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Assemblywoman  
Woerner secured for  
our families

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Dear Neighbor,

I hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy. As the battle against COVID-19 continues, I've been working hard to support our families, including passing a 2021-22 state budget that invests in the future of our communities.

In this newsletter, you'll find a brief overview of the budget. From child care funding to small business assistance, this budget includes a number of priority items that were raised to me by individuals, groups and businesses in Saratoga and Washington counties.

If you have any questions or concerns about the budget or any other issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office at 518-584-5493 or [WoernerC@nyassembly.gov](mailto:WoernerC@nyassembly.gov).

Sincerely,



**2021-22 Budget  
Newsletter** from  
Assemblywoman  
Carrie Woerner



Your feedback is important. For questions or concerns about community issues, please contact my office at:

Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner  
112 Spring St., Suite 205, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
518-584-5493 | [WoernerC@nyassembly.gov](mailto:WoernerC@nyassembly.gov)



### Supporting our communities

To help ensure that our local communities get their fair share, the budget restores revenue generated by Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) for the City of Saratoga Springs. An equitable agreement was also reached between the Saratoga Harness Association and Rivers Casino reestablishing the casino's responsibility to provide support payments to fund purses and breeder awards for the Saratoga Harness Track.

Additionally, I secured funding for Pitney Meadows Community Farm and Comfort Food Community to expand their programs to better meet the needs of people facing food insecurity throughout Saratoga and Washington counties. And the budget expands supervised youth hunting during deer season in counties that choose to opt into this program.

### Investing in our children's future

The 2021-22 budget helps ensure our students continue to receive a quality education. This includes expanding pre-K programs to schools that have previously not been able to offer one, including the Mechanicville, Schuylerville, Shenendehowa, Argyle, Fort Edward and Salem school districts. In addition, several districts will receive additional funding to expand their programs, including Ballston Spa, Saratoga Springs, Stillwater, Greenwich and Hartford.

K-12 schools also saw an increase in Foundation Aid ranging from 3% to over 10%. Further, capital funds for library construction were increased to help local libraries with plans to expand their facilities in the coming year to better meet the needs of our communities.

To support New Yorkers' pursuit of higher education, the amount of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grant was increased by \$500, bringing it to \$5,665 – the first increase in seven years. Funding to SUNY and CUNY universities and to community colleges was also increased, and there will be no tuition increase at any of the state universities or colleges.

### Helping small businesses

This budget provides much-needed assistance for small businesses affected by the pandemic. A new \$800 million COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant program has been established to help cover various business costs or pandemic-incurred expenses.

A new \$40 million Arts Recovery Grant program will assist performing arts organizations like SPAC, the Hudson River Music Hall and Hubbard Hall. This program will help with reopening efforts of various not-for-profit arts organizations and provide financial support for the conversion of outdoor venue spaces.

I also heard from many of my constituents about the need to expand affordable, quality child care to help parents go back to work full-time. The budget expands the number of subsidized child care slots and provides support for providers to establish child care centers in areas that don't currently have any or enough providers, such as the Adirondacks and parts of Saratoga and Washington counties.



### Assisting renters and landlords

To help tenants who have been unable to pay their rent because of a job or income loss due to COVID-19, the 2021-22 budget includes a federally-funded program allowing them to apply for rental assistance to cover back rent. Landlords can also apply on behalf of their tenant, with the tenant's permission. Funds will be disbursed directly to the landlord. An additional state fund was established for landlords whose tenants are not eligible for this rental assistance but are behind on rent.

### Boosting New York's agriculture

The budget provides significant funding for agriculture commodity support programs, including the Empire Sheep Producers. The Farm Viability Institute and research programs at the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Science (CALs) were fully funded, and funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension was increased, for a total of \$4.4 million.

Additionally, the budget allocates \$18 million for farmland conservation programs. The Farmland for a New Generation program, run by American Farmland Trust in Saratoga County, also saw an increase in funding to \$500,000.

The budget also invests \$50 million in Nourish New York, which supports farmers who sell food to food banks and helps ensure that New Yorkers have access to healthy, locally grown foods. And to help farmers with the rising cost of labor, the farm workforce retention tax credit was extended for three years.

### Expanding access to broadband

Since many households still lack access to reliable high-speed internet, the budget invests in developing a complete mapping of broadband availability across the state, which will serve as the basis for investment in finally delivering broadband for all New Yorkers. The budget also includes a measure requiring broadband companies to provide a low-cost option for New Yorkers of \$15 or \$20 a month depending on the level of service. Certain smaller companies with a limited customer base are excluded from this requirement. Please check with your provider for their low-cost options.

### Improving infrastructure

The state budget increases funding for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs), including more than \$2.3 million for Washington County - a 21.03% increase over last year - and nearly \$3.2 million for Saratoga County - a 19.78% increase. It also includes funding to help municipalities complete roadwork on "touring roads," which are state roads in cities, such as Route 29 in Saratoga Springs.

### Protecting our environment

To further help our communities, the budget includes \$500 million for clean water infrastructure programs. This funding will help communities looking at the feasibility of a new water system like Salem and those with aging water systems like Stillwater. In addition, the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) received \$300 million.

The budget also establishes a new 30% Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit for Small Projects. For communities with historic downtown centers, like Mechanicville or Hudson Falls, this credit will help bring in private investment to purchase, rehabilitate and restore downtown buildings.

