



August 14, 2023

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for your continued outreach to my office and advocacy on behalf of Ithaca Carshare and bill [A5718](#). I recognize that this is such an important bill for our community to maintain carshare as a transportation option. Ithaca Carshare had to pause operations on May 19 and is at risk of permanent closure. My legislative team and I have been working diligently with Sen. Lea Webb, communicating with the Governor's staff and advocating for the Governor to sign the bill that was passed by both the Senate and Assembly in June. Please know that this is a priority for my office, and I will keep you informed on the bill's status.

## Around the District

### **New York State Assembly Citations**

One of the honors I have as your Assemblymember is to recognize outstanding citizens and organizations in the district with an official New York State Assembly Citation. This award acknowledges individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to the life of our community, either through their leadership, service, or career achievements. While I may not have the opportunity to share with constituents every time a citation is

awarded, I am so grateful for the dedication and service of these award recipients and wanted to take a moment to recognize the [2023 Citation Recipients to date](#).

I am continuously in awe of the outstanding work of constituents. If your organization is celebrating the achievements of an individual or a significant milestone and you'd like to discuss an Assembly Citation, please reach out to District Office Director, [Cathy Emilian](#), who coordinates the process in my office.



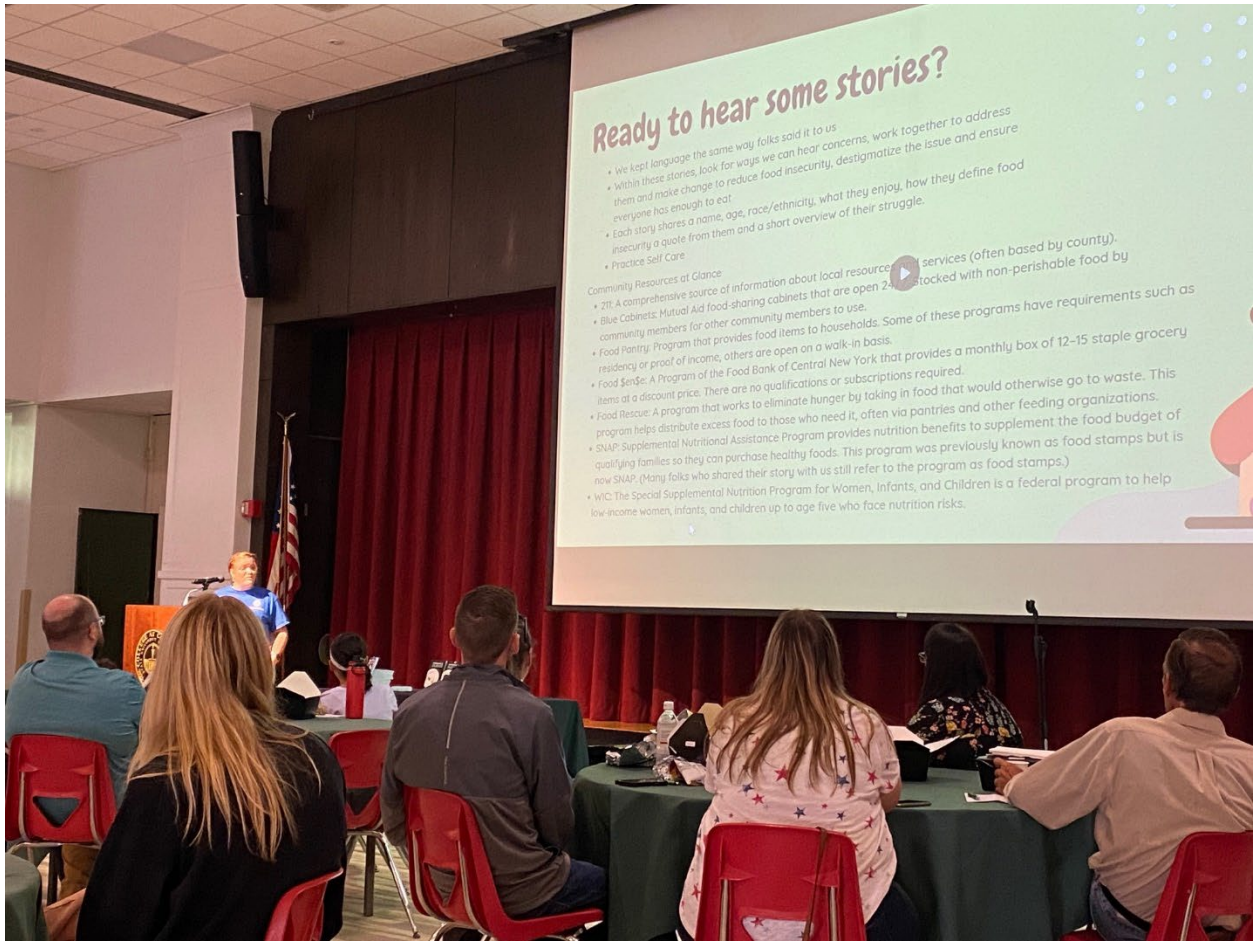
## **Funding for Cortland Free Library**

I am excited to share that the Cortland Free Library has been allocated \$691,750 in state aid for library construction funds. The funds will enable the library to reconfigure the main reading room, expand and reconfigure elevator access, install a new HVAC system and install an exterior sign. The funds are from \$34 million in capital funds for public library construction and broadband infrastructure projects provided in the FY 2022-2023 State Budget.

New York's public libraries are central community hubs but are in urgent need of renovation and upgrading. More than half of the over 1,000 public library buildings in communities across New York are over 60 years old. Many local public libraries are unable to accommodate users with disabilities, are energy inefficient, and struggle to provide Internet and computer access because of outdated and inadequate electrical wiring. I applaud New York's commitment to libraries and look forward to these funds enhancing the Cortland community.

## **Food Insecurity in Cortland County Storytelling Event**

Over the last two years, Seven Valleys Health Coalition (SVHC) has been working with community members in Cortland County to hear and document their experiences with food insecurity through a storytelling project. My team was able to attend the culminating event last week at SUNY Cortland to understand lived experiences and participate in a community discussion on lessons learned related to addressing food insecurity. SVHC has created a [shortened version of the presentation](#) as well as compiled all the stories into a book, which will be available for purchase soon through Barnes and Noble. Thank you to SVHC and all the community organizations working daily to address food insecurity.



# From the Speaker

**Excelsior Scholarship Deadline**

Most New Yorkers in households earning under \$125,000 qualify to attend SUNY or CUNY colleges tuition-free thanks to the Excelsior Scholarship. If you're pursuing a college degree, this scholarship can help you chart a course to a brighter future! Visit [www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior](http://www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior) to learn more and apply today.



**Unclaimed Funds**

The NYS comptroller announced that the state currently holds over \$18.4 billion in unclaimed funds – money from dormant utility and bank accounts, uncashed checks, investment accounts, insurance claims, stocks and other inactive accounts. Visit <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/unclaimed-funds> to see if any of this money belongs to you.



**Are you owed money?**

**The New York state  
comptroller's office has  
billions of dollars of New  
Yorkers' unclaimed funds.**

**Check to see if any lost  
funds have your name on it!**

# COVID-19 News & Resources

Tompkins County Whole Health (TCWH) is alerting the community to a [recent rise in COVID-19 cases](#) throughout the county and the importance of being up to date on your COVID-19 vaccinations. TCWH encourages community members to consider being proactive by wearing [high-quality masks](#) when indoors and consider personal risk when gathering with others. If you are in need of COVID-19 at home test kits, please contact either my Ithaca or Cortland district offices.

# Community Resources

## **Health Alert: Increase in Opioid Related Deaths in Tompkins County**

Tompkins County Whole Health is alerting the community to an increase in opioid related deaths in Tompkins County. Within the first half of this year (January-June 2023), there have already been 17 reported [drug-related overdose deaths](#) in Tompkins County. Compared to annual totals from the



past 5 years in Tompkins County, this represents a significant increase in drug-related overdose deaths. Multiple factors affect the rate of overdose in the community, including the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased presence of fentanyl and xylazine in illicit street drugs. For resources, prevention and treatment information, visit the [Tompkins County website](#).

## **Climate Friendly Homes Fund**

The Climate Friendly Homes Fund, a \$250M fund launched by New York State Homes and Community Renewal and administered by the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC), is now offering 0% interest, forgivable loans and technical assistance for building upgrades that prepare existing small rental buildings to operate on clean energy. This funding will cover the installation of high-efficiency electric heat pumps for heating and cooling, domestic hot water heating system replacement with heat pump water heaters, and limited additional building envelope and ventilation system improvements.

Eligible buildings must be located in New York State, with between 5 and 50 residential units per building, and currently be subject to a regulatory agreement with a public agency OR be located in either a Low-Moderate Income Qualified Census Tract OR a NYSEERDA Disadvantaged Community. You can review [more information](#) and find the [program details and applications](#) online.

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In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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