



# 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.

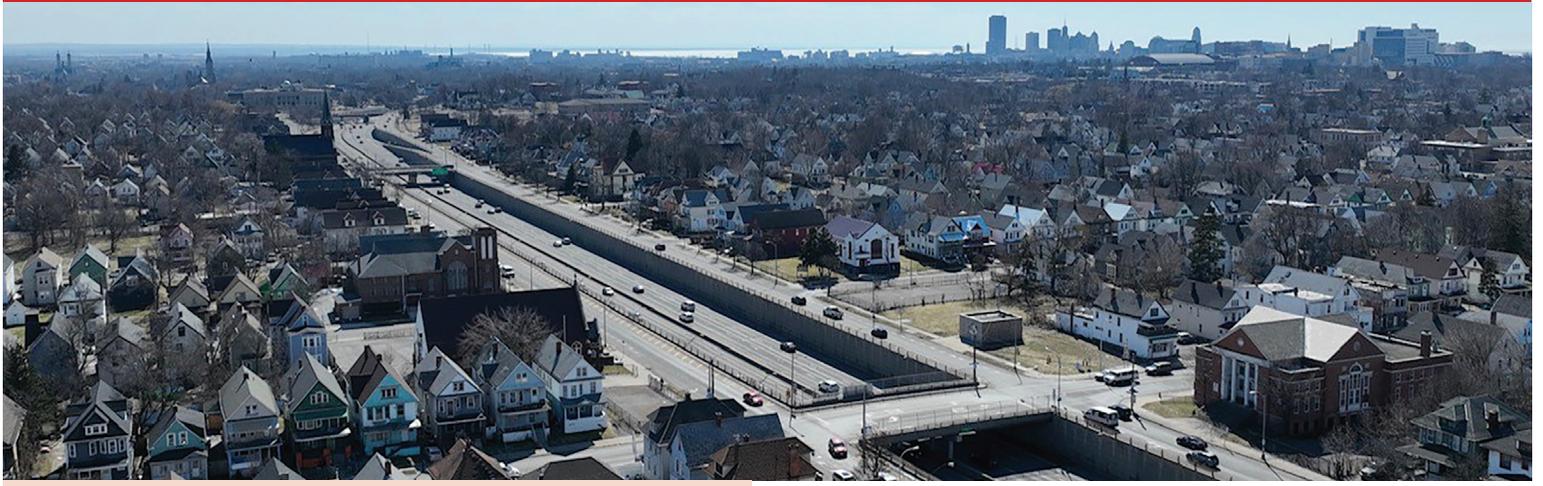
## Community Healing Needed After Mass Shooting at Tops on Jefferson



On Saturday, May 14, 2022, a white supremacist committed an evil act of domestic terrorism on Buffalo's Eastside at Top's on Jefferson Avenue, killing 10 residents and injuring 3 others. We deeply mourn the victims' loss of life and pray for them and their families: Roberta A. Drury, 32; Margus D. Morrison, 52; Andre Mackniel, 53; Aaron Salter, 55; Geraldine Talley, 62; Celestine Chaney, 65; Heyward Patterson, 67; Katherine Massey, 72; Pearl Young, 77; and Ruth Whitfield, 86. We continue to pray that those injured will make a full recovery: Zaire Goodman, 20; Jennifer Warrington, 50; and Christopher Braden, 55.

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced that \$2.8 million in federal and state funding will be available to provide additional services and support to individuals and families affected by the shooting. The state Office of Victim Services (OVS) will administer the funding from the state Division of Criminal Justice Services, and the state's Community Violence Intervention Act, which annually designates a portion of the state's federal Victims of Crime Act funding for programs serving communities hardest hit by gun violence. Donations and an outpouring of love have flowed in from all over the country and the state, totaling over \$4.5 million thus far. The NY Project Hope Line is available for Crisis Counseling at 844-863-9314.

## Covering the Rt. 33 Kensington Expressway Update



On June 30th, the Department of Transportation held two kickoff public engagement sessions to brief over 225 interested residents on the basics of covering a portion of the Rt. 33 Kensington Expressway. The Governor and State Legislature approved up to \$1 billion in the DOT's new 5-year Capital Budget passed during the 2022-2023 state budget process. These sessions were only the first step as DOT and its consultants will begin to meet more regularly with area block clubs, churches, community-based organizations, and concerned residents to learn more about restoring parts of Humboldt Pkwy. to reconnect the community, create jobs, increase property values, return green and recreational space, and address public health.



## African American Veterans Memorial Update

On July 6th, the 6th construction meeting was held for the AAVM Project with the AAVM Committee, the City of Buffalo, Mark Cerrone General Contracting, Buffalo Stone Works, Frey Electric, and Watts Engineering & Architects. Pallets of commemorative bricks and all twelve 10 ft pillars are ready for installation. Site construction and foundation work are already underway and will conclude with a highly anticipated dedication ceremony tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 24, 2022.

## Upcoming Events



**Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup> - Movie Night**  
@ The Dipson Theater (University Plaza)

**Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup> - Movie Night**

@ MLK Park (between Casino and basketball court)  
Rain location: Buffalo Science Museum's Auditorium

**Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**- Wills & Estate Intake**

North Buffalo Community Center • 203 Sanders Road  
Please call 716-897-9714 to register

**Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**- Virtual Cannabiz Convo 105**

## Legislative Update

- **A2358B** – This bill creates the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice within the Executive branch, which will act as a central entity within state government to support racial equity and social justice and help ensure policies and decisions are made in a manner that is equitable and fair for everyone. *{Passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting delivery to Governor}*
- **A3081** – This bill implements sensible parameters for municipalities when establishing “mortgage in default registries.” This legislation protects struggling homeowners from costly and predatory registry terms some communities have been subjected to in New York State. *{Passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting delivery to Governor}*
- **A3511A** – This bill designates certain acute children’s hospitals as enhanced safety net hospitals. *{Passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting delivery to Governor}*
- **A7325C** – This bill helps prevent and detect lead poisoning in children and provides parents and guardians information on best practices. *{Chapter 532 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A7916A** – This bill will enhance the process for enrolling as an organ and tissue donor by modernizing communication methods with the Donate Life Registry by allowing electronic communication methods. These improvements will result in a more equitable, convenient, and effective organ and tissue donation process. *{Passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting delivery to Governor}*
- **A8697** – This bill clarifies provisions of Chapter 780 of the Laws of 2021 related to providing patients predictability and protections by preventing non-medical changes of prescription drug formularies during a contract year. *{Chapter 99 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A8732** – This bill clarifies provisions of Chapter 743 of the Laws of 2021 related to expanding ways in which New Yorkers can decide to enroll as an organ and tissue donor. *{Chapter 37 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A9259A** – This bill helps uphold the integrity of the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) program including by establishing a searchable internet database of certain MWBE-related documentation, and establishing an MWBE Fund to root out fraud and assist MWBEs to succeed. *{Passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting delivery to Governor}*
- **A9283** – This bill authorizes the Cannabis Control Board to issue Conditional Cannabis Cultivator Licenses to qualifying New York hemp farmers, and establishes a mentorship program for interested social and economic equity applicants. This legislation will ensure that when adult-use cannabis retail dispensaries open for business, which will predominantly be social and economic equity licensees to start, they will have safe and reliable products from New York farmers. *{Chapter 18 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A9365** – This bill provides Erie County flexibility in marketing of certain bonds and notes. *{Chapter 329 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A9367** – This bill provides the city of Buffalo flexibility in marketing of certain bonds and notes. *{Chapter 330 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A9423A** – This bill reduces the number of petition signatures required for a person to obtain in order to become a candidate for a Member of the Buffalo Public School Board. *{Chapter 495 of the Laws of 2022}*
- **A10428A** – This bill closes a loophole in the law in order to make all functional large capacity ammunition feeding devices unlawful in New York State. *{Chapter 209 of the Laws of 2022}*

# State Fiscal Year 2022- 2023 Enacted Budget Highlights

## Tax Relief

- Accelerates the phase-in of the middle-class tax cut from 2025 to 2023
- A one-year property tax rebate credit for households that are eligible for STAR and Enhanced STAR and have incomes below \$250,000
- Supplemental Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to taxpayers equal to 25 percent of their 2021 EITC benefit, which would be an average of \$190 per taxpayer
- Supplemental Empire State Child Credit for families with children over the age of four would be calculated based on the taxpayers' 2021 Empire State Tax Credit
- A 16 cent per gallon gas tax holiday that will last from June 1 through December 31, 2022, and authorization for counties to cap their sales tax at \$4 per gallon

## Support for Local Schools, Libraries, and Our Children's Mental Health

- State funding for school aid totaling \$31.2 billion, an increase of \$2.1 billion, or 7% over last year, and \$120 million over the executive budget proposal
- Increases Foundation Aid by \$1.5 billion, fully phasing it in by the 2023-24 school year
- Increases special education provider rates by 11%
- \$40 million to increase the teacher workforce
- \$18 million in ongoing funding for the My Brother's Keeper program
- \$125 million annually for a three-year UPK step-up program, for a total of \$375 million
- Provides \$53 million for school mental health programs to help students thrive in the classroom and beyond
- Provides nearly \$3 billion to increase access to quality, affordable child care.

## Relief for Tenants and Homeowners

- \$4.5 billion for a new five-year affordable housing capital plan
- \$1 billion for Affordable Rental Housing
- \$1.1 billion for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP)
- \$50 million for public housing outside New York City
- \$15 million increase to the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) for a total of \$35 million
- \$35 million, an increase of \$10 million over last year, for the Legal Representation for Eviction Cases Program to provide legal services and representation during eviction cases for renters living outside of New York City who cannot afford to pay for counsel during eviction proceedings
- \$250 million to weatherize and electrify units
- \$250 million for residential gas and electric utility arrears

## Access to Affordable, High-Quality Child Care and Support Services

- More than doubles the current investment in child care, providing nearly \$3 billion more in child care over the next three years, expanding eligibility for subsidized care from 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 300% FPL by Aug. 1, 2022
- Eliminates the 17.5 hour a week work requirement for parents enrolled in post-secondary education
- \$25 million to create a five-year property tax abatement for property owners who create a new child care center or expand an existing center
- Restores \$21.9 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding, which includes:
  - An additional \$5 million in funding for Advantage After School Program, which provides structured activities for kids to help them succeed academically
  - \$3.2 million for non-residential domestic violence services

## Investing in Higher Education

- \$60 million in additional state operating support funds for SUNY
- \$48.8 million for SUNY to fully reimburse each system and eliminate the "TAP gap" - the difference between TAP funding for students and actual tuition costs
- \$150 million to expand TAP eligibility to 75,000 additional part-time students and \$5 million to restore TAP eligibility for incarcerated individuals
- An increase of \$6 million to all opportunity programs, for a total of \$203 million

## Investing in the Health Care Sector

- Support frontline workers by providing a one-time bonus payment of \$3,000 to full-time health and mental hygiene frontline workers who earn less than \$125,000 and stay in their position for a year
- Increases the home care worker minimum wage by \$3 over a two-year period
- \$22 million in additional funding for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program
- Provides \$800 million for safety-net and public hospitals
- \$7.7 million to fund the statewide expansion of the Dwyer Program, which provides peer-to-peer support and counseling to veterans transitioning into civilian life and navigating PTSD, depression and traumatic brain injury
- \$50 million for mental health, NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) community-based providers
- \$75 million for residential health care facilities and adult care facilities
- \$35 million to create the 988 Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Hotline, which supports those experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis
- \$2 million for Crisis Intervention Services

## Relief for Small Businesses, Economic Development, and the Arts+

- Provides \$250 million to create a refundable tax credit program to help small businesses cover COVID-19-related expenses, offering a minimum credit of \$1,000 per business
- An additional \$1.37 million for the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Development and Lending Program for a total of \$2 million to cover additional services and expenses
- \$250 million to create a refundable tax credit for small business COVID-19-related expenses, with a minimum credit of \$1,000 per business
- \$100 million in tax cuts for New York small businesses
- \$250 million for the Restore New York Communities Initiative
- \$50 million for the Cannabis Management Program to provide assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in relation to the establishment of retail cannabis dispensaries
- \$50 million for the New York State Council on the Arts to provide pandemic relief, \$10 million of which is through regional arts councils
- \$1 million for arts stabilization grants
- \$10 million for Arts Recovery Grants, for a total of \$50 million

## Student Loan Forgiveness Programs in NYS



Approximately 12% of all New Yorkers owe \$91.9 billion in student loans with an average loan debt of \$37,678, according to The NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC). HESC offers programs that could eliminate student debt or at least give borrowers more time before they must start paying them back. HESC has loan forgiveness programs for social workers, teachers, nurses, farmworkers, and a program that allows eligible New Yorkers to get their loans paid for two years. Check out the loan forgiveness programs HESC offers below along with a description of the program. For more information, please visit: <https://www.hesc.ny.gov>.

## Governor Hochul Announces More Funding for Buffalo's East Side

### East Side Commercial Districts Program

Applications for the East Side Commercial Districts Program are due Friday, September 16th, and will be available on Monday, August 1st at the website for each Local Program Administrator (LPA): Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services (BFNHS), Citizens' Alliance, Inc. in partnership with the Black Chamber of Commerce and University District Community Development Association (UDCDA). A public information session, to provide details of the program and second round application process, was held on Tuesday, August 9th at 5:30 p.m. at PS 309 East Community High School, located at 820 Northampton Street in Buffalo. Interested applicants should contact their LPAs for more information.

### \$20 Million Buffalo East Homeowner Assistance Fund Program (BEHAF)

The Governor announced the \$20 million Buffalo East Homeowner Assistance Fund Program (BEHAF) to assist up to 4,000 homeowners behind on water, taxes, sewer charges and user fees, with an average award of \$5,000 which will run through the Western New York Law Center (WNYC).

### \$10 Million Buffalo East Home Improvement Program (BEHIP)

Governor Hochul also established the Buffalo East Home Improvement Program (BEHIP) to assist homeowners with emergency home repairs including code violations and major system repairs with an average award of \$10,000. This will be administered by five local nonprofits: PUSH Buffalo, Broadway-Fillmore, NeighborWorks Community Partners, Heart of the City and the Community Action Organization of WNY.

## \$4.5 Million East Buffalo Down Payment Assistance Plus Program (DPAL+)

To assist 150 residents in purchasing a home by providing Down Payment Assistance with an average award of \$30,000, Governor Hochul additionally announced the creation of the East Buffalo Down Payment Assistant Plus Program (DPAL+). The program will be offered through three SONYMA participating lenders: Premium Mortgage, M&T Bank, and First Priority Mortgage.

### Further East Side Support

In June, Governor Hochul announced that the State would invest \$1.5 million to partner with Goodwill to expand the 'Goodskills' Career Builder Program for East Buffalo. This program builds off the Goodskills pilot program launched in 2021 and will equip individuals from communities in East Buffalo with the skills employers seek to fill higher-paying, in-demand jobs in manufacturing, technology, health care and sales and services. On Monday, August 1st, Goodwill will open a Goodskills Career Builder walk-in center at the Group Ministries office at 1333 Jefferson Avenue. The walk-in center will allow local residents to gather information and sign up for the program there.

Additionally, New York State will be investing \$3 million for the Resource Council of WNY to create the East Side Resiliency Center, which aims to offer door-to-door education and access to benefits, services and programs. The Resource Council of WNY is located at 347 E. Ferry St. and has led the effort to distribute food to the surrounding community during Tops' temporary closure and since it has reopened.

Lastly, New York State will be investing \$3 million for the African Heritage Food Cooperative from Empire State Development to assist its operations and building out its commercial space at 238 Carlton St. to provide locally grown produce to area residents.

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Assemblywoman  
**Crystal D.  
Peoples-Stokes**

**Community News**

Summer 2022

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U.S. POSTAGE  
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## Lt. Craig Lehner Scholarship Application

This scholarship held by The Buffalo Police Athletic League was created in remembrance of BPD Lt. Craig Lehner who dedicated his life to community service. The scholarship's goal is to assist and encourage deserving students seeking education in Criminal Justice and Law.

### Criteria:

- Applicant must be a current resident of Buffalo, New York.
- 3.0 GPA or higher at the time of graduation.
- 90% or higher attendance rate at time of graduation.
- Acceptance to and entering into a Criminal Justice, Political Science or 2- or 4-year Degree Legal Program within Erie County, NY.
- Applicant may be an undergraduate student who graduates the current year and has a GPA of 3.0 or higher and has been accepted and is entering Law School within Erie County, NY.

- Applicant must submit at minimum two (2) letters of recommendation from Teachers/Professors
- Applicant must submit an application and 500-word scholarship essay\*.
- Applicant must be available for interview by the Scholarship Awards Committee upon request.

**SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE:  
ROLLING FOR 2022**

<https://buffalopal.com/lieutenant-craig-lehner-scholarship-fund-page/>