



Department of State Community Services

December 2025 CSBG Newsletter

General Resources and Information

Senior Homelessness Crisis, Access to Housing and Stability

Older adults ([ages 65 and older](#)) are the fastest age group experiencing housing instability, and homelessness has rapidly increased in recent years, and is expected to accelerate. Removing barriers to stability will be critical not just to preserving the health and safety of this group but also to limiting a resulting expensive public health crisis. Without intervention, states, localities, health care organizations, and homelessness response providers won't have the budget or capacity to deal with a rising population of older adults experiencing homelessness.



Prevention will be key to reducing homelessness for older adults, keeping them safe, and ensuring states don't face severe budgetary crises related to the surge of older adult homelessness. Stabilizing people in their homes and ensuring they don't become homeless is a cost-effective, compassionate way to address this issue. Click [here](#) to read the full article and access additional resources provided by the [Urban Institute](#).

Homes and Community Renewal Announces Vacant Rental Program

The Vacant Rental Program (VRP) is a grant program funded by the State of New York and administered by the Housing Trust Fund Corporation's (HTFC) Office of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), to support repairs and rehabilitation of vacant rental units and other vacant spaces to increase the supply of critically needed apartments for low- and moderate-income renters outside of New York City. The program aims to help owners of rental properties bring vacant units and spaces in small-scale properties back into productive use to create safe, quality, and affordable long-term rental units.

This funding may be used to improve and rehabilitate vacant housing units and other vacant spaces, including commercial spaces, which are currently uninhabitable or unmarketable into safe, quality, and affordable rental units. These repairs and improvements may include health and safety improvements, correction of code violations and/or updating spaces to meet residential standards, accessibility modifications, environmental remediation, and other repairs determined by the local program administrator as necessary to rehabilitate vacant units. To learn more, visit

<https://hcr.ny.gov/vrp>, and for other HCR funding opportunities, visit <https://hcr.ny.gov/funding-opportunities>.

Charge Ready NY 2.0 with Rebates from NYSERDA

Bring new customers to your business, attract and retain employees, and do your part to make New York State's environment cleaner by [installing electric vehicle \(EV\) charging stations](#).

Charge Ready NY 2.0 offers rebates to public, private and not-for-profit organizations that install level 2 EV charging stations at workplaces, multi-unit properties, or hotels and motels.

NYSERDA provides rebates on a per-port basis, based on property type and whether the site is located within a [Disadvantaged Community \(DAC\)](#). Rebates can be paid upon completion of the installation of charging equipment and the provision of appropriate documentation. For further information on how the rebate works, to become a qualified charging vendor and additional program resources, check out [Charge Ready NY 2.0](#).

Find Lost Money or Unclaimed Funds through the State Comptroller

What are unclaimed funds? Do you have an old dormant bank account, uncashed checks, stock certificates, and/or unused gift cards? After a period of inactivity, lost money is considered abandoned property and is turned over to the New York State Comptroller's Office. Individuals, businesses, and non-profits can search for unclaimed funds for free, click [HERE](#) to get started.

Prevent Being Scammed from the Division of Consumer Protection

The New York State Department of State Division of Consumer Protection continues to update its vast library of resources relating to recognizing and preventing scams in order to keep the public current with the latest trends. You can report any of the scams below to [the Federal Trade Commission](#). 'Tis the season to make donations, here are some tips on avoiding charity scams:

- Contribute to known and verifiable charities. Search the NYS Attorney General's online database of registered charities at <https://ag.ny.gov/>.
- Be aware of callers who want money fast and use pressure tactics. Ask for additional written information about the charity and/or how money is spent and disbursed.
- Don't disclose any personal or financial information. Never give your Social Security number, credit card or debit card number, or any other personal identifying information.

Highlights Around the Network

Meet the New Executive Director of the CAP for Madison County

William Nicholson has been selected as the new executive director for Community Action Partnership (CAP) for Madison County, the agency's Board of Directors said in an announcement on Friday, Dec. 5. The appointment, which followed a rigorous search and evaluation officials said, will be effective Jan. 1, 2026.



“I am humbled to be selected to lead this important organization, this vital and indispensable community asset, into the future,” Nicholson said. “It is a great privilege to continue serving the community side by side with the incredible staff at CAP who show up every day to make good on our mission: to partner with individuals, families, and children to address the challenges of today and build hope for the future.”

William has served as CAP’s Community Services Director since 2022. During that time, he has overseen agency strategic planning, community-wide data analysis and needs assessment, and the continuous development of impactful collaborations with key stakeholders throughout the region, the announcement said.

ACAP Partners with Spectrum to Focus on Enhancing Career Center

[Albany Community Action Partnership \(ACAP\)](#) received a \$50,000 grant through Spectrum Community Center Assist, Spectrum’s philanthropic initiative to revitalize local community centers and invest in job training programs. This funding will enhance ACAP’s Career Services program and support facility upgrades for the newly dedicated Spectrum Training & Technology Center at ACAP.

On August 2, 2025, Spectrum staff volunteers, City of Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, and members of ACAP’s leadership team (Neenah Bland, Executive Director, and Jessica DeJesus, Director of Community & Career Services) celebrated the partnership with a revitalization event at ACAP’s main office. Volunteers landscaped, painted, and assembled furnishings to transform the space where classes are held. Spectrum also donated laptops, furniture, and a smart board, creating a modern learning environment for workforce development and financial literacy programs.



One key initiative hosted by ACAP in the Center is “Let’s Make Cent\$,” a program originally funded by a DOS Financial Literacy grant. Designed to help low-income families break the cycle of poverty and build a solid foundation for a secure, prosperous future, the program delivers financial literacy education on topics shaped by ACAP customers’ priorities and goals. Although the original contract ended in July 2025, the program’s success contributed to ACAP receiving Spectrum’s investment, ensuring continued support for workforce development workshops, financial literacy education, and other learning opportunities for the community.

“We are very grateful for this investment in ACAP as it reflects a cross-sector commitment to upward economic mobility for the community we serve,” said Neenah Bland, Executive Director of

ACAP. “The revitalization of our facility and support for our programs will create a lasting impact, allowing us to better equip our customers with the skills they need to thrive at work and at home. This experience also demonstrates the value of community awareness and understanding of the work we do and the role we play in supporting local families.”

State and National Partner Resources & Training Opportunities

New York State Division of Human Rights

The New York State Division of Human Rights is the state agency responsible for enforcing the New York State Human Rights Law. The Division investigates complaints of discrimination and holds violators of the law accountable.

The New York State Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination in many settings that New Yorkers encounter often, including employment, housing, education, and places open to the public—like stores and restaurants. The law covers nearly two dozen protected characteristics, including race, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, and more.

Over the past year, the Division has made major improvements to the process of reporting discrimination, making it easier for New Yorkers to file reports and get help:

- The Division launched its first-ever discrimination reporting call center. Now, you can call (844) 697-3471 to report discrimination, and a trained representative can guide you through the process.
- The Division launched an improved online discrimination reporting form that collects more information and helps the agency review each report more efficiently. This form is available at dhr.ny.gov.
- The Division launched a centralized Intake Unit, which includes staff who review all reports of discrimination and will contact you if your report is missing any information and tell you how to fix it. Intake Unit staff will also help you file your formal complaint.

The Division also offers hate and bias prevention resources for communities throughout the state. You can connect with the Division’s Hate and Bias Prevention Unit by visiting dhr.ny.gov/nohate.

To stay connected to the Division, follow @NYSHumanRights on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#), [X](#), and [YouTube](#).

New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)

2026 Region II Training & Technical Assistance Needs Survey

NYSCAA needs your input to help identify trainings, resources, and technical assistance opportunities that will support the growth and success of the network. This annual survey will directly shape regional planning and professional development opportunities throughout the year.

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE NY SURVEY](#), no later than January 5, 2026.

Join a NYSCAA Community of Practice (CoP)

NYSCAA is excited to reopen applications for their Communities of Practice (CoP)—collaborative spaces where CAA staff from across New York can learn from one another, strengthen skills, and build meaningful connections. For more information on what CoPs are, who can participate, and how to join, visit www.nyscommunityaction.org or call (518)690-0491.

Using Data to Inform Strategic Priorities in Your Community

Join the [Urban Institute](#) on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 1:00 pm (ET), for an engaging webinar on using data to advance upward mobility in your community. Local leaders need both the right data and the ability to act on it—and this session will show you how. Participants will explore key data sources to identify local challenges and set clear, actionable priorities.

Through real-world examples, you'll see how other communities have successfully used data to drive mobility goals. The session will also walk through practical tools and guidance from Chapters 4 and 5 of the [Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility](#), offering step-by-step support you can apply in your own work. To register, click [HERE](#).

National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)

Equipping the Journey: Exploring the Resources from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility
December 11, 2025, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar.

This webinar offers a curated selection of resources that address shared challenges to economic mobility and provide insights for strategies to implement with local community initiatives.

Community Action Transit Forum: Connecting Models, Communities, and CAA Practice

December 15, 2025, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar.

This webinar showcases the CAA transit providers and how volunteer driver programs, non-emergency medical transportation, fixed-route services, and coordinated transit efforts function in real communities. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the models that resonate with their agency and advance transportation options across the network.

CAPLAW: New Resources You Should Know

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 1 PM (ET)

Join [CAPLAW](#) for a webinar showcasing several of our new resources and tools. CAPLAW attorneys will explain key elements of the legal framework behind each resource, as well as how the information can be used to enhance CAAs' compliance, operations, and programs. This session will also include a brief demonstration of some resources to boost usability and highlight specific features. For more information and to register, click [HERE](#).

Division of Community Services Updates and Reminders

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Advisory Council Meeting

Save the Dates – 2026 Meeting Schedule:

- Thursday, February 5th, 2026, 10:00AM
- Thursday, April 23rd, 2026, 10:00AM
- Thursday, July 23rd, 2026, 10:00AM
- Thursday, October 8th, 2026, 10:00AM

Locations and meeting links will be posted on dos.ny.gov prior to the meetings.

Division of Community Services Online Resources

The Department of State has a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@nysdosvideos/playlists>

Check out the Division of Community Services' playlists: [CSBG Public Meetings](#) and [CSBG Training](#)

Please reach out to your Program Analyst or dos.sm.dcs@dos.ny.gov for more information.

CSBG Eligibility Guidelines continue at 200% Federal Poverty Level

[Click for the 2025 Federal Poverty Guidelines](#)

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