



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES/CSBG

Kathy Hochul, Governor
Robert J. Rodriguez, Secretary of State

Please practice social distancing and wear a mask whenever possible for your safety and the safety of others.

Division of Community Services Director Receives Recognition at NASCSP Conference



Pictured: Charisse Johnson (Director, Division of Community Assistance, Office of Community Services), Beverly Buchanan (President, NASCSP Executive Board), Jeannie Chaffin (Interim Executive Director, NASCSP), Manuel A. Rosa (Director, Division of Community Services, New York State Department of State), Zoila Del Castillo (Deputy Secretary of State for Economic Opportunities, New York State Department of State), and Nikoletta Battistoni (Deputy Director, Division of Community Services, New York State Department of State)

Division of Community Services Director Manuel A. Rosa was honored and presented with the **Ann Kagie Award** on October 27, 2022, during the National Association for State Community Services Program (NASCSP) 2022 Annual Training Conference in Minneapolis, MN. The Ann Kagie Award is presented to someone who has been or continues to be involved with the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) activities at the national, state or local level, recognizing outstanding and significant contributions in the CSBG program, dedication and commitment to the constituencies served, and leadership and advocacy for the network.

Agency Highlight: ACCORD Celebrates 50 Years!

ACCORD Corporation celebrated 50 years of serving Allegany County this summer.

ACCORD's 50th Anniversary Celebration was held on August 19, 2022 in Island Park located in Wellsville, NY. The day began with an inspiring virtual training on poverty, provided by Donna Beegle, President of Communication Across Barriers, attended by ACCORD staff and many of their partners including Allegany County Employment and Training and Department of Social Services employees.



The ACCORD Team at 50th Anniversary Celebration. Photo courtesy of ACCORD.

Grounded in their mission and very excited to all be together for the first time in more than two years, ACCORD staff, volunteers and board members then headed to the park for the celebration. ACCORD's walkway was lined with a timeline of yard signs that provided a powerful look at how ACCORD has grown and changed throughout the 50 years. ACCORD celebrated many milestones and staff achievements which included special honors for the recipients of their Annual Vision and Value Awards. Award winners are peer-nominated, with the final selection done by ACCORD's Board of Directors.

The best part of their day was "Telling Our Stories," hearing directly from people who shared how ACCORD made a difference in their lives was moving and powerful.

Check out this video share in the fun: [ACCORD Celebrates 50 Years!](#)

Division of Consumer Protection

THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ISSUES WARNINGS AS HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES

This holiday season, cost-conscious New Yorkers are battling rising prices along with ever-evolving scams. New York State Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) has the following tips to share to help you through the season.

ONLINE SHOPPING TIPS

The convenience of shopping online creates both opportunities and challenges for consumers. One of the major challenges is figuring out what is real or fake as scammers find new, more sophisticated ways to trick consumers.

Shop Safely Online with these Tips:

- **Don't rush when buying online.** Technology has simplified the way we shop. With a click of a button, we can quickly shop multiple sites, browse hundreds of items, comparison shop, find deals, read consumer reviews and make purchase decisions for a variety of items. Before you click, take the time to carefully read and review what you're buying and who you're buying it from.
- **Be careful when shopping on social media.** Social media commerce is gaining ground among shoppers, and according to experts it's growing three times faster than traditional ecommerce. As more consumers browse and shop directly on social media platforms, we urge consumers to pay attention to brand imposters and fake retailers with fake consumer reviews. Avoid placing orders on these copycat sites for products that will never arrive.
- **Shop on trusted sites** with retailers known to you. Consumers are exposed to hundreds of retailer websites, and some promote products that may not meet their expectation by offering a poor-quality version of the advertised item. Some consumers have also reported not receiving any product at all. Use caution on trusted sites that host items for third-party sellers.
- **Beware of third-party vendors.** If redirected from a trusted site to a third-party site, read the seller's policies, review ratings, read consumer comments, and most importantly do a broad internet search before making your purchase. Trusted retailers who host third-party sellers do not warranty their sales, thus you could get a substandard product or no product at all when you take the risk and purchase from an unknown third-party vendor.
- **Do your research** if you want to try a new site or retailer. Performing a broad internet search will provide you with important feedback from other customers.
- **Learn how to spot a fake review.** Watch out for fake reviews online. One red flag to look for is one-sided reviews with no specifics. Real reviews often reflect customer experiences that are balanced, descriptive and subjective. Also look for multiple reviews that look very similar and posted during the same timeframe. This is a sign that the reviewers are either copying information or were all written by the same person.
- **Read product specifications.** Online marketing is geared to get you to buy, so it is important to understand the product you are purchasing and the terms of the sale to ensure you are getting what you want.

Don't be Fooled by Package and Delivery Scams:

- **Keep track of your packages.** Package tracking and delivery scams are common during the holidays. Review the tracking information for your package and note any issues right away through the retailer's websites.
- **Beware of phishing attempts.** Another common scam this time of year is scammers using phishing emails and text messages to impersonate delivery companies (e.g., UPS, USPS, FedEx), banking and credit card companies, and other large retailers (e.g., Netflix, PayPal, eBay, Amazon), which often include links to sites attempting to steal your information. Always open a browser and type the company's website address yourself instead of clicking on a link in an email or text message.

Tips for Using Credit Cards Online:

- **Check the website's encryption;** it's easier than you think. Before entering your credit card information, make sure that the website's address begins with "https" and that there is a closed lock on the website address bar or unbroken key symbol in the lower portion of your window.
- **Don't keep the credit card on file** for future purchases. Provide your credit card number each time you make a purchase.
- **Designate one credit card and one email address** for online shopping. This will allow for easy review of purchases and provide protection in case of a dispute.

The New York State Division of Consumer Protection provides resources and educational materials to consumers on product safety, as well as voluntary mediation services between consumers and businesses. The Consumer Assistance Helpline 1-800-697-1220 is available Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding State Holidays, and consumer complaints can be filed at any time at www.dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection.

For more consumer protection tips, follow the Division on social media at Twitter: @NYSConsumer and Facebook: www.facebook.com/nysconsumer

Agency Highlight:**Connecting Communities in Action Awarded One of 36 CDC Grants Nationwide**

Connecting Communities in Action (CCA) has been awarded \$125,000 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose of the grant, "Closing the Gap with Social Determinants of Health Accelerator Plans", is to accelerate action in Cattaraugus County that leads to improved chronic diseases outcomes among persons experiencing health disparities and inequities.

The one-year project develops multi-sector collaborative plans that involve public health, government, businesses, non-profit organizations, and healthcare partners in the accelerator plans. Both the Community Health Assessment for Cattaraugus County, and CCA's Community Needs Assessment identified Food and Nutrition Security, and Community Clinical Linkages among the top health priorities in the community. A Leadership Team that includes CCA, the Cattaraugus County's Health Department and Department of Aging, Southern Tier Healthcare Systems, Universal Primary Care and other key stakeholders will meet regularly during the 2023 calendar year, guided by a consultant, to develop and implement the accelerator plan.

New York State Health Rankings place Cattaraugus County at number 60 of 62, among the bottom three in the State for health outcomes. While any Social Determinant of Health may be addressed during the project, it is broadly recognized that barriers to accessing health care services and nutritious foods are critical. Among the possible outcomes of the accelerator plan, the community may strengthen linkages to physical and behavioral health care, transportation, mobile food outreach in identified food deserts, and more.

Office for New Americans (ONA)

ONA Highlights LGBTQ+ Immigrant Community and Cell-Ed's Program Updates

In November, the New York State Office for New Americans (ONA) is proud to be highlighting Transgender Awareness Week and celebrating the positive contributions of the LGBTQ+ immigrant community and organizations such as [Translatinx Network](#), who were featured presenters in their October webinar for LGBTQ+ History Month.

On October 25, 2022, ONA hosted a webinar to commemorate LGBTQ+ History Month on the topic of **Celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month & Services for LGBTQ+ Immigrants in New York State**. This webinar featured presenters including the Governor's Director of LGBTQ+ Affairs and leaders from the LGBTQ+ immigrant community in New York State, offering an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the people, places, and moments that have shaped the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

The information in this webinar provided participants with an understanding of recognizing the barriers faced by this community and learning about services available for LGBTQ+ immigrants. Participants also learned how to best support and be an ally for LGBTQ+ immigrants in their community.

If you would like to receive a copy of the materials and recording from this webinar, please contact ONA at NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov

Cell-Ed's Program Updates

ONA also featured new information on its Cell-Ed program. On November 3, 2022, ONA and its partner Cell-Ed hosted a webinar to announce new updates regarding the changes to the Cell-Ed system, particularly the launch of one pin code for all users in New York State, new courses, and new content available to learners.

ONA's Cell-Ed program in New York State provides a pathway for individuals to learn English and build skills on any mobile device. The webinar focused on the designated unique PIN (1788) as a key identifier on the Cell-Ed platform to increase the organization and utilization of Cell-Ed. The pin code unites all agencies under one umbrella to ensure a smooth process for new onboarding learners. In addition, new courses will be available to assist users in developing more skills and adding new languages for coach assistance to aid users.

For more information on Cell-Ed and to learn how you can sign up, visit <https://dos.ny.gov/cell-ed-0> or call the New Americans Hotline at 1-800-566-7636.

NYS ONA Webinar: How to Support and Assist Immigrants Impacted by Crime

Tuesday, November 29, 2022, 1PM – 2PM

Register here: <https://forms.office.com/g/p7EtpVG4Mm>

Elizabeth Cronin, Director of the New York State Office of Victim Services, will be delivering this presentation. The webinar will focus on information and resources to help immigrant victims of crime, and how you can best support them and their families. This webinar features a presentation by the [New York State Office of Victim Services](#).

The mission of the NYS Office of Victim Services (OVS) is to provide critical services and support for crime victims and their families. It is an executive level agency that funds community-based victim assistance programs, provides financial compensation/reimbursement for certain expenses that occur as a result of victimization, and advocates for the rights of victims of crime. OVS receives federal Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) and state funding.

Department of Public Service: Virtual Winter Workshops

The Department of Public Service is hosting “one-stop shopping” virtual workshops, one on **November 29, 2022, 1:00-2:30 pm** and one on **January 26, 2023, 1:00-2:30 pm**. Both will include presentations from the following state agencies: Department of Public Service, Energy Research and Development Authority, Housing and Community Renewal, Office for the Aging, Power Authority, and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Topics Include:

- Energy Affordability Programs
- Financial Assistance Programs
- Weatherization Programs
- Energy Efficiency
- Services for Older Adults



[Register Here](#)

Or Visit WWW.WEBEX.COM/JOIN

Access Code: 2342 835 4429

Password: Nov29-1pm

Phone Only-Access:

518-549-0500

Access Code: 2342 835 4429



[Register Here](#)

Or Visit WWW.WEBEX.COM/JOIN

Access Code: 2343 552 8230

Password: Jan26-1pm

Phone-Only Access:

518-549-0500

Access Code: 2343 552 8230

The Department of Public Service has a Winter Preparedness 2022-2023 webpage with additional resources: www.dps.ny.gov/winter

Division of Community Services Reminders:

CSBG Eligibility Guidelines

Be on the lookout for updated information regarding the 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The language in the current Continuing Resolution allows for the use of the 200% FPL CSBG Eligibility Guidelines until December 16, 2022.

CSBG CARES ACT Supplement Funding – DOS Close Out Activities

The CSBG CARES Supplement Act funding came to an end as of September 30, 2022. In preparation for the closure of this funding opportunity, DOS is providing an anticipated timeline and related close out activities' checklist. Please direct any questions regarding the CSBG CARES close out to your assigned Program Analyst or Fiscal Field Representative.

CSBG CARES Contract Closeout Checklist:

During the last CSBG CARES contact, DOS Program Analysts will review a sampling of customer files:

- ☐ to ensure that customers who received CSBG CARES funded service(s), activity(ies) and/or outcome(s) were CSBG income eligible.
- ☐ to verify that the file notes what CSBG CARES funded service(s), activity(ies) and/or outcome(s) were provided or achieved.
- ☐ to verify that the service(s), activity(ies) and/or outcome(s) noted within the customer file is consistent with the last approved CSBG CARES work plan (prepare, prevent or respond).

By October 30, 2022, the subrecipient will have:

- ☐ Submitted a completed final Program Progress Report (PPR).
- ☐ Completed the PPR Narrative and explain any outcomes, services or activities that did not meet or exceeded projected outcomes based on the last approved CSBG CARES work plan.
- ☐ Submitted the CSBG CARES Unaudited Financial Report (UFS) to their assigned Fiscal Field Representative (due by November 14, 2022).

By November 30, 2022, the subrecipient will:

- ☐ Complete and submit an amendment, only upon request by DOS, to reconcile actual expenditures with last approved budget.

By December 30, 2022, DOS will complete and distribute:

- ☐ a closeout report on the review of the PPR, PPR Narrative and contract performance.

Additional Resources for the CSBG Network

Resources for Responding to COVID-19

[Community Action Partnership: COVID-19 Community Needs Assessment](#)

[CAPLAW: Coronavirus Updates for the Community Action Network](#)

[NASCP Coronavirus Resources](#)

[NYSCAA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#)

[Food Pantries across New York State](#)

[New York State Department of Health](#)

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