families of Blind Brook-Rye and their hands-on assistance in resolving this crisis. This reopening would not have been possible without their direct assistance. When construction-related building code issues at the school were identified, Commissioner Rosa provided an unprecedented level of guidance, expertise and SED staff support to assist the district in completing needed work to reopen the school as quickly as possible.



**FEMA**

**NYS Now Accepting Applications for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance**

***The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Programs Administered by NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to Help Communities Fund Mitigation Projects***

***Following Devastation from the Remnants of Hurricane Ida, Governor Hochul Urging Municipalities and Government Agencies to Apply for Critical Funding Focused on Resiliency***

Governor Hochul announced State agencies, cities, towns, and Indian Tribal governments can now apply for federal funding through the \$1.16 billion Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities and Flood Mitigation Assistance grant programs to assist with mitigation projects designed to strengthen resiliency against future national disasters such as severe floods, wildfires, and hurricanes. The application period is open through November 30, 2021 to apply for funds using the Federal Emergency Management Agency's online system, FEMA GO. The State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services will review the applications and assist applicants with questions on the process.

This year, [BRIC](#) and [FMA](#) will prioritize projects that benefit disadvantaged communities in alignment with the guiding principle of promoting equity through implementation of the [Justice40 Initiative](#). These pre-disaster programs fund projects that help improve resiliency, reduce disaster suffering, and avoid future disaster costs, especially in disadvantaged and at-risk communities that are often disproportionately impacted by climate change.

New York State Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Patrick A. Murphy said, "We are urging communities across the State to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation funds to complete projects benefitting their citizens and improve their preparedness for future natural disasters. These funds will allow communities to reduce their vulnerability, protect lives and strengthen their ability to address changing climate conditions."

These nationally competitive mitigation grants do not cover immediate needs or repairs from recent severe storms. These grants are to assist in implementing a sustained pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation program to reduce overall risk to the population and structures from future hazard events, while also reducing reliance on federal funding in future disasters.

Each of the grant programs limits maximum project cost and the corresponding federal share. Applicants cover the remaining project cost after the federal share has been applied.

For information on available resources for survivors of Ida, visit [www.ny.gov/ida](http://www.ny.gov/ida).

For more information, please visit [www.dhSES.ny.gov/recovery/](http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/recovery/) or contact DHSES Mitigation at [HazardMitigation@dhSES.ny.gov](mailto:HazardMitigation@dhSES.ny.gov).

**New Legislation to Help Homeless, Disabled and Elderly SNAP Recipients  
Purchase Prepared Meals**

*Launches \$25 Million Restaurant Resiliency Program, Building on the  
Successful Nourish New York Initiative, to Provide a Boost to Struggling Restaurants  
While Feeding Families in Need*

*Restaurants Can Apply [Here](#) for the Resiliency Program Beginning Today*

Governor Hochul signed legislation (S.64/A.1524) establishing a statewide Restaurant Meals Program as part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The legislation mandates the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to apply for USDA approval to authorize the program, which would allow homeless,

elderly and disabled SNAP recipients to use their benefits for prepared or hot food from participating restaurants.

The Governor also announced the launch of the \$25 million Restaurant Resiliency Program to provide relief to the restaurant industry, which continues to face severe challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, proposed by the legislature, will build on the successful Nourish New York initiative. It will provide funding to New York's network of food banks and emergency food providers to purchase prepared meals from New York restaurants and deliver them to families in need.



### **Covid-19 Booster Doses Now Available for Eligible New Yorkers**

On Monday, Governor Hochul announced that New York State endorsed the CDC's recommendations to ensure at-risk New Yorkers can stay protected from the virus and encouraged all New Yorkers to stay up to date with recommended vaccines this fall including the seasonal flu shot. Workers in high-exposure jobs, including school staff, may receive a Pfizer booster shot, based on an assessment of their individual benefits and risks.

A new dedicated booster website has also launched to help New Yorkers get their shot. Visit [NY.gov/Boosters](https://ny.gov/Boosters) for more information.

### **Area Pop Up Vaccine Clinics:**

- October 20, 2021 from 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm
  - **White Plains High School**, Library, 550 North Street, **White Plains**, NY 10605
- October 22, 2021 from 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm
  - **Highlands School**, Middle School Gym, 128 Grandview Avenue, **White Plains**, NY 10605
- October 27, 2021 from 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm
  - **Columbus Elementary School**, Gym, 275 Washington Ave, **New**

**Rochelle, NY 10801**

- November 13, 2021 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
  - **Rye High/Middle School**, Middle School Gym, 3 Parsons St. **Rye**, NY 10580
- **Ongoing Vaccine Clinics:**
  - **White Plains Vaccination Clinic**  
134 Court St., White Plains  
Fridays from 10-1pm  
Walk-ins accepted; offers Pfizer

Westchester County Department of Health will be holding **Pfizer vaccine booster clinics**, by appointment only, every Wednesday and Thursday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, at 134 Court Street in White Plains. To be eligible to **receive a Pfizer booster dose**, you must have completed your original Pfizer vaccine series **at least six months ago and you must fall into one of the following categories:**

- 18+ who lives or works in a [high-risk setting](#)
- 18+ with [underlying medical conditions](#)
- 65 years and older

