December 2021

Continuing Resolution: H.R. 6119

On December 3, 2021, H.R. 6119, the “Further Extending Government Funding Act” was passed for continuing projects and activities of the Federal Government through February 18, 2022.

H.R. 6119 also appropriated CSBG FY2022 second quarter funds. The Office of Community Services (OCS), Division of Community Assistance (DCA) anticipates that the full allotment for second quarter funds will be available in late-January, contingent upon OCS receiving the apportionment in mid-January.

Additionally, H.R. 6119 extended the state’s authority to revise the income limit for eligibility from 125 to 200 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL) as authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This extension applies to regularly appropriated CSBG and CSBG CARES funding. This extension does not apply to CSBG Disaster Supplemental funds. This extension is through February 18, 2022. For more information visit congress.gov or CSBG DCL-2022-11 Q2 Continuing Resolution FY2022.

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, January 19th at 2PM (ET)

2022 Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Webinar

Keynote Speaker: Jerome H. Underwood, President & CEO, Action for a Better Community.

Click here to register for the webinar hosted by Community Action Partnership.

Join ONA Webinars!

The New York State Office for New Americans coordinates a monthly webinar series to link immigrant service providers to information and resources to serve immigrant communities and their neighbors. Recent topics have included:
- Health Care for New Americans
- Beyond Humanitarian Parole & Asylum: Exploring Pathways for Afghans in New York and Abroad
- Understanding & Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Creating a Barrier Free Environment

To be added to our listserv to learn about upcoming webinars, please e-mail NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov.
New York Homeowners Affected by COVID: Help is Here!

The New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund (NYS HAF) is a federally funded program dedicated to supporting homeowners who are at risk of default, foreclosure or displacement as result of a financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is administered by the NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) agency. They work in partnership with Sustainable Neighborhoods, a non-profit organization dedicated to foreclosure prevention and homeownership preservation.

When will NYS HAF Assistance be Available?

The program will begin accepting applications January 3, 2022. In the meantime, NYS encourages those interested to review the application guide which includes a list of documents required to submit the application. NYS HAF expects to receive significantly more applications than can be funded by the program. Applications will be processed in the order in which they were received. Application submission does not guarantee applicants will receive financial assistance.

Who Will Be Eligible to Apply?

Homeowners in New York State are encouraged to apply if they were financially affected by COVID-19 and who are now:
• Behind or in forbearance on their mortgage
• In default on a reverse mortgage
• Behind on their property taxes, water, or sewage bills
• Behind on monthly maintenance charges of your coop or condo
• Behind on their chattel loans, retail installment contracts or other types of home purchase loans of your manufactured home

What Type of Assistance is Available?

The NYS HAF will provide homeowners who were affected by COVID-19 with several types of support:
• Financial support to address delinquent housing payments that result in an affordable outcome;
• Access to a Call Center and case managers who can help find out about any mortgage relief that the homeowner may be entitled to and how it will affect future housing payments; and
• Referrals to professional housing counselors or legal service providers who are experts in this field.

For additional information describing the NYS HAF program, visit: New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund. Or call NYS HAF at: 1-844-77-NYHAF (1-844-776-9423), Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. The call center is staffed with live operators who speak multiple languages and who can assist with any additional questions about the program or the application process.

Resources for Child Tax Credit (CTC)

The Office of Community Services recently released a Dear Colleague Letter regarding the expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) in the American Rescue Plan, signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021. Visit whitehouse.gov/child tax credit for more information.
Connecting Job Seekers to Employment Opportunities Initiative

On December 1, 2021, Governor Kathy Hochul announced a new initiative to build upon extensive efforts already underway by the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) to connect job seekers to the record more than 220,000 available jobs, tools, and training resources. "After the hardship New York's workforce has experienced as a result of COVID-19, it is crucial that we connect individuals looking for jobs with businesses looking to hire," Governor Hochul said.

The NYS DOL continues to proactively connect New Yorkers with jobs through recruitment, skill-matching, marketing, community outreach, virtual career services, a broadcast and social media campaign, and other ongoing efforts as part of New York State’s economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. DOL plans to expand those existing services to collaborate with additional community partners across the state to educate New Yorkers about no-cost resources available to connect them with jobs.

DOL will look to partner with Community Based Organizations, including those who assisted New Yorkers through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Interested organizations can sign up to take train-the-trainer sessions here. The training for community partners will focus on how to access career services and how to leverage them effectively. Services include career exploration, job search assistance, resume writing, interviewing skills, and virtual career services such as a virtual career center and virtual career fairs.

DOL already offers thousands of virtual one-on-one career services appointments to those receiving unemployment benefits. Additional appointment slots have been added, people can sign up for appointments here.

The New York State Department of Labor continues to encourage businesses to utilize these free recruitment services and hiring incentives. Their media campaign called “This is Why”, introduces New Yorkers to new career paths such as truck driving, manufacturing, and nursing.

NYS DOL offers many free resources to assist New Yorkers looking for work, including:

- New York State Job Bank and JobZone
- Virtual Workshops
- Career Center Services
- Coursera
- SUNY Training
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Part-Time Hiring Opportunities Job Bank

Additionally, NYS DOL offers many free resources to assist businesses looking for workers, including:

- Access to Millions of Job Seekers
- Career Fairs
- Tax Credits and Hiring Incentives
- Training Funds
- Shared Work Program
- Consultation Services
- Labor Market Trends and Data Overview
Downtown Revitalization Initiative Winners

The fifth round of winners of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) were announced:

The City of Rochester, Monroe County, the Village of Newark, and Wayne County

Each of the winners will receive $10 million each in funding as the Finger Lakes Region winners, and Little Falls of the Mohawk Valley region winners will receive $10 million. As part of DRI Round 5, each of the State's 10 regional economic development regions are being awarded $20 million, to make for a total state commitment of $200 million in funding and investments to help communities boost their post COVID-19 economies by transforming downtowns into vibrant neighborhoods.

Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin said, "As we continue to recover from COVID-19, the State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative is a critical tool to help communities across the Empire State recover. The $20 million in funding awarded to Rochester and Newark will help these communities achieve more vibrant neighborhoods and boost their post COVID-19 economies."

Led by the NYS Department of State, the DRI serves as a cornerstone of the State's economic development policy by transforming downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers of activity that offer a high quality of life and attract redevelopment, businesses, jobs, and economic and housing diversity. In this round, Governor Hochul doubled funding from $100 million to $200 million and allowed each Regional Economic Development Council to decide whether to nominate two $10 million awardees or one $20 million awardee for transformative and catalytic downtown redevelopment projects. DRI funds will then be awarded for selected projects that have the greatest potential to jumpstart revitalization and realize the community's vision for the downtown. Through the DRI, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will provide technical support to the awardees to assist them with including carbon neutral principles in support of the State's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent by 2050. Visit Downtown Revitalization Initiative to learn more.

Legislation to Combat Homelessness and Expand Affordable Housing

Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation S.6573/A.8009 which makes housing vouchers available to eligible families under the Family Homelessness and Eviction Protection Supplement (FHEPS) program in New York City. This legislation raises the maximum rent payable under the FHEPS program to cover the true cost of rent in New York City, one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation.

This bill will expand FHEPS access to serve more families in need, ensuring that more families avoid eviction by remaining in their homes and are placed in stable housing. This bill will raise the rent cap from 85 percent to 100 percent of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Fair Market Rent. Furthermore, FHEPS is the only preventive program available to survivors of domestic violence and their families who receive public assistance. Raising the FHEPS levels and preventing more evictions will allow the State and City to achieve the mutual goal of using FHEPS to keep New Yorkers in permanent housing, out of shelters, and connected to social services to enhance their ability to ultimately move off the caseload.

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Here to Help: The Division of Consumer Protection

The holiday shopping rush is winding down as we head into the New Year. Unfortunately, many New Yorkers may be facing difficulties with purchases made throughout the holiday season.

The NYS Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) is here to help! DCP’s Consumer Assistance Program resolves thousands of consumer complaints each year through voluntary mediation. Experienced Consumer Advisors work closely with the business community to aid consumers in efficient, expedient resolution of their marketplace disputes. Consumers can contact DCP by calling the Consumer Helpline, mailing a written complaint, or completing an electronic complaint form online.

Some common consumer complaints include:

- **Billing disputes** - If inaccurate or false charges are found on a bill or receipt and the company has not resolved the issue, consumers should file a complaint with DCP.
- **Refund policies** - NYS law requires retailers clearly post their refund policies, and consumers having trouble obtaining a store refund are encouraged to file a complaint.
- **Non-delivery of goods and services** - Businesses are subject to laws that require them to deliver goods within a certain period. If a package was not received in a timely fashion and notification of the delay was not provided, reach out to a Consumer Advisor for assistance.
- **Credit reporting errors** – A credit report error can result in damaged credit or worse, indicate possible identity theft. Consumer Advisors can assist with getting the error corrected or help the consumer secure credit.
- **Possible identity theft** - DCP operates New York State’s Identity Theft Prevention and Mitigation Program. If a consumer feels that their personal information has been compromised or that they have fallen victim to a scam, they are encouraged to reach out to a Consumer Advisor for advice and guidance on what steps to take.

The holidays are rife with scams that target vulnerable populations of all ages. Reach out to the Division of Consumer Protection for help resolving a consumer concern. More information and consumer tips can be found at the Division of Consumer Protection website at: [https://dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection](https://dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection).

Any time a consumer has spent money in the marketplace on a good or service and did not get what they bargained for, DCP encourages them to file a complaint online at [https://dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection](https://dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection). Consumers can also request a complaint form in the mail by calling the Consumer Helpline at (800) 697-1220. The Consumer Helpline is staffed Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Connect with the Division on social media by following us via Twitter at @NYSConsumer or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nysconsumer](http://www.facebook.com/nysconsumer).
Governor Hochul Launches "Boost Up, New York"

Governor Hochul launched the statewide "Boost Up, New York" campaign to urge New York adults to get their booster dose for better protection against COVID-19.

The "Boost Up, New York" campaign will be featured at grocery stores, malls, and transit stations statewide. The program utilizes online advertising to reach people on search engines and social media channels. With increased urgency and a timely message, the program will kick-off December 6 and run for four weeks.

New Yorkers Can Schedule Their Free COVID-19 Vaccine or Booster Dose

To date, over 2.5 million New Yorkers have already received their booster or additional dose, out of approximately 6.5 eligible. In addition to the new "Boost Up, New York" campaign, the State launched a dedicated website with information about booster doses, additional doses, eligibility, frequently asked questions, and resources for providers on-the-ground. The State continues direct-messaging outreach to eligible New Yorkers through SMS-based messages and local notifications to fully vaccinated New Yorkers through the State’s Excelsior Pass platform.

The COVID-19 vaccine and booster doses are free and widely available statewide at pharmacies, local health departments, clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, state-run mass vaccination sites, and other locations across New York State.

New Yorkers can boost up or get vaccinated by visiting vaccines.gov, texting their ZIP code to 438829, or calling 1-800-232-0233 to find nearby locations. New Yorkers can also visit the Am I Eligible page or call 1-833-NYS-4-VAX to schedule a booster or vaccine appointment at a state-run mass vaccination site.

Eligible New Yorkers can receive any of the FDA-approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccines for their booster dose, including Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Janssen/Johnson & Johnson. If New Yorkers have questions, they should consult their health care provider or vaccine administrator.

Critical Water Infrastructure Projects Across New York State

Governor Kathy Hochul announced more than $115 million for critical clean and drinking water infrastructure projects across the state that protect or improve water quality. The grants, interest-free loans and low-interest loans approved by the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) Board of Directors on December 9, 2021 will help 34 municipalities and public authorities undertake drinking water and wastewater projects. Of the funding announced, more than $33 million is allocated to 13 drinking water projects in Nassau and Suffolk counties to address emerging contaminants.

"Every New Yorker deserves access to clean water," Governor Hochul said. "This funding will upgrade clean and drinking water infrastructure across the state, address emerging contaminants, and reduce pollution. We will continue to work with local governments and partners to protect New Yorkers’ water quality for years to come."

The Board’s approvals include IMG and WIIA grants and financings through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF).
Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

The NYS Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) is accepting applications as of June 1, 2021. There are several important resources on the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) website. The website provides links to informational videos to help navigate and become familiar with the ERAP system.

Get Help Applying for ERAP: Apply for the ERAP online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Contact by phone: 844-NY1RENT (844-691-7368) 7 days a week from 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. For the hearing impaired, TTY phone number: 1-833-843-8829. Contact by Webchat: Chat with a representative

Eligibility  Renter-Checklist  Landlord-Checklist

Payments will be made directly to the landlord/property owner and utility company on behalf of the tenant. Tenant applicants will be notified of the amounts paid on their behalf.

Emergency Broadband Benefit

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program created to help families and households who cannot afford or are struggling to afford internet service. This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services, virtual classrooms, and more.

For more information, including eligibility requirements, visit: https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit.

Outreach kits are available in multiple languages: https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-outreach-toolkit.

It is important to note that the program runs as long as there are funds to support it, all eligible participants are encouraged to apply ASAP!

Reach out to Gregg Collar (Gregg.collar@dos.ny.gov) from the NYS Department of State, Division of Consumer Protection, who will be able to provide you with further direction and answer any specific questions you might have regarding the Emergency Broadband Benefit.

Resources for responding to COVID-19

Community Action Partnership: COVID-19 Community Needs Assessment
CAPLAW: Coronavirus Updates for the Community Action Network
NASCSP Coronavirus Resources
NYSCAA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources
Food Pantries across New York State
New York State Department of Health

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