



Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes



Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes led the Assembly through one of the most productive sessions in Albany in recent memory while continuing her work for the people here in her district.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As our State reopens, I hope everyone is staying safe, having fun, and enjoying this fantastic summer weather.

It's time for my post-legislative session newsletter. I'm proud to report to you on the progress I've been making as a community servant and the New York State Assembly Majority Leader. This has been a trying year for everyone, but it hasn't been without its bright spots. From record funding for education, pandemic recovery for small businesses, the passing of my landmark bill: The Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA), to renter and homeowner assistance that's underway, there is something here for everyone.

It has been a challenging yet productive year as Majority Leader. I look forward to continuing to hear from and working with you, my constituents, and community stakeholders to help me fight to improve the quality of life for the people of Buffalo, Western New York, and the entire State of New York.

Sincerely,

Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes

Peoples-Stokes Helps Announce New \$8 Million Cryo-Electron Microscopy Center at Hauptman-Woodward Institute



Assembly Majority Crystal Peoples-Stokes attends ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Cryo-Electron Microscopy Center at Hauptman-Woodward Institute. This new \$8 million state-of-the-art medical research facility in Western New York will allow scientists to make groundbreaking medical and biological findings to accelerate drug discovery and treatment of disease. The Majority Leader is proud to have secured \$1 million in DASNY funds for this project.

Upcoming Events

FREE MOVIE NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

HOSTED BY Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes

Wednesday, August 11th 6:00 pm

Wednesday, August 18th 6:00 pm

Buffalo Museum of Science | 1020 Humboldt Parkway | Buffalo, NY 14211

COVID-19 Update

I'm proud to say that New York State went from being one of the hardest-hit states in the country, to now being one of the leaders in its efforts to combat the virus. Today, over 70 percent of New Yorkers have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and the rate of new COVID-19 cases have dropped to the lowest levels in the nation, allowing communities and businesses to re-open and lift all restrictions. New York State's new COVID vaccination efforts involve targeting zip codes with lower vaccination rates, which includes 14215. Getting the most people vaccinated as possible is key to getting through this pandemic.

I would like to thank my staff who have distributed over 49,000 masks and 208 gallons of sanitizer to residents and organizations in need.

FREE MOVIE NIGHT AT THE NORTH PARK THEATRE

HOSTED BY Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes

Wednesday, August 25th 6:30 pm

1482 Hertel Avenue | Buffalo, NY 14216

Marijuana Expungement and Community Day

- Thursday, September 2nd - 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
- Augustin "Pucho" Olivencia Community Center, 261 Swan St, Buffalo, NY 14204
- Saturday, October 16th – 11am – 1pm
- Greater Faith Bible Tabernacle, 391 Edison Ave, Buffalo, NY 14215

Wills & Estates Planning Workshop:

JFK Community Center, 114 Hickory St, Buffalo, NY 14204

- INTAKE: Saturday, September 18th, 10 am - 12 pm
- EXECUTION: Saturday, November 6th, 10 am - 12 pm

After Helping Restore \$13 Million in Cuts to Roswell Park, Peoples-Stokes Announces Creation of 100 New WNY Jobs



As one of the nation's leading cancer research hospitals, the proposed cuts threatened the hospital's ability to hire the staff necessary to continue to maintain their world-class levels of service. The threat to the hospital's funding was compounded by the moratoriums on elective surgeries that were imposed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further cut into the hospital's revenue streams. In total, this year's state budget provides \$51,463,000 in operating funding for the world's first cancer research hospital.

"Roswell Park has historically been a world leading institution in cancer research, committed to the fight to end cancer," said Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes. "When state budget cuts greatly threatened Roswell Park's operations and its standing as a world-leading cancer research center, I decided to take action. Through strong and decisive action, I have been able to successfully restore \$13 million to the cancer center. As a result, this funding will create 100 new jobs here in WNY dedicated to cancer education, research, prevention, and treatment."

The 2021 Summer "Earn While You Learn" Program

Buffalo plans to pay 200 high schoolers this summer to successfully complete class as part of the city's plan to help combat learning loss during the pandemic.

The new "Earn While You Learn" program will be added to offerings from the city's Mayor Byron Brown's Summer Youth Program, which provides paid jobs and career-building opportunities, and the Buffalo City School District will make "Earn While You Learn" integral to its wide array of PreK-12 summer programs. Students selected for the "Earn While You Learn" option will have a blended day - most spent on academics, the rest on acquiring and strengthening soft skills related to job experience. Wages will start at \$12.50/hr paid for by the City.

Contact: Elena Cala - 716.254.1250 www.buffaloschools.org

Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program

The New York State COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program was created to provide flexible grant assistance to currently viable small businesses, micro-businesses and for-profit independent arts and cultural organizations in the State of New York who have experienced economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Grants will be for a minimum award of \$5,000 and a maximum award of \$50,000 and will be calculated based on a New York State business' annual gross receipts for 2019.

For more information or to see if your business is eligible, please visit: <https://esd.ny.gov/business-pandemic-recovery-initiative>.

Need Help Paying for Child Care?

NYS Expanded Child Tax Credit payments to eligible families started going out on July 15. The maximum credit under the program is \$300 per month for each child under age six and \$250 for each child ages six to 17. These advanced payments will total 50% of the benefit, and recipients will receive the rest of the benefit as a credit on next year's tax returns. Recipients may also unenroll from advanced payments and instead receive the entire benefit amount as a credit on next year's tax returns.

Visit www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/advance-child-tax-credit-payments-in-2021 to learn more.

Legislative Lane

A1248A (Chapter 92 of the Laws of 2021) - Creates a comprehensive and equitable framework for cannabis recreational use and sale in New York State through the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act

A8026 (Passed both Houses) - Grants former Police Officer Cariol Horne a rightfully deserved retroactive retirement date of August 5, 2010 from the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System

A3523A (Passed both Houses) - Expands the scope of practice of applied behavior analysis, thereby allowing many more deserving patients access to this critical and effective treatment

A4668 (Passed both Houses) - Provides patient stability and protections by preventing non-medical changes of prescription drug formularies during a contract year

A5463 (Chapter 170 of the Laws of 2021) - Provides the city of Buffalo flexibility in marketing of certain bonds and notes

A5464 (Chapter 171 of the Laws of 2021) - Provides Erie County flexibility in marketing of certain bonds and notes

A6247A (Passed both Houses) - Expands the requirements of the state community reinvestment act to non-depository lenders

A6392 (Passed both Houses) - Allows individuals to register on the lifesaving Donate Life organ, eye, and tissue donation registry via electronic applications administered by the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, the Higher Education Services Corporation, and on certain electronic tax filings documents

A7183 (Passed both Houses) - Extends the residential parking permit system in the Fruitbelt neighborhood for five years

A7729 (Passed both Houses) - Allows public defenders, legal aid societies, and administrators of assigned counsel plans to have access to the Division of Criminal Justice Services criminal history records (commonly referred to as Rap Sheets) in order to provide more effective representation and confirm accurate histories

WNY Delegation Announces \$814 Million Record State Funding for Buffalo Public Schools



Superintendent Dr. Kriner Cash was joined by the Majority Leader and her WNY Delegation colleagues that represent the Buffalo Public School District (Assemblymember Conrad, Senator Kennedy, Assemblymember Rivera, and Senator Ryan), to announce that the new State Budget provides a 10.38% overall increase in funding, including a nearly 8% increase in Foundation Aid - totaling more than \$814 million in funding.

"As Buffalo Public Schools works to return 32,000 students across 65 schools for full-time, in-person education, it is vital to the momentum of progress that schools have the resources required to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic," said Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes. "This historic increase in funding for BPS will not only help schools recover from the pandemic but provide students with remedial learning support so that they can soar to new and impressive heights."

East Side Homeowner Assistance Coming Soon

Buffalo's East Side covers approximately one-third of the city yet has very few historic districts, whether locally designated or listed on the National Register of Historic Places - meaning it largely lacks the protections and funding opportunities provided by such designations. In an effort to help rectify this, Preservation Buffalo Niagara (PBN) has been working with a steering committee of scholars and local neighborhood historians, as well as project consultant Bero Architecture, on an East Side Context Statement with \$25,000 in matching funds provided by the Majority Leader, the Preservation League of New York State, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Now nearing completion, this study will be released in 2021 and will identify and describe major themes in the physical and cultural development of the East Side. The Context Statement will help identify new East Side historic districts which will then be eligible to access The New York State Historic Homeowner Tax Credit Program which will cover 20% of qualified rehabilitation costs of owner-occupied historic houses, up to a credit value of \$50,000. Eligible buildings must be individually listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places or located within a listed historic district. For more info on the tax credit process, please visit: <https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/>.

Capital Projects Funded

Below is a list of capital projects recently approved and funded by my office through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY):

Grantee	Award Amount
Hauptman Woodward Medical Research Institute – Cryo-Electron Microscope	\$1,000,000
Say Yes to Education Buffalo – Office Construction	\$1,000,000
City of Buffalo – Expansion and Construction of 509 Michigan Ave.	\$1,000,000
City of Buffalo – Construction of African American Veterans Monument	\$600,000
Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers – Construction of Westminster Commons Senior Apartments	\$500,000
NFTA – Repaving Utica Bus Loop & New Bus Shelters	\$500,000
City of Buffalo – Michigan St. Archway & Corridor Streetscape	\$275,000
Gerard Place – Renovation of Community Center	\$250,000
Gerard Place – Renovation of Training and Ancillary Space	\$250,000



Construction Completed of \$7 Million Mixed-Use Building at Hertel & Parkside

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced construction completion of a \$7 million, 5-story mixed-use building located in the heart of the Hertel Avenue Business District in North Buffalo. The new building will include retail space on the first floor, 25 residential apartments on the upper floors and underground parking. It received funding from the Buffalo Billion's Better Buffalo Fund program. "The transformation of a vacant gas station into a new 5-story commercial space and affordable housing development serves as a shining example of the Buffalo Better Fund's commitment to revitalizing our community, said Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes. "I applaud Governor Cuomo's leadership and investment in WNY through the Buffalo Billion."

AAVM Update

On Tuesday, May 25th, the Buffalo Common Council approved the last piece of outstanding funding to allow the African American Veterans Monument to proceed with construction. Funding was held up for over one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic as New York State froze all non-essential and non-emergency spending. With a Construction Manager, Watts Architect & Engineering, in place already, attention now turns to the City of Buffalo issuing an RFP for a general contractor to build the monument before the end of July 2021. The winning bidder is expected to be selected by fall 2021. The COVID-19 delay pushed back the construction timeline as the new grand opening is now anticipated to be summer 2022. Stay tuned for future announcements.

The AAVM Committee successfully raised over \$1.6 million to build the monument, including \$175,000 directly from the sale of commemorative bricks. With the fluctuating cost of construction materials due to pandemic shortages, the AAVM Committee may need to continue to actively fundraise. The monument was designed by the late artist Jonathan Casey of Solid716. A special thank you to our corporate sponsors: Niagara River Greenway Commission, former State Senator Chris Jacobs, M&T Bank, Delaware North, HSBC, Pegula Sports & Entertainment, Catholic Health Systems, Uniland Development Family/Carl & Carol Montante Charitable Fund, City of Buffalo (Mayor Byron Brown and Council President/Ellicott District Councilmember Darius Pridgen, County of Erie (County Executive Mark Poloncarz and Chairwoman April Baskin), KeyBank, Northwest Charitable Foundation and more.

Multi-Modal Funding

The Multi-Modal Program provides reimbursement funding for five (5) specifically authorized transportation capital project "modes" found in State Transportation Law 14-k and NYS DOT Program Policy. Eligible modes include certain Rail, Port, Fixed Ferry Facility, Airport, and State and Local Highway and Bridge projects. Here are the most recently funded projects by my office:

Grantee	Award Amount
City of Buffalo – Street Pavings: Clinton, Walden, and Holden Aves.	\$500,000
NFTA – Buffalo Niagara International Airport – New Baggage Carousels	\$500,000

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

On May 3rd the NYS Legislature extended the Eviction Moratorium until August 31, 2021. This was done to allow the NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance (OTDA) an opportunity to establish a process for renters and landlords to apply for \$2 trillion in available COVID relief resources from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). ERAP went live on June 1st accepting applications for rental assistance.

Rent and utilities (gas and electric) that are past due up to 12 months, accrued after March 13, 2020 are eligible. Both the tenant and landlord must complete certain parts of the ERAP application for eligibility to be determined and rental payments to be issued to landlords/property owner and utility companies on behalf of the tenant. Tenant applicants will be notified of the amounts paid on their behalf. If a landlord is difficult to locate or does not otherwise provide information needed to complete the application, funds will be held for up to 180 days to allow sufficient time to locate the landlord and collect required information as well as to provide tenant protections and maximize landlord participation. The same holds true for landlords with unresponsive tenants. If experiencing difficulty, please call 2-1-1 or 888-696-9211. Please call the ERAP Hotline at 1-844-NY1-RENT (1-844-691-7368) to get help filling out an application over the phone.

To apply or check on your eligibility, please visit: www.otda.ny.gov/erap.

The Latest on ROCC



Congressman Higgins, Mayor Brown, Senator Kennedy and I, alongside ROCC (Restore Our Community Coalition), recently held a press conference advocating for the accelerated completion of the Department of Transportation's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A federally-approved EIS is required to compete for the forthcoming federal infrastructure and transportation bill that could pose extremely beneficial to efforts to fully cover the Route 33 Kensington Expressway from East Ferry to Best Streets to restore Frederick Law Olmsted's vision for Humboldt Parkway while also reconnecting the Hamlin Park, Cold Spring, and MLK neighborhoods. Also potentially slated to benefit would be ROCC's sister project, the Scajaquada Corridor Coalition (SCC), with the goal of downgrading and converting the Rt. 198 Scajaquada Expressway that cuts through Delaware Park into a boulevard from Parkside Avenue to its connection with the Route 190. These reclamation-type projects have become more popular in recent years as state and federal governments alongside social justice advocates seek to right historic wrongs that have negatively impacted low-income communities nationwide by way of increased traffic and pollution which led to health complications (cancers, lupus, asthma), environmental issues, and decreased property values.

Cannabis Legalization

The Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act also referred to as MRTA (A.1248/S.845), passed both state houses on March 30th. It was carried in the Senate by Senator Liz Krueger, and in the Assembly by my office. Key provisions of the bill will begin to repair the heavily discriminatory impact that enforcement of prohibition has had on communities of color in New York State. These provisions include:

- Dedicating 40% of revenue to reinvestment in communities disproportionately impacted by the drug war, as well as for drug treatment and public education.
- Equity programs providing loans, grants, and incubator programs to ensure broad opportunities for participation in the new legal industry by people from disproportionately impacted communities as well as by small farmers.
- A goal of 50% of licenses going to equity applicants.
- Elimination of penalties for possession of less than three ounces of cannabis.
- Automatic expungement of records for people with previous convictions for activities that are no longer criminalized.
- Establishment of a well-regulated industry to ensure consumers know exactly what they are getting when they purchase cannabis.

The bill establishes the framework to build a well-regulated industry that will replace the illegal market, prevent domination by large existing players, and ensure that consumers know exactly what they are getting when they purchase cannabis. To achieve these goals, the bill:

- Establishes an Office of Cannabis Management with a board comprised of 5 members - 3 appointed by Governor and 1 by each legislative house, with the chair subject to Senate confirmation.
- Establishes an Executive Director appointed by the Governor subject to Senate confirmation, and a Chief Equity Officer subject to approval by at least 4 members of the board.
- Establishes a Cannabis Advisory Board comprised of 13 members – 7 appointed by the Governor and 3 by each legislative house. The Advisory Board will represent a broad range of communities of interest, which will be responsible for approving grants from the Community Reinvestment Fund as well as making policy recommendations and

reporting on the state of the cannabis program.

- Grants the Office of Cannabis Management powers to evaluate license applicants using a broad range of metrics, including social equity status, commitment to environmentally sound policies, public health, and fair labor practices.
- Expands the medical cannabis program allowing for additional licenses, expanded patient access, and a broader range of product types.
- Allows current Registered Organizations (NYS-licensed medical marijuana companies) limited access to the adult use market in exchange for licensing fees that will help fund equity programs. The legislation prohibits vertical integration for all other licensees except micro-businesses to protect the retail sector from being controlled by larger cannabis producers and establishes a goal of 50% of licenses going to equity applicants.
- Allows limited home grow of three mature and three immature plants for both medical patients and in the adult use program, subject to regulation by the Office of Cannabis Management.
- Provides funding for training drug recognition officers and expands traffic safety protections, including the development of roadside testing technology.
- Allows for localities to opt out of retail sales at the city, town, and village level.
- Sets a 9% sales tax on cannabis, plus an additional 4% tax split between the county and city/town/village, plus an additional tax based on THC content as follows: 0.5 cents per milligram for flower, 0.8 cents per milligram for concentrated cannabis, and 3 cents per milligram for edibles.

“This is a rare opportunity to participate on the ground floor of a brand-new industry and create generational wealth for your family. With New York State’s cannabis market not anticipated to be ready until 2023, now is the time to begin figuring out how and where you fit in,” Peoples-Stokes said. It is anticipated that it will take 18-24 months for the regulatory system to be put in place. For more information and to register for updates, please visit the Office of Cannabis Management: www.cannabis.ny.gov.

425 Michigan Avenue, Suite 107, Buffalo, NY 14203



Assemblywoman
**Crystal D.
Peoples-Stokes**

Community News

Summer 2021

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Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF)

The NYS Div. of Housing & Community Renewal has \$540 million available statewide from the US Treasury Dept. for homeowners that have been negatively impacted due to COVID-19 that are facing foreclosure or displacement. If a homeowner has multi-unit rental property (4 units and smaller), it must be owner-occupied to qualify for homeowner assistance. Those behind on mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities (gas and electric), HOA/maintenance fees accrued after March 13, 2020 are eligible. Anticipated assistance will not exceed program cap of \$50,000 per applicant in the form of a five year, non-interest bearing, non-amortizing, forgivable loan. Applications are anticipated to begin being accepted starting September 1, 2021. Interested parties should visit: www.hcr.ny.gov/homeowners to apply and for more information.

WNY E-Bike Share Program

Shared Mobility, Inc. is piloting a fleet of shared e-bikes this summer. With e-bikes stationed at a handful of locations around Buffalo, riders will be able to take the bikes for a spin for free throughout the duration of the program. E-Bike Pilot stations include locations at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Seneca One Tower, the Buffalo Museum of Science, and PUSH Buffalo’s School 77 on the West Side. East Side Bike Club will also lead an E-Bike Library with group rides, and other programming. Participation is free! Are you interested in joining our community of e-bike riders? To learn more about how to get involved, visit Shared Mobility’s website at <https://www.sharedmobility.org/e-bikepilot>

WNY E-Bike Libraries

Shared Mobility Inc. is supporting community partners East Side Bike Club and Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative as they test E-Bike Library programs in Western New York. These E-Bike Libraries will build programs that provide free access to shared pedal-assist electric bicycles for residents of Buffalo’s East Side and Niagara Falls. This program aims to expand free access to high-tech electric bicycles through programming that is led by community-based organizations. For residents of Buffalo’s East Side that are interested in getting involved, please stay tuned to East Side Bike Club’s Facebook page.