



Dear Neighbors,

I am thrilled to introduce a new addition to our team, Melanie, who is serving as our Albany intern for the 2022 Legislative Session.



Melanie is a senior at SUNY Old Westbury majoring in Politics, Economics, and Law and minoring in Pre-Law. After graduating this spring, she plans to attend law school and further her education in the field of health care law and public policy. Melanie is an active volunteer at Parker Jewish Rehabilitation in New Hyde Park, Long Island, and has volunteered as a tutor for the School with Students with Disabilities at SUNY, OW. She also enjoys outdoor activities with her dog, Thomas, and reading. Welcome to the team, Melanie!

# Community Resources

## **NYSEG Billing Issues:**

We are hearing of widespread concerns with increases on NYSEG bills for local customers. If this issue is affecting you, please complete the following survey:

**CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE NYSEG BILLING SURVEY**

## **Gift Card Scam Alert!**

We have heard about an uptick in gift card scams in our area. Recently a constituent contacted our office about their a scammer calling them, claiming to be a federal investigator. When scammer was asked for proof of identity, they supplied a convincing image of a badge and an ID number. They presented the constituent with an urgent scenario that could only be taken care of by immediate action that included the purchase of gift cards.

**REMEMBER** - legitimate businesses do not ask for payments in the form of gift cards. They will not call, email or text this type of request. If you get such a request, please notify the police.

If you are the unfortunate victim of such a scam you should:

- Contact the retailer that issued the gift card
- File a report with your local police
- Report the fraud to the Federal Trade Commission
  - <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>
- Report the fraud to your state attorney general
  - <https://ag.ny.gov/complaint-forms>

## **Water Bill Assistance**

Behind on your drinking water and wastewater services bills? LIHWAP may be able to help. Visit [www.otda.ny.gov/programs/water-assistance](http://www.otda.ny.gov/programs/water-assistance) to see if you're eligible or to fill out an application.



The **Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)**

helps income-eligible households pay past due bills for drinking water and wastewater services.

The maximum benefit is **\$2,500** per provider or **\$5,000** if drinking water and wastewater services are combined.

## Income Tax Return

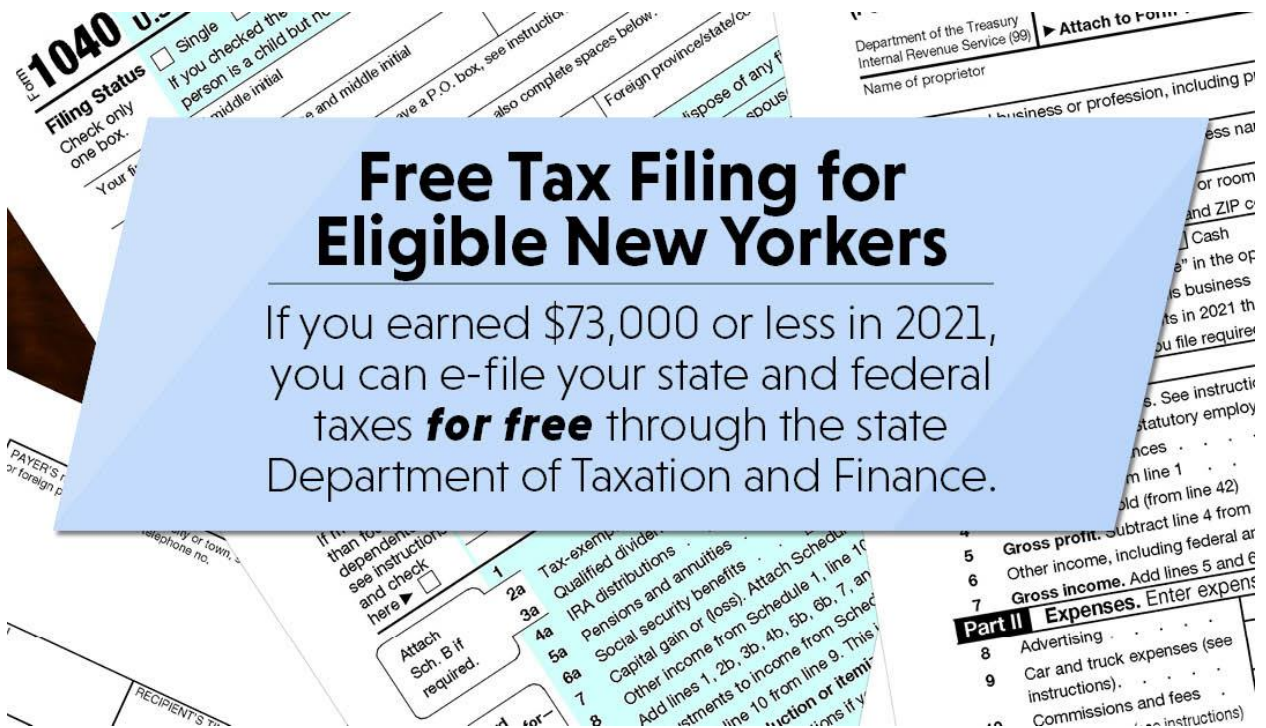
We know that many New Yorkers are facing increased financial burdens related to the pandemic. My team and I want to make sure you are taking advantage of all of the tax benefits available to you. To get started on your income tax return, check your refund status or find free assistance, visit <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/>.

Free File can help you claim valuable tax credits without the cost of hiring a paid tax preparer. The software provides savings as well as puts money directly in your pocket by ensuring you claim the credits you deserve, including the earned income tax credit (EITC).

### **Earned Income Tax Credits are worth up to \$9,083 for a family with three or more children**

EITC is a refundable credit for working taxpayers who earn less than \$57,414. This means you get a refund even if the credit amount is more than what you owe in taxes. [More info here!](#)





### Have a safe and restful weekend!

My team and I have been enjoying watching all of our amazing athletes compete in the Winter Olympics in Beijing. A huge congratulations to Cornell's [Karen Chen](#), whose fourth place finish in the individual free skate helped the U.S. figure skating team win the silver medal in the team competition on Monday. We also hear there is a big football game this weekend! Have fun and be safe out there!



In good health,

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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