

Dear Neighbor,

This email offers some legislative updates, as well as health information, upcoming events, and useful resources.

This past Wednesday was the first day of the 2023 legislative session, and my first day representing the new 28th District in the State Senate. Although I am losing parts of Murray Hill and Kips Bay, I am excited to be representing more of Midtown, the Garment District, and Times Square, as well as adding Roosevelt Island and parts of Chelsea to our district, while continuing to represent East Midtown, Turtle Bay, Lenox Hill, Yorkville, and the Upper East Side. <u>Click here for a map of our new district</u>.

This month will be a very active one in Albany. In addition to beginning to move legislation at our regular sessions, we will also be hearing from the Governor in her State of the State address, which is scheduled for January 10th. In the State of the State, the Governor will lay out her priorities for the coming year, including some details about what we can expect in her Executive Budget proposal.

Sometime toward the end of January, the Governor will release her Executive Budget proposal, and following that the Legislature will announce the schedule for our joint budget hearings, which I convene as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, with Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. Those hearings will run through February.

March is the time when the Senate, Assembly, and Governor's office negotiate what will be in the final budget, which must be passed by April 1st. Then between April 1st and the last day of session, which is scheduled for June 8th this year, we work on all the remaining bills that do not have direct budgetary implications.

You can find more information about what is happening in the Senate, including livestreams of sessions, debates, votes, and hearings, at nysenate.gov.

Stay safe and healthy. As always, if you have any questions or need assistance, please email or call my office at <u>lkrueger@nysenate.gov</u> or 212-490-9535.

Best,

Governor Hochul Signs and Vetoes Key Bills

Last month Governor Hochul signed and vetoed many important bills, including several that I carried. Here is a rundown of a few bills of interest:

Signed:

- S.8591, which I carried, will address issues with the Medical Indemnity Fund, which exists to provide a funding source for future health care costs for infants who sustained birth-related neurological injuries, in order to reduce medical malpractice premium costs. The fixes provided for in this bill were identified by families enrolled in the MIF, and will improve access to vital health care services, as well as streamlining information sharing and benefit utilization.
- S.6291, carried by Sen. Hoylman, prohibits the manufacture and sale of common apparel to which PFAS substances have been intentionally added. Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances are a class of chemicals known as "forever chemicals" due to their persistence in the environment and in the human body. PFAS chemicals have been linked to a variety of adverse health effects, including tumors and reproductive, developmental, liver, kidney, and immunological effects.
- S.5027C, carried by Sen. Kavanagh, creates an Extended Producer Responsibility program to recycle carpets. New York State generates about 515 million pounds of carpet waste annually, less than 1% of which is recycled. While there is existing demand for more than 90% of the materials in recycled carpets, the cost of collection, transportation, and processing is higher than the market can bear. This new law will reduce carpet waste, encourage closed-loop carpet recycling, and provide a mechanism for carpet producer stewardship of their product through its life cycle.
- S.7867, carried by Sen. Biaggi, will establish a statewide electronic tracking system for rape kits. Currently 33 states and Washington DC have either implemented or are in the process of implementing sexual assault kit tracking systems. These tracking systems give survivors agency and allow them to access information about the status of their rape kit, when and if, they are ready.
- S.8922, the Warehouse Worker Protection Act, carried by Sen. Ramos, will support warehouse workers who currently have no protections from inhumane work quotas. It puts safeguards on the algorithms which are monitoring, punishing and pushing workers to burn out or get injured. The new law prevents the algorithm from placing workloads on employees that could injure the worker.

Every workplace will have an ergonomic assessment of all tasks and based on that assessment will be provided safe workloads.

• S.6809A, carried by Sen. Reichlin-Melnick, restores many of the State Comptroller's oversight powers over state contracts. The Comptroller will once again have the authority to review major state contracts by SUNY, CUNY, and the Office of General Services before they are signed. Oversight by the Comptroller is crucial for ensuring the integrity of state contracts and saving taxpayer dollars.

Vetoed:

- S.9387, which I carried with Assm. Gottfried, would prohibit the future establishment or increased capacity of for-profit hospices. A recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that "for-profit compared with nonprofit hospices provide narrower ranges of services to patients, use less skilled clinical staff, care for patients with lower-skilled needs over longer enrollment periods, have higher rates of complaint allegations and deficiencies, and provide fewer community benefits, including training, research, and charity care. For-profit hospices are more likely than nonprofit hospices to discharge patients prior to death, to discharge patients with dementia, and to have higher rates of hospital and emergency department use." New York is uniquely situated to prevent the deterioration of end-of-life care described above, as currently only two of 41 hospices in New York are for-profit, compared to a national average of two-thirds as of 2017. I continue to believe that now is the time to place the care and safety of persons who are dying first and foremost over profit.
- S.7453, which I carried, would have created an Electric Landscaping Equipment Rebate program, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and reduce noise pollution by promoting the adoption of electric landscaping equipment. In addition to being a noisy nuisance, gas-powered landscaping equipment emits a stunning amount of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants. Operating a gas-powered leaf blower for one hour creates as much smog-forming pollution as driving a car 1,100 miles, and gas-powered lawn mowers account for 5% of all the air pollution in the United States.
- S.7337, carried by Sen. Comrie, would have restored powers to the Public Authorities Control Board (PACB) that were significantly curtailed by former Governor Cuomo in the 2019 budget. The PACB has oversight of large economic development projects, including, for example, the Penn Station area redevelopment.

Still Awaiting Action:

• S.8815, which I carried, would close a loophole in New York's False Claims Act that had allowed wealthy individuals and large corporations to avoid penalties for knowingly not filing necessary tax returns in order to avoid their tax obligations.

Liz Krueger's 2023 Virtual Roundtable for Boomers and Seniors

"Living Well: Age-Friendly Housing"

Senator Krueger's 2023 five-part Virtual Roundtable for Boomers and Seniors will focus on housing for older people. Access to safe affordable housing is critical to ensure that we are able to age well in the community.

While affordable housing is a scarce commodity in New York City, the first session of the series will provide information about what types of housing are available and how to apply. During subsequent sessions, you will hear from the experts about the Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program designed to keep your rent regulated apartment affordable, learn strategies to ensure your landlord makes needed repairs, and find out how to assess your apartment to determine if it's safe and best suited to meet your needs as you age.

To RSVP for any or all of the sessions in this year's series, please go to https://tinyurl.com/2023-Senior-Roundtable.

You will have the **option of joining the events online through Zoom**, a webinar hosting service.

You will also have the **option to view the events online through Facebook**. Please note that **you do not need a Facebook account or profile** to view the event through Facebook.

If you do not have access to a computer, tablet, or other electronic device, you can listen in by telephone.

If you register for an event, **a confirmation email with the Zoom link and the call-in information will be sent **at least a week in advance** of the event.**

Thursday, January 12th – Affordable Housing Options for Older Adults 10 am – 11:30 am

- Paul Freitag, Executive Director, Westside Federation for Senior Housing (WSFSH)
- Paul Nagle, Executive Director, Stonewall CDC
- Alison Nickerson, Executive Director, LiveOn New York
- Kai Usher, Housing Ambassador Program Assistant, and EVH Navigator

Thursday, February 9th - SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption) Program

10 am - 11:30 am

- Kim Lerner, Director, Benefits Outreach Program, LiveOn NY

- Inie Park, Ombudsperson, Office of the Tax Payer Advocate, NYC Department of Finance

Wednesday, March 8th – Get It Fixed: How To Get Repairs In Your Rental Apartment

7 pm – 8:30 pm (note evening time)

- Speakers TBD

Thursday, April 13th – Is Your Home Age Friendly? How to Assess Your Apartment

10 am - 11:30 am

- Josh Krasner, Home Safety and Fall Prevention Coordinator, Health Advocates for Older People

- Anna Martinez, Director of the Equal Access Project, NYC Commission on Human Rights

Thursday, May 11th – Housing Advocacy Issues

10 am - 11:30 am

- Speakers TBD

To RSVP for any or all of the sessions in this year's series, please go to https://tinyurl.com/2023-Senior-Roundtable.

City Retiree Health Benefits Update January 9th NYC Council Hearing

This update pertains to City retirees who are currently enrolled in a City Medicare plan (GHI/EBCBS Senior Care Plan, HIP VIP plan, etc.).

On Monday, January 9th at 9:30 a.m., the NYC Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor is <u>holding a hearing</u> on <u>Int. 874</u>, a bill that would "amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to health insurance coverage for city employees, city retirees, and their dependents". For more information about how this legislative action relates to the City's ongoing efforts to transition City retirees from the Senior Care Plan to a City Medicare Advantage Plan, please see this <u>City Paper article</u>, Council Member Gale Brewer's <u>Statement on Medicare Advantage</u>, and <u>this article in</u> <u>The Chief</u>.

If you would like to testify during the hearing, <u>please click here for instructions on how</u> to sign up. You may also submit written testimony up to 72 hours after the hearing has been adjourned.

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COVID-19 Resources

COVID-19 Vaccinations

- General Vaccine Information and Eligibility
- <u>NYC Vaccine Finder</u>: Find COVID-19 and flu vaccine sites online or call 877-829-4692
- NYC Health + Hospitals Vaccine Sites: Call 877-829-4692 or <u>Schedule Online</u>

- Local and Nationwide vaccine sites: <u>https://www.vaccines.gov/search/</u>
- CVS Pharmacy: Call 800-746-7287 or Schedule Online
- Rite Aid Pharmacy: Call 800-748-3243 or Schedule Online
- Walgreens Pharmacy: Call 800-925-4733 or Schedule Online
- Request an in-home vaccination, including the new Bivalent Pfizer booster shot, (Pfizer vaccine only) if you are an NYC resident who is homebound or age 65+. <u>Sign</u> <u>up online</u> or by calling 877-820-4692.

COVID-19 Testing

- Order Free at-home COVID-19 tests
- Find <u>NYC Health + Hospital Testing Sites</u>
- Check the <u>wait time at NYC Health + Hospital Testing Sites</u>
- <u>NYC COVID-19 Test Site Finder</u>

COVID-19 Treatment

• Visit the NYC Health Department <u>COVID-19: When You Are Sick</u> web page for information about how to access available treatment if you contract COVID-19 or Long COVID.

COVID-19 Data

- <u>NYC Health Department Prevention Guidance</u>
- <u>NYC Health Department COVID-19 Data</u>
- <u>NYS Health Department COVID-19 Data</u>
- CDC COVID-19 Data
- Check the transmission level in your neighborhood at: <u>NYC Health Department</u> <u>COVID-19 data web page</u>. Click "Transmission" and then "Your Neighborhood."

COVID-19 Supplies

- Order free COVID-19 at-home rapid testing kits from the federal government (current maximum is 4 testing kits per household). Order online or call 800-232-0233
- Pick up free COVID-19 at-home rapid tests from City-distribution sites. <u>Click</u> <u>here to see a list of community sites and times when you can pick up a free rapid test</u> <u>kit</u>.
- <u>COVID.gov</u>: a federal website where you can look up information on where to get free masks, as well as COVID-19 vaccinations, treatment, and testing.

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COVID-19, Flu, and RSV Updates

In the U.S. and New York, we continue to experience high case rates of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV. The good news, however, is that some of these illnesses are on the decline.

- **RSV and Flu:** In her January 5th update on the state of the Triple-demic, epidemiologist Katelyn Jetelina reported that **we are now seeing a notable decrease in cases of RSV**, as evidenced by CDC data. **We are also experiencing a gradual decrease in cases of the flu**, however, it is possible that the remainder of our flu season will mirror that of countries in the Southern Hemisphere, which had two waves of the flu that were caused by two different flu strains. **Whether we have one or two waves of the flu, it is not too late to benefit from getting a flu shot.** You can find vaccine sites that are administering the flu shot at <u>NYC Vaccine Finder</u>.
- **COVID-19:** Unlike RSV and the flu, we are experiencing an increase in cases of Coronavirus, driven by the most recent and most transmissible Omicron variant to date: XBB.1.5. The World Health Organization (WHO) is performing a risk assessment of XBB.1.5, details of which will be available in the coming days.

The presence of a new and more transmissible Omicron variant is not new to us; however, the following is why I want to make sure you have information about this variant:

- XBB.1.5 has rapidly become the dominant variant in the Northeast and New York, and is quickly spreading to the rest of the U.S. As of December 31, 51.9% of cases in NYS were caused by XBB.1.5 vs. 27.6% of cases as of December 17.
- Dr. Ashish K. Jha addressed the degree of protection that the COVID-19 vaccines or recent infections have against this new variant: "<u>If you had an infection before</u> July OR your last vaccine was before bivalent update in September your protection against an XBB.1.5 infection is probably not that great...You likely have very little protection against infection and for older folks, diminishing protection against serious illness".

At this time, 12.9% of NYC residents have received the COVID-19 bivalent booster. It is never too late to get up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations, including the bivalent booster vaccination, in order to have maximum protection against serious illness, as well as to help prevent against infection and Long COVID. You can find vaccine sites that are administering Coronavirus vaccines at <u>NYC Vaccine Finder</u>.

As a friendly reminder, due to the high volume of RSV, flu, and Coronavirus cases, the NYC Health Commissioner issued a <u>Health Advisory</u> on December 9, 2022, urging NYC residents, regardless of vaccination status, to wear high-quality masks when in public indoor settings and in crowded outdoor settings. **This means that it is important to wear masks such as the N95, KN95, and KF94.** If you do not have access to one of these high-quality masks, you can wear a cloth mask over a disposable mask for added protection. **A disposable/surgical mask alone does not provide sufficient protection against these highly transmissible variants.**

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COVID-19 Treatment

A friendly reminder that the best way to prevent getting COVID-19 and Long COVID is to stay up to date with Coronavirus vaccinations and boosters, and follow other preventive safety measures. However, Paxlovid is a medication that provides life-saving treatment and reduces the chance of hospitalization for people who contract the Coronavirus and are at higher risk of severe illness.

To access Paxlovid:

- Make sure to get tested as soon as you experience possible symptoms of COVID-19
- Speak with your primary care provider to discuss eligibility for COVID-19 treatment. If you do not have a primary care provider, or if you are uninsured, you can call 212-268-4319 and press option 9 to reach the NYC Health + Hospitals emergency telehealth service. You will have intake with a nurse and then speak with a clinician to determine eligibility.

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Apply to Be on Your Community Board

Community Boards are the independent and representative voices of their communities—the most grass-roots form of local government. The Boards are pivotal in shaping their communities and work to enhance and preserve the character of the city's many unique neighborhoods. Manhattan's 12 Community Boards are composed of 50 volunteer members serving staggered two-year terms—thus, 25 members are appointed (or reappointed) each year.

Each year, the Manhattan Borough President appoints 300 members to the borough's 12 Community Boards to serve two-year terms, and **applications are now open through 5 pm on March 17, 2023.** You can apply <u>here</u>.

The Borough President is especially interested in appointing Manhattanites who have historically been less represented on Community Boards, including youth 16 years or older, public housing residents, and people holding marginalized identities. Borough President Levine is committed to ensuring that Community Boards authentically reflect the diversity of the neighborhoods they represent, lifting up the lived experience and concerns of Manhattanites who have long been disenfranchised.

Community Board members must live, work, or have an otherwise significant interest in the neighborhoods served by the community district, and be a New York City resident. In addition, we look for applicants with histories of community involvement, expertise and skill sets, and attendance at Board meetings. No more than 25 percent of the members of any board may be New York City employees.

Each Board has a budget, a district manager and staff, and has three distinct responsibilities:

- Monitoring the delivery of city services such as sanitation and street maintenance;
- Planning and reviewing land use applications including zoning changes; and
- Making recommendations for each year's city budget.

Community Boards consider a wide range of issues, including distribution of liquor licenses, consideration of sidewalk café applications, and permits for street fairs and other outdoor events. They may also weigh in issues before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Board of Standards and Appeals (the city agency dedicated to land-use and zoning regulation), and provide input on proposals from city agencies.

Members are officially appointed by the Manhattan Borough President. Half of the members of these boards are selected unilaterally by the Manhattan Borough President, and half are nominated by the City Council Members whose districts overlap with the Community District.

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Financing Electrification Retrofits for New York's Small Buildings

The Climate Friendly Homes Fund (CFHF), administered by The Community Preservation Corporation, provides financing for existing, 5-50-unit buildings in New York State, with a focus on replacing older and less energy-efficient systems with allelectric, high-performance heating, cooling, and hot water heating systems.

With \$250 million in New York State funding, CPC and New York State Homes and Community Renewal aim to finance electrification retrofits in at least 10,000 units of multifamily housing that serve economically disadvantaged communities. These funds will empower small building owners to identify and execute a scope of work to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings and decrease their greenhouse gas emissions.

By catalyzing the adoption of new, energy-efficient technologies, the program will advance New York State and CPC's commitments to supporting multifamily building owners in their transition to a green economy and delivering the benefits of climate friendly homes to residents of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. <u>New York State and CPC announced</u> the program in September 2022. CPC was selected, through a Notice of Funding Availability, to administer the CFHF.

Program Overview Use of Funds

Owners of eligible buildings may apply for funds to cover the cost of eligible building upgrades including electrification of heating, cooling, and water heating systems and additional building envelope improvements. Funds may be used for approved retrofit work scope items (see below), as well as certain soft costs.

Retrofit Scope of Work items eligible for funding include:

- Electrical service upgrades
- HVAC systems replacement with high-efficiency heat pumps

- Domestic Hot Water replacement with high efficiency heat pumps
- Additional energy conservation measures to optimize new system performance
- Systems commissioning

Eligibility

- Buildings must have 5-50 residential units and be located in New York State.
- Owners of regulated affordable and unregulated multifamily rental buildings in eligible locations may apply; Buildings must currently be subject to a regulatory agreement with a public agency or be located in one of the following locations:
 - Low-Moderate Income Qualified Census Tract as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - Disadvantaged Communities as defined in the New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

Find out if your building location is eligible: See <u>HUD Qualified Census Tract Areas</u> <u>here</u> and view a map of <u>NYSERDA Disadvantaged Communities Areas here.</u>

Application Process

- Building owners may apply for funding by submitting eligibility documentation.
- Applications are expected to open in the first quarter of 2023. <u>Sign up here</u> to receive notifications.

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Online & In-Person Meetings, Town Halls, and Webinars

- **Civilian Complaint Review Board January Meeting**: Wednesday, January 11th, 6:30 8:30 pm, in person at Harlem Hospital Center Auditorium (506 Lenox Ave) and <u>virtually via Webex</u>.
- What To Know About RSV: Thursday, January 12th, 6 7:30 pm, a virtual presentation by Lenox Hill Greenwich Village, cosponsored by State Sen. Brad Hoylman, Rep. Jerry Nadler, B.P. Mark Levine, Assembly Members Deborah Glick, Danny O'Donnell, Linda Rosenthal, and Council Members Shawn Abreu, Erik Bottcher, and Gale Brewer. <u>Register here</u>.
- Navigating the System for People With Developmental Disabilities: YAI is offering online trainings to provide information about eligibility and access to services through the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Information offered in this workshop is relevant only to New York State services. Workshops are open to people with I / DD, parents, family members, caregivers and professionals. To respect the privacy of our attendees, this workshop will not be recorded. Upcoming dates for workshops are:
 - January 18, Noon 1 p.m. Register <u>here</u>
 - February 8, 6-7 p.m. Register here

• Employment Rights for People with HIV, Substance Use Disorders and Viral Hepatitis: Wednesday, January 18th, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. This 90-minute webinar explains the employment rights of people with HIV, viral hepatitis, and substance use disorders. It focuses on anti-discrimination laws, such as New York City and State Human Rights Laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As a result of this training, participants will be able to: Describe what employers may ask about disabilities, including HIV status, Viral Hepatitis, and substance use disorders; Describe the basic workplace anti-discrimination protections for people with HIV, Viral Hepatitis and substance use disorders; List legal remedies available to people who have experienced workplace discrimination; and Identify useful resources to help clients understand their employment rights and seek legal help when they believe their rights have been violated.

Audience: Health and social service providers working with individuals who have HIV, hepatitis, and/or substance use disorders and who are employed or seeking employment.

Important Registration Information!

To register for this training, <u>click here</u> and enter your account log-in information. If you do not have an account with <u>NYS DOH AIDS Institute HIV Education &</u> <u>Training Program</u>, you will need to sign up for one before registering for this course.

- Retirement Readiness Base Camp: Estate Tax Planning: Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023, 1:00 to 2:00 PM Instructor Ron Fatoullah, Esq. addresses why no estate is too small to avoid some tax planning. Life happens and you never know what can creep up to put your estate into a taxable category. Learn:
 - What are the ways to protect your estate?
 - How does succession planning work?
 - Why should you think of multiple generations?
 - How do capital gains factor in?

Sponsored by Presbyterian Social Services. Register here.

- Manhattan Borough President Mark D. Levine's State of the Borough Address: Tuesday, January 31st, 6pm, at City College of NY Shepard's Hall, 160 Convent Ave, Manhattan. <u>Register here</u>.
- **Grants Workshops for Small Businesses and Community Groups:** CitizensNYC is hosting a series of workshops on their grants programs. Find out more about their Neighborhood Business Grants of up to \$10,000 and Community Building Grants of up to \$3,000 by participating in an upcoming workshop. More information on the grants and workshops is available at https://www.citizensnyc.org/grantmaking.

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COVID-19 and the Economy

<u>New York by the Numbers - Monthly Economic and Fiscal Outlook,</u> by NYC Comptroller Brad Lander

Physical and Mental Health Care, Health Insurance, Public Health, Research

• The FDA has approved certified pharmacies to dispense abortion medication: As of January 3, 2023, people who seek a medication abortion may get a prescription for Mifepristone Tablets filled at local pharmacies that are certified to dispense the medication. The prescription must have been issued by a certified prescriber. Mifepristone may be dispensed in-person or by mail.

The FDA ruling is a step in the right direction. Medication abortion is safe and must be made more accessible for individuals seeking abortion care. For more information, please see <u>Dr. Daniel Grossman's explanation</u> of the FDA decision, this <u>NY Times</u> <u>article</u>, and the <u>FDA webpage on Mifepristone</u>.

• Changes to Medicare Savings Programs in 2023: While Medicare open enrollment for 2023 is now closed, those eligible can still apply for a Medicare Savings Program. Beginning next year, income limits will be raised for the Medicare Savings Program, allowing more people to save money on their healthcare costs.

In New York, individuals with monthly incomes of up to \$2,107, and couples with monthly incomes of up to \$2,838, will be eligible for the Medicare Savings Program. With this increase taking place, it is estimated that as many as 300,000 New York residents can receive the benefits of this program.

Those on Medicare Savings Program will automatically be enrolled into Extra Help, which can pay for your drug premium plan, while reducing your drug costs at the pharmacy. In addition, vaccines under Medicare Part D drug plans (including Shingles) will be covered in full. If you have a prescription for insulin, your monthly co-pay is capped at \$35.

If you have any questions or need assistance to apply, do not hesitate to contact our <u>Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP)</u> team by calling Aging Connect at 212-AGING-NY (212-244-6469).

• **Open Enrollment for Healthcare Marketplace Coverage in 2023** We have entered the Open Enrollment Period for the Healthcare Marketplace in New York, which runs from November 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023. During the Open Enrollment Period, you can enroll for health insurance through the individual marketplace, as well as make changes to your current health insurance coverage in 2023. Cost-sharing subsidies are available for eligible policy holders to help make the cost of health insurance more affordable. <u>Please note that if you already have a health insurance policy through the individual marketplace and want to make a change, you can do so on or after November 16th.</u>

2023 health insurance plan details are now available. If you would like to consult with a trained representative about plan options or subsidies at no charge prior to selecting your health insurance plan, Navigator Sites are an excellent resource. The following is the contact information for a local Navigator Site:

Community Service Society of New York

Phone: 888-614-5400

Please make sure to call and schedule an appointment before January 31st to ensure health care coverage in 2023. <u>You will need to sign up for a health insurance policy</u> by December 15th in order for it to take effect January 1, 2023.

- Do More, Feel Better A Community Program Against Depression: People 60+ experiencing depression can enroll in a nine-week research program to explore how increasing participation in pleasurable and rewarding activities can lead to improvement in depressive symptoms. The program is conducted by Weill Cornell Medicine, and individual sessions will be completed via telephone or video chat. If you are eligible to participate, you will receive compensation over the course of the program. For more information, contact Kiana, Caroline, or the study team at 844-333-3579 ext. 720 / ext. 714 or kms4003@med.cornell.edu.
- Important Changes Coming to New York Medicaid, Child Health Plus and the Essential Plan Do you or a family member currently have health insurance through New York State Medicaid, Child Health Plus or the Essential Plan? When the COVID-19 public health emergency ends, New York State will resume eligibility reviews and renewals for people enrolled in these programs. This means you may need to take action to renew your health insurance or the insurance of your family members. Please visit this web page to view updates as new information becomes available, including when the COVID-19 public health emergency will end. Frequently Asked Questions for New Yorkers enrolled through NY State of Health Frequently Asked Questions for New Yorkers enrolled through their Local Department of Social Services or the New York City Human Resources Administration

Here are some things you can do now to get ready.

• Sign up to receive SMS/MMS Text alerts from NY State of Health so you don't miss important health insurance updates, including when it's time to renew your coverage.

To subscribe, text START to 1-866-988-0327

Learn more:

- o <u>SMS/MMS Text Messaging Privacy Policy</u>
- o SMS/MMS Text Messaging Consent and Terms of Service
- **Make sure your address and contact information is up to date.** Make sure NY State of Health has your current mailing address, phone number and email

address so they can contact you about your health insurance. To update your information:

- Call NY State of Health at 1-855-355-5777 (TTY: 1-800-662-1220)
- Log into your account at <u>nystateofhealth.ny.gov</u>, or
- o Contact an <u>enrollment assistor</u>

If you enrolled in Medicaid through <u>your county's Medicaid office or through New</u> <u>York City's Human Resources Administration</u>, contact that office to update your address and contact information.

• NYLAG Webinars on Medicaid Changes: Big changes are happening for older adults and people with disabilities who receive Medicaid in New York State. Register now for TWO free webinars from the New York Legal Assistance Group on these changes scheduled for early 2023. CLE credit pending.

Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 10 AM – 12 PM: Medicaid & MSP Eligibility Increases

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 10 AM – 12 PM: Update on NY Independent Assessor

- NYC Well: Free, confidential mental health support in more than 200 languages, 24/7/365. Call 888-NYC-WELL or text "WELL" to 65173.
- Mental Health for All: A comprehensive hub with helplines and services that offer a range of free, direct support to meet the needs of all New Yorkers. Access resources at https://mentalhealthforall.nyc.gov/.

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Food

• **Greenmarkets:** The <u>82nd Street Greenmarket</u> on East 82nd Street between First and York is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

The <u>Dag Hammarskjold Plaza Greenmarket</u> at 2^{nd} Avenue and 47^{th} Street is open Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m – 3:00 p.m.

The <u>Union Square Greenmarket</u> is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m - 6:00 p.m.

The <u>Roosevelt Island Greenmarket</u> is open Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m just under the Helix, near Foodtown.

GrowNYC farmers markets are a great chance for community members to access the freshest, most nutritious locally-grown food the region has to offer.

Please note that shoppers can use their SNAP/EBT/P-EBT benefits at the market! When customers spend \$2 in SNAP/EBT/P-EBT, they receive a bonus \$2 Health Buck (up to \$10 per day) to purchase additional fruits and vegetables!

- Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Fresh Food Box: Every Tuesday from 2:30-6:30 at First Avenue and 70th Street. Pay one week in advance for an equitably-priced, preassembled box of healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables grown primarily by regional farmers and sourced through GrowNYC Wholesale!! (Yes, equitably-priced - just \$7 for SNAP card holders - and with generous enough portions some folks share a weekly box!!) More information available <u>here.</u>
- NYC Neighborhood Food Resource Guides: Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center has compiled these resource guides to help New Yorkers find free and low-cost food resources in their community, as well as social services and additional resources for New Yorkers.
 - o NYC Food Resource Guide: Upper East Side
 - o <u>NYC Food Resource Guide: Midtown</u>
 - o <u>NYC Food Resource Guide: Stuyvesant Town/Turtle Bay</u>

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Housing

- New Rules Regarding Surcharges for Air Conditioners in Rent Regulated Apartments: Prior to the rent laws being updated by Chapter 619 of the Laws of 2022, a five dollar (\$5.00) per air conditioner per month surcharge was lawful. Effective November 21, 2022, in rent stabilized and rent controlled apartments, owners are prohibited from the continued collection and from the prospective imposition of a surcharge on a tenant for the use of a tenant-installed air conditioning unit if the tenant pays for the electric utility service. For more information, see HCR Fact Sheet #27 – "Air Conditioners": https://hcr.ny.gov/fact-sheet-27.
- Affordable Housing Lotteries: You can view open affordable housing lotteries on the NYC Housing Connect website here: https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/search-lotteries
- Waitlist Open For Affordable Apartments in Murray Hill: A waitlist has opened to fill affordable apartments available now and for future vacancies at The Copper, originally known as the <u>American Copper Buildings</u>, a pair of luxury rental towers at <u>626 First Avenue</u> with a three-story sky bridge connecting the two buildings. New Yorkers earning 60 percent of the area median income can apply for a spot on the wait list for the apartments, which are priced between \$832/month to \$1,311/month on <u>NYC Housing Connect</u>.
- NYC Property Tax Rebate Program Deadline Extended: The deadline to apply for a \$150 property tax rebate has been extended to March 15, 2023, for homeowners

who couldn't apply by the Nov. 15 deadline due to an extenuating circumstance. Think you qualify? More info on how to apply here: <u>www.nyc.gov/propertytaxrebate</u>. To be eligible, the property (a one, two or three-family residence or a co-op or condominium unit) must be the primary residence of owners with a combined annual adjusted gross income under \$250,000 in tax year 2020. If you did not already receive the rebate earlier this year you can learn more and apply <u>here</u>. You can also view this <u>short YouTube tutorial</u> on how to apply (which shows how to start at that DOF page).

- Home Fire Safety Information: The FDNY offers information on fire safety best practices at <u>www.fdnysmart.org</u>.
- Heat Season Rules: The City Housing Maintenance Code and State Multiple Dwelling Law require building owners to provide heat and hot water to all tenants. Building owners are required to provide hot water 365 days a year at a constant minimum temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Between October 1st and May 31st, a period designated as "Heat Season," building owners are also required to provide tenants with heat under the following conditions:
Between the hours of 6AM and 10PM if the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees, the inside temperature is required to be at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
Between the hours of 10PM and 6AM the inside temperature is required to be at least 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Note that there is no longer any outside temperature requirement for night hours

Tenants who are cold in their apartments should first attempt to notify the building owner, managing agent or superintendent. If heat is not restored, the tenant should call the City's Citizen Service Center at 311. For the hearing-impaired, the TTY number is (212) 504-4115. The Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) hosts Buildings After Hours, their in-person information session with DOB staff every Tuesday from 4 – 7 pm in each local DOB borough office. (Manhattan's DOB office is at 280 Broadway, 4th Floor). More details are available here:

https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/buildingsafterhours-sn.pdf.

• **Council Member Erik Bottcher Monthly Housing Clinic**: An opportunity for residents of City Council District 3 to meet individually with housing attorneys regarding tenant-landlord issues. The second Tuesday of every month, from 4pm to 6pm. To sign up, <u>click here</u>.

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Education

• **Kindergarten Applications:** The kindergarten application is open. Apply by January 20, 2023. This year you can add G&T programs to it, too. In New York City, children

enter kindergarten in the fall of the calendar year they turn five, and are guaranteed a kindergarten seat at a public school. Once your child starts kindergarten, they can remain at the same school until its final elementary grade. Watch this <u>video series</u> to learn more about kindergarten admissions.

Need an elementary school for your child now? Learn if your child has a zoned school by entering your address at <u>https://schoolsearch.schools.nyc/</u> or by calling 311.Contact your zoned school directly to enroll. If you don't have a zoned school, contact schools of interest directly or visit a Family Welcome Center for help finding a school.

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Jobs, Job Training, Residencies, Internships, Fellowships

- **Train and Earn:** <u>Train & Earn</u> is a vocational training program for young adults (16-24) who are out of school/out of work. Participants receive customer service and food handling certificates, employment readiness and financial literacy training. Instruction is hybrid, and participants receive a Chromebook. Successful participants earn \$500 upon completion. Some participants will do 175 hours of paid internship experience. Job placement and access to advanced trainings. Click <u>here</u> to apply.
- Housing Court Answers Hotline Specialist: Housing Court Answers, an independent nonprofit, seeks a full time Hotline Specialist. They provide non-lawyer assistance to people from information tables in Housing Courts in all 5 boroughs, through a hotline, and for NYCHA tenants at the impartial hearing office. HCA also works on policy issues surrounding Housing Court. Hotline Specialists assist callers with rent arrears and eviction issues, utility arrears, public benefits problems or questions, questions about Housing Court and Housing Court procedures and questions about housing rights and responsibilities. Salary (currently, salary is \$51,819) and benefits are negotiated through collective bargaining. Send resume and cover letter to info@hcanswers.org with "Hotline Position" in the subject.
- **Try Out to Become a Lifeguard for Summer 2023:** Lifeguard Qualifying Tests are being offered this month at various locations around NYC to find out more about becoming a lifeguard, click <u>here</u>.
- NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship: The <u>NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship</u> is a \$8,000 unrestricted cash grant available to artists living in New York State (and/or an Indian Nation within state boundaries). They are currently accepting applications in the categories of Craft/Sculpture, Digital/Electronic Arts, Nonfiction Literature, Poetry, and Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts. Visit the link at New York Foundation for the Arts to learn more. Application deadline is Wednesday, 1/25/2023 and successful applicants will be notified Summer, 2023.

- Part-time Medical Escorts Needed to Accompany Older Adults on Vital Appointments: Search and Care seeks compassionate chaperones – Medical Escorts -- to accompany older adults safely from the upper east or upper west side to/from medical and other vital healthcare appointments. Candidates will be asked for proof of COVID vaccinations and have at least one weekday availability for 4-6 hours between 8:30 and 5pm. Bilingual (Spanish) a plus. Pay rate is hourly, no benefits; agency covers cost of background check. Please contact Robin Strashun at 212-289-5781 or strashun@searchandcare.org.
- New York State Career Center Events and Recruitment: New York's Career Centers offer a variety of classes, workshops, job fairs, job clubs including virtual career fairs and virtual workshops, including informational sessions on a variety of topics.For a complete schedule, visit <u>https://statistics.labor.ny.gov/career-zone/career-calendar.shtml</u>.
- Helpful Resource Available for New UI Customers: Applying for unemployment insurance (UI) may be daunting for new claimants, so NYSDOL has created a <u>new</u> online guide that simplifies the process. The resource provides a brief overview of eligibility criteria, items needed for filing a claim, how to file, payment options, and what to expect after submitting a claim. Claimants looking for answers to more indepth questions can easily navigate to DOL's <u>UI FAQs</u>, <u>claimant handbook</u>, or <u>How</u> <u>To Apply video</u>.
- For UI Recipients, 1099-G Forms Coming in January: With tax season approaching, the 1099-G tax form will soon be available for anyone who received unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in 2022. UI benefits are taxable, and the 1099-G form shows how much an individual was paid during the previous calendar year. If you received UI benefits in 2022, you must include your 1099-G form when filing your taxes.

This year, receiving your 1099-G form became a whole lot easier. 1099-G forms will be automatically mailed out in mid-January to those individuals who require them, unless they opted to only receive this information electronically.

For more information about the 1099-G form, visit on.ny.gov/1099-G.

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Volunteer and Donation Opportunities

• Join a Team TLC shift to welcome new neighbors arriving at the Port Authority.: <u>Team TLC NYC</u>, an affiliate group of Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden, is a grassroots organization committed to providing basic needs and support to asylum seekers and immigrants. They have been leading the effort to greet migrants who are arriving in NYC by bus (some at Port Authority and some at the Megabus stop at W. 34th St), and they need volunteers every day of the week. In addition to providing a warm welcome, volunteers help migrants make their way to shelters, connect with family or friends, and secure bus tickets if they want to travel elsewhere. Volunteers also provide food, clothing, and toiletries to help meet folks' immediate needs. Volunteers who speak Spanish are especially needed, but folks who don't can be helpful, too. Learn more and sign up for a shift here.

- **GENuine Connections Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunity:** DOROT is excited to launch GENuine Connections, a free, virtual program, where teens and older adults connect in small groups on a weekly basis to bridge the generational gap and have fun doing it. Do you know an adult aged 65+ or a high school student looking for a new volunteer opportunity? Find out more <u>here</u>.
- **DOROT Winter Package Delivery:** Join DOROT for Winter Package Delivery on Sunday, January 29 or Monday, January 30. Share warmth and companionship with an older neighbor. Deliver a bag filled with winter staples and treats. Stay for a visit or follow up with a phone call to show you care. Help DOROT address social isolation and loneliness in our community. For more information and to register, please visit: <u>https://www.dorotusa.org/winter</u>
- Volunteer Opportunities for those interested in helping Asylum Seekers:
 - NYC/Catholic Charities is looking for people to volunteer at the asylum seeker navigation center: http://tinyurl.com/4n5h3nbu
 - NY Immigration Coalition: <u>https://www.nyic.org/get-involved/volunteer/</u>
 - Grannies Respond (one of the primary groups greeting people at Port Authority): <u>https://www.granniesrespond.org/volunteer.</u>
- **Donation Drive for Asylum Seekers:** Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine and the New York Immigration Coalition are sponsoring a clothing and toiletry donation drive for newly arrived asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants.
 - What to Donate: Toiletries (body wash, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shaving cream, nail clippers, menstrual products (unopened), baby/body wipes, bath towels, face cloths, diapers). New and Packaged Clothing (underwear, socks, t-shirts for men, women and children).
 - Where to Donate: 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor, South Side, M-F 9am-5pm or 431 West 125th Street, M-F 10am-5pm.

For questions or information, visit <u>tinyurl.com/57bfye67</u>, email <u>info@manhattanbp.gov</u> or call 212-669-8300.

The Civilian Complaint Review Board's Youth Advisory Council application
process is open: The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is a council of young New
Yorkers who are committed to criminal justice issues and improving policecommunity relations. The YAC counsels the CCRB and finds innovative ways to
bring young New Yorkers into the narrative about civilian oversight of the NYPD.
Applications are open to New Yorkers ages 10-18 years old. Video and audio
statements can be submitted via link in the application's "Please describe why you
would be an ideal member of the CCRB Youth Advisory Council" section. The
deadline is Tuesday, January 31st, 2023. Eligible applicants can apply
here (https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ccrb/about/outreach/yac-application.page) to join our
2023 class. To learn more about the YAC visit www.nyc.gov/ccrbyouthcouncil

Social and Legal Services

• Affordable Connectivity Program: The Affordable Connectivity Program is available to help you pay for broadband internet service! Qualifying individuals and families can receive up to \$30 per month off their broadband costs. You can learn more about and sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program here: <u>GetInternet.gov</u>.

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Resources for Older Adults & Caregivers

- LiveOn NY Benefits Outreach and Assistance: LiveOn NY's Benefits Outreach and Assistance program works to ensure older New Yorkers can make ends meet through easy access to public benefits in New York City. They offer benefits screenings and application assistance for SNAP (Food Stamps) and other benefits programs. For assistance call 212-398-5045, email <u>Benefits@liveon-ny.org</u> or complete their <u>Confidential Benefits Screening Form</u>.
- VOLS Legal Support for Older Adults: The VOLS Senior Law Project serves low income New Yorkers age 60+ by partnering with pro bono attorneys to provide wills, powers of attorney, and other essential life planning documents free of charge. For more information and to access support, visit <u>https://volsprobono.org/projects/seniorlaw/</u>. They also publish a helpful guide to live planning documents and decision making which is accessible here
- Health Advocates for Older Adults Healthy Aging Calendar: Health Advocates' Healthy Aging Program strives to help seniors remain healthy, active, and connected to their communities, both online and in person. They offer a wide array of activities, including exercise classes, technology training, music, movies and tours of local venues- some weekly and others on various dates throughout the year. For a list of upcoming activities and dates/times, please view their calendar <u>here</u>.
- Classes for Seniors in New York City: If you're an older adult in New York, you can take part in live, <u>in-person</u> and <u>online classes</u> to learn new skills, discover ways to save money, and find a community where you can get in shape and make new friends. Senior Planet offers courses, programs, and activities that enhance the lives of older adults. Please join us! Got questions? Call our Senior Planet in NYC hotline:(917) 936-4410
- Attorney General's Nursing Home Hotline: The NY Attorney General has recently uncovered fraud and abuse at several nursing homes. If you believe that a loved one could be at risk, please call the AG's Hotline: 1-800-771-7755.

Resources for Small Businesses and Non-Profits

- Small Business Growth Accelerator Course: The NYPL has opened applications for a free Small Biz Growth Accelerator course; the deadline to apply is 1/17/23. The program starts Tuesday, 1/24/23, 5 8 pm, at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library (455 Fifth Avenue, Fifth Floor). It's led by instructor Jimmy Newson, and includes:
 - o Two 3-hour in-person workshop-style classes
 - Two additional virtual sessions for Q&A, workshop accountability, and peer networking
 - Strategic Planning Template
 - o 5 Action Plan Workbooks
 - Financial Literacy Program
 - Accessibility Training Program
 - o In-Depth Software demos

For more information, or to apply, click here.

• National Broadband Census: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is conducting a national broadband census. To help ensure the most affordable and accessible internet for every New York home and business, the New York State ConnectALL Office is mobilizing people and organizations to help raise awareness about the FCC national broadband map, the importance of its accuracy and how to submit a challenge to update the map. However, our federal partners have given the public a narrow window in which to submit challenges and the deadline for submitting a challenge is January 13, 2023. Challenges submitted after this date can still update the map, but will not increase New York's allocation of federal funds

We encourage local business owners and residents to review their address on the <u>FCC</u> <u>national broadband map</u> and submit a challenge if needed (from your home or business, smart phone, local library or a community based organization that can provide access to a computer terminal).

We need as many New Yorker's as possible to participate in the national broadband census to confirm the accuracy of their broadband service—millions of dollars in federal funding are at stake.

Residents and businesses in your community can contact the <u>ConnectALL</u> team for additional support and if you have any questions on this process.

• Free Tech help for Businesses: The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce offers free tech help to small businesses. At a 30-minute, one-on-one phone consultation with their tech expert, learn how to improve your online strategy and get advice about a range of digital business processes, from building and managing a website, honing

your marketing strategy, online payments, or setting up a database or how to use Customer Relationship Management software for yourself or your team. Click<u>here</u> to make an appointment.

- The PACE Small Business Development Center provides no-cost, one-on-one business counseling to entrepreneurs in New York City. Our advisors guide both existing small business owners as well as entrepreneurs with emerging ventures and discuss a range of topics including marketing, digital media, financing, business planning, government contracting, and more. Sign up here to schedule an appointment: https://www.pacesbdc.org/contact. They also host regular webinars on issues impacting businesses which can be viewed here: https://www.pacesbdc.org/events.
- NY DOB Small Business Help Form: Need assistance on your latest construction project? Now small business owners and entrepreneurs can use the <u>Small Business</u> <u>Help Form</u> to get one-on-one guidance on planned or ongoing construction projects, including inspections, permits, and general advice. DOB's new Small Business Support Team (SBST) will handle the inquiries and project applications coming from our City's small business community. Whether opening a new place of business or renovating an existing one, owners and entrepreneurs can get the dedicated support they need. Contact SBST through the <u>Small Business Help Form</u> to get your project to completion and your business up and running faster. For additional resources and support, contact the NYC Department of Small Business Services' <u>NYC Business Express Service Team (BEST)</u>.

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In-Person & Virtual Community Activities

- Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association Holiday Show: The RIVAA Gallery's annual Holiday Exhibition runs from December 17th to January 11th. This year's exhibition, Into Light, will open on December 17, 2022 from 6-9. Amish Darr an acoustic performer based out of Greenpoint, Brooklyn will be playing at RIVAA holiday show on December 17th at 7:30pm. The RIVAA Galery is located at 527 Main Street on Roosevelt Island. For more information, email info@rivaagallery.org.
- The New York Jewish Film Festival: On Thursday, January 12th at Lincoln Center, <u>The New York Jewish Film Festival</u> opens with "<u>America</u>" by Ofir Raul Graizer, in Hebrew with English subtitles; Q&A with Ofir Raul Graizer after the screening. The festival continues through January 23rd. Complete schedule at the festival link above.
- Community Board 8 Manhattan's Winter Crafts Show: Open call for NYC Crafters. Show date February 11th, 11am to 4pm at Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E 88th Street. Submit a photo sample of your work by January 13th to <u>info@cb8m.com</u> using "Craft Submission" in the subject line. Free to apply and participate.

Mulch Your Christmas Tree: It's that time again! Mulchfest runs December 26 through January 8! Wrap up your holiday season and say goodbye to your tree at Mulchfest. Join NYC Parks and the <u>New York City Department of Sanitation</u> in the NYC holiday tradition of recycling your Christmas tree! Put on your boots and haul your tree to a <u>Mulchfest location</u> — we'll chip your tree into wood chips that we'll use to nourish trees and make NYC even greener. DSNY will also conduct curbside collections of Christmas trees for mulching and recycling Friday, 1/6 through Saturday, 1/14.

• City Parks Foundation Programs:

Senior Fitness Classes for those 60+ at NYC parks. In Manhattan, they offer yoga in Carl Schurz Park and tennis in Central Park, among many other classes. View more classes and register <u>here</u> or contact sports@cityparksfoundation.org or call (718) 760-6999 with any questions.

• Lincoln Center calendar of events

• The 2023 Open Streets application is now live: <u>Apply today!</u>

With a streamlined process for returning partners & resources available for those looking to manage Open Streets, we're excited to work with communities across NYC to grow the program this year! Visit <u>www.nyc.gov/openstreets#apply</u> to access the application and to learn more about the program.

Email <u>openstreets@dot.nyc.gov</u> with any questions, concerns, or if you need assistance completing an application.

New York City's Open Streets program transforms streets into public space open to all. These transformations allow for a range of activities that promote economic development, support schools, and provide new ways for New Yorkers to enjoy cultural programming and build community.

Application Deadlines:

The 2023 application features important deadlines partners should consider before applying:

• If your Open Street will launch on or before June 30th, 2023, you must apply by January 31st, 2023.

• If your Open Street will launch on or after July 1st, 2023, you must apply by April 14th, 2023. This deadline is also for any school applying for the 2023-2024 academic year.

NYC DOT works with community-based organizations, educational institutions, and groups of businesses to execute Open Streets citywide. In coordination with community partners, NYC DOT can also help to develop operational plans to manage the street for multiple uses, including outdoor dining, programming, and outdoor learning/recreation for schools. NYC DOT works with partners and local stakeholders to ensure loading, deliveries, and emergency access is coordinated as part of the Open Streets' operations.