



Weekly Update 2/3/2023

Dear Neighbors,

On Tuesday Governor Hochul gave her 2023 Budget Address, kicking off this year's budget season. This is an extremely eventful time in the Assembly, and my team and I will be working round the clock to move crucial legislation forward. This busy time will require careful allocation of staff resources to make sure we are meeting the needs of District 125's constituents. I will be releasing bi-weekly newsletter updates for the duration of the budget season unless there is time-sensitive information that I know will be important to the District. In those instances I will send one-issue updates immediately. However, please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any specific questions or issues.

Below are some highlights from the Governor's Budget Address that outline the areas that I felt would be most important to our district.

State Budget

FY 2024 Budget Highlights

- A \$1 billion overhaul to improve **mental health** services, increasing access to inpatient and outpatient care, and expanding mental health services in schools.
- A plan to address the **housing** shortage and build 800,000 homes over the next decade, emphasizing transit-oriented development and giving local governments more power and support to reach housing goals. Further assistance to low-income homeowners and renters include \$39.8 million to go toward reducing the risk of lead exposure and \$50 million to create a statewide Homeowner Stabilization Fund to provide critical home repairs.

- Funding to increase **public safety**, including \$337 million toward **reducing gun violence**, and \$31.4 million for alternatives to incarceration programs.
- A plan for a \$5.5 billion investment to combat **climate change** and increase **environmental protection** measures, including \$500 million to clean water infrastructure, \$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, and \$200 million to improve state parks. In addition, \$400 million will go towards providing electric bill relief and support for building and appliance electrifications and retrofits.

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- \$7.6 billion over four years to make **child care** more accessible and affordable, improving availability of services and expanding eligibility.
- Strengthening New York's **healthcare** system by adding over \$1 billion in capital funding, including \$500 to hospitals and telehealth services, \$100 million to expand Medicaid coverage, and \$157 million towards improving services and long-term care for the aging population.
- Plans for **economic growth** including the expansion of business attraction programming, \$425 million to invest in local economies, \$60 million to fund locally sourced food for schools and other state-funded programs, investment into the tourism industry, and aid for Public Assistance recipients. **Agriculture** industry funding will include an investment tax credit and the development of a stronger food supply workforce.
- A historic \$34.5 billion will be allocated to **education**, including \$24 billion to complete the full funding of Foundation Aid for public schools, which will close gaps in funding in low-income areas and bring greater equality to our state's public education system. \$1.5 billion will go to new capital projects for SUNY and CUNY.

As I familiarize myself with the details of this budget I will share further relevant highlights and areas of concern that I will be fighting to rectify so that the final budget addresses our collective needs effectively and equitably.

Click [here](#) to see the full 2024 Budget Briefing Book and [here](#) for the full executive budget.

Around the District

Vera Institute of Justice Town Hall

I want to thank Jullian, Ben, Brian and Chantal from the Vera Institute of Justice for their four-day visit to Tompkins and Cortland counties providing presentations and facilitating robust discussions about public safety with law-enforcement, elected officials, advocate groups and the community.

Data came out earlier this week in a [joint legislative public hearing from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Office of Court Administration](#) that although crime has increased nationally, and in particular violent crime, the increase is less in NY than the national average and the re-arrest rates are lower than they were in 2019. Although this is comforting news this doesn't address the fact that on a day to day basis we are all experiencing and witnessing an increase in crime in our communities.

In Thursday evening's town hall we focused on how we can step away from a conversation that has become politicized and focus on what are in fact the causes of crime and how can we collectively foster public safety. I want to thank all the community members who made the conversation so dynamic and meaningful.

For those who were not able to join click [here](#) to watch the recording of the Town Hall meeting. We were unable to get to all the questions in the town hall but the team from Vera has kindly provided answers that you can find [here](#). This conversation was just the beginning of what I hope to be a robust relationship with the Vera Institute and our community so stay tuned for further events through the year!

Community Resources

Grants Action News

Assembly Speaker Heastie has released information on state, federal, and private grants available beginning in February 2023. These include available funding for programs and research such as safety and security against health crimes, sexual health programs, music education, legal assistance for victims of domestic and sexual violence, animal-assisted therapy, college students with disabilities, and more. Learn more [here](#).

GED at BOCES

TST BOCES is offering in-person GED instruction at Cornell Appel Commons every Monday & Wednesday afternoon from 2:00-5:00pm. For more information or to schedule enrollment, please go to www.tstboces.org.

TCPL "Behind the Wall: Art and Writing from Prison" Art Exhibit

Beginning Wednesday February 1st, Story House Ithaca will be presenting an art exhibit at Tompkins County Public Library called "Behind the Wall", telling the stories of people who have experienced or are impacted by incarceration. The exhibit will be traveling to other cities beginning in March, completing its tour at Cortland Free Library in June. For more information, click [here](#).



Clean Energy Tax Credit Resources

The US Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy has compiled a list of helpful Clean Energy Tax Credit Resources. Here are some of them:

- [30% federal tax credit for electric heat pump installation](#)
- [Up to 30% federal tax credit for geothermal heat pumps](#)
- [Expanded tax credit for Solar investments](#)
- [Subsidies for Zero Energy Ready Homes](#)
- For more information on tax credits for residences, businesses and organizations, click [here](#).



It is going to be a very cold night tonight so so please everyone stay safe.

Hoping for a restful weekend for us all!

In good health,

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

ALBANY OFFICE

LOB 833
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5444

CORTLAND OFFICE

83 Main St
PO Box 5026
Cortland, NY 13045
607-208-2024

ITHACA OFFICE

106 East Court Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-277-8030

Assembly District 125 | kellesa@nyassembly.gov