

A Message From ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN



Dear Neighbor,

I hope you, your friends, and family are staying healthy. We are working hard to ensure that New Yorkers affected by this crisis have access to support -- you can read about those resources below.

As always, my office is here to help. If you need assistance, leave a voicemail at 212-979-9696 or email help.district74@gmail.com and someone will get back to you shortly.

Harvey

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NYS on PAUSE Continues and an Update on Social Distancing from the Federal Government

New York State will stay on PAUSE through April 15th. That means the non-essential workforce [is directed](#) to continue to work from home until at least April 15th. The state will re-evaluate every two weeks.

The president has also extended social distancing guidance until April 30th. Read more [here](#).

Small Business Relief

Applications Open for Small Business Relief Program Mayor Bill de Blasio, the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Gregg Bishop, and NYC Economic Development Corporation President James Patchett announced today that

loans are available for small businesses affected by COVID-19. Small businesses have begun applying for relief and can access the application [here](#). The Small Business Continuity Fund offers financial assistance to small businesses in New York City as they deal with various challenges in response to the novel coronavirus.

[Apply Here](#)

This investment is a public-private partnership between Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Tapestry, Inc.'s Coach Foundation and Pursuit to provide loans to New York City's small businesses affected by COVID-19. Goldman Sachs Foundation will provide a grant to support technical assistance and capacity building for the Small Business Continuity Fund.

"The City is committed to making sure small businesses have the resources they need to stay open during this time," said Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services. "As the situation continues to evolve, we will hear from our small businesses and make the necessary changes to address the challenges that they are facing. This partnership represents a step in the right direction as City and private companies come together to assist this community."

For general updates, please view USP's [COVID-19 Resource Page](#). To continue supporting local businesses, use our guides on [Giving Back to Local Businesses](#) and [Takeout + Delivery in Union Square](#).

As you may have read, the federal assistance can include a forgivable loan (which will be converted to a grant) for small businesses, including those that continue to pay their employees. The funds are not unlimited, so please stay on top of this.

You can learn more about the programs here: <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

Fostering Pets and Assistance for Animal Shelters and Pet owners

Seeking companionship during social distancing measures, more people are turning to pet foster. Read more about that [here](#).

The ASPCA has developed a \$5 million grant program to aid animal shelters and pet owners impacted by the coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis. Find out how to apply [here](#)

Fighting for Rent Freeze

I have introduced legislation with Senator Salazar to provide a rent freeze for rent-stabilized tenants. I was pleased to learn that the Mayor agrees with me that tenants need a rent freeze during this public health crisis.

Access to stable and affordable shelter during a disaster, especially one that requires New Yorkers to stay indoors is critical to ensuring our state can recover from the major economic and health impacts caused by disasters. With many rent-stabilized tenants facing unemployment or other unexpected costs such as medical bills during a state disaster emergency, tenants should not be subject to the additional burden of rising rents.

Volunteer and Donation Opportunities

I'm inspired and not at all surprised to see New Yorkers coming together to help each other during this crisis. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- LES Ready - visit <http://www.lesready.org/covid/> to learn how to get involved
- Donate to help restaurants provide meals to healthcare workers: <https://www.doing4others.org/>
- Do you have personal protective equipment (PPE) to donate? Visit: https://getusppe.org/?mod=article_inline to learn how.
- If you want to volunteer with my office please email:
- harvey.district74@gmail.com
- Companies who have stock on hand and are offering to DONATE or SELL medical supplies and equipment (e.g. gowns, masks, ventilators, face shields) can register [here](#). Each offer will be vetted and contacted if there is interest.
- Local manufacturers and industry sector companies looking to begin producing supplies can register [here](#).
- Food and other non-medical donations should go through [DonateNYC](#). Note: We are not accepting food donations directly to the City but this site provides a platform to connect with organizations in need of food.
- The city is still identifying and standing up new hospital capacity. They are particularly interested in private spaces that may not be yet on our radar. For those you know who have space they want to offer, please have them fill out this space survey here: [Share Your Space Survey](#).

Hundreds of retired or non-practicing healthcare professionals have signed up to the City's medical reserve! Anyone interested can sign up at [Help Now NYC](#).

CEC Remote Town Halls

Meeting K-12 Student Needs during COVID-19

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer

Monday, March 30th • 6:30 PM

Visit neighbors.columbia.edu/K12StudentNeeds to join the virtual town hall.

Panelists:

- Dr. Roberta Lenger Kang, Director of the Center of Professional Education of Teachers, Teachers College
- Deirdre McIntosh-Brown, Co-Chair of Manhattan Community Board 9's Youth, Education and Libraries Committee
- Dr. Detra Price-Dennis, Associate Professor of Education, Teachers College
- Marisol Rosales, Executive Superintendent for Manhattan, NYC Department of Education
- Moderated by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer

Family Zoom with Superintendent Carry Chan

Join us on a video conference for updates on remote learning and to share your feedback with District 1 Community School Superintendent Carry Chan. Zoom can be accessed through desktops, laptops, tablets (such as iPads) and all smartphones. Reach out to Family Support Coordinator Elvis Marte at emarte6@schools.nyc.gov with questions or support with Zoom.

Wednesday, April 1 at 5:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/581262407>
Meeting ID: 581 262 407

Together, we can do this!

NYC Department of Education
D1

Join CEC D1 and Superintendent Carry Chan for updates on remote learning on Wednesday April 1st at 5pm: <https://zoom.us/j/58126240> Meeting ID: 518 262 407

Parent Support Network Meeting

Time: Mar 30, 2020 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/295323918> Meeting ID: 295 323 918

Additional Resources

- Mental Health Resources: This can be a stressful time for many New Yorkers. Please help New Yorkers connect to resources by contacting 1-888-NYC-WELL or Texting "WELL" to 65173. For more information visit: [NYC Well](#).
- #AskMyMayor: The Mayor has a new Daily Message available on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) every morning. If you have questions, comments or concerns, they want him to respond to, they can send them using the hashtag #AskMyMayor.
- New Yorkers with disabilities: During this crisis, New Yorkers can reach out on Twitter to @NYCDisabilities, 311 or visit [The Mayor's Office for People with](#)

[Disabilities](#) for more information. Deaf New Yorkers can also connect via video phone at 646-396-5830.

- The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) has guidance for employees and employers about the different mandates under COVID-19: [Update about Workplace Laws](#).
- Report Labor Issues: If you believe an employer is violating either existing labor laws or recently issued executive orders by the Governor, please contact 311, the Attorney General's office at (212) 416-8700 or via email at Labor.Bureau@ag.ny.gov.

Remember: only call 911 if you need immediate assistance.

Other resources available:

- Text 'COVID' to 692-692 to get important COVID-19 related updates sent straight to your phone. You can text 'COVIDESP' to get updates in Spanish.
- General FAQ: [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak Factsheet](#)
- NYC DOE: [Information about remote learning and free meals](#)
- Stop the Spread : [Stop the Spread of Coronavirus Flyer](#)
- Services for folks in need: [COVID-19 Services & Resources](#)
- How to Help: [Help Now NYC](#)
- For Tenants/Landlords: [Disinfection Guidance for Buildings](#)
- For Small Businesses: [Grant and Loan information for Businesses](#)
- Non-Profit Providers: [Guidance for Non-profit providers](#)
- Supplies: [COVID-19 Emergency Supply Sourcing & Manufacturing](#)
- Essential Business/Services: [List from Governor's Executive Order](#)
- Latest reduced ferry schedules: [Staten Island Ferry](#) / [NYC Ferry](#)
- H+H visitor policy: [New Policy to Reduce the Spread of Coronavirus](#)
- Domestic Violence: [NYC Hope](#)

Job Opportunities

The city's Workforce1 Career Center launched a [Virtual Center](#) (or call 718-960-2458) to help New Yorkers prepare for, and connect to, jobs across New York City's five boroughs and in every sector of the economy. The in-person Workforce Career Centers are currently closed. Candidates can be connected via web or phone to one-on-one help from professionals for help with:

- Job Opportunities
- Individual Career Advisement
- Resume & Interview Preparation
- Training

We are recruiting TLC-licensed drivers through [DeliveryTLC](#) to help with work related to COVID-19, such as delivering food to older adults. This work will be paid \$15/hour plus reimbursement for gas and tolls. Drivers will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. The initial need for drivers will be small, but we expect it to increase as we expand our programs.

Don't Forget the Census!

It is imperative that we do not lose sight of the billions of dollars in funding at stake for places like our schools and hospitals. We need to ensure our community is not forgotten and remains funded so that in crises like these, we know that New York is well equipped. Please take the time to fill it out [here](#).

In the news

1. [**New York told landlords not to evict renters. Advocates say that's not enough.**](#) - Curbed NY
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Previous email update from March 27th

Dear Friend,

I hope you and your loved ones are remaining healthy during these trying times. It is important that we check on each other and ensure we are all getting what we need and that our friends and neighbors are taken care of. Please remember to do that.

If you live in Public Housing or a development or building where you get Section 8 and you have reduced income, you have the right to get your rent reduced starting on the 1st day of the month after you report this income reduction. Please let your landlord know about this reduction in income right away. If you have any problems, please reach out to my office for more information.

As always, my office is here to help. If you need assistance, leave a voicemail at 212-979-9696 or email help.district74@gmail.com and someone will get back to you shortly.

See you soon from a distance,

Harvey

In this Newsletter:

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- DOE Remote Learning FAQ Sheet
- Federal Recovery Bill
- Small Business Resources
- Remaining Safe While Isolated
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- Free Mental Health Services
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- Don't forget the census!

HRA Updates

HRA is offering Cash Assistance special grants for any worker who is likely to miss rent due to reduced income. If your work schedule was reduced as a result of the coronavirus and you are unable to pay your rent, you can apply for a Cash Assistance special grant to get benefits for emergencies.

Submit your request online on ACCESS HRA here. You can also apply or renew your SNAP benefits without having to go to an HRA center: <https://a069-access.nyc.gov/accesshra/>.

DOE Remote Learning FAQ Sheet

The Department of Education has put together a remote learning FAQ sheet that you can access here. It contains answers to questions about Special Education, English Language Learner instructions, remote learning checklists and more!

Reminder, if you need a free tablet apply here or you can also call 718-935-5100 and choose Option 5 on the menu. If you know someone without access to technology please pass this phone number on to them! DOE has also provided guidance on a Special Education Remote Learning Plan that will be developed for all students with IEPs in the school by their special education teacher or other school based staff with knowledge of the student, and that each child's plan will be shared and discussed with their family. Here are remote learning materials you can access for special education!

Federal Recovery Bill

The House and Senate have passed a \$2 trillion stimulus bill in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Here is what it would do:

Unemployment benefits increases - the federal government would give unemployed individuals an extra \$600 a week on top of state benefits. In addition, the deal calls for a new pandemic unemployment assistance program, which would provide benefits to those who are unemployed or unable to go to work due to COVID-19. This includes the self-employed and gig workers. The \$260 billion dollar plan will deliver at least \$15 billion directly to New York. Payments of \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for couples accounts for another \$15.5B to New York.

REAL ID deadline postponed - the deadline to obtain a REAL ID will be extended until at least September 2021. REAL IDs are federally mandated identification that will be needed for passengers to board aircrafts.

Small business rescue plan - allocates more than \$375 billion to forgivable loans and grants to small businesses and non-profits so they can maintain their existing workforce and help pay other expenses during this crisis, like rent, a mortgage or utilities. New York, with its 2.2 million small businesses and tens-of-thousands of non-profits can expect to see billions of dollars once companies and organizations begin to apply for those funds. NYS small businesses that currently have over 19,000 existing SBA loans will also have relief from the burden of paying those loans with a new policy of the SBA instead paying the principal, interest, and fees for a 6-month period.

Public transit aid - \$25 billion dollar allocation for transit, delivering \$4.35 billion to New York, \$3.8 billion of that exclusively for MTA. These dollars can be used to supplement revenues due to steep declines in ridership and to cover additional costs of coronavirus-related cleaning products and labor.

Other emergency appropriations - this is money for hard-hit airports, expanded benefits to SNAP, funding for child care, of which New York would receive an additional \$162 million, nutrition for seniors, nearly \$1 billion dollars to help heat homes when income becomes a problem, and \$1.5 billion for the National Guard to support to the hardest hit States and territories, like New York where approximately 2,200 members of the National Guard have been activated, amongst other things. New York will see tens-of-millions from this account, as well.

Student loan payments suspended - the Department of Education would suspend payments on student loan borrowers without penalty through September 30th.

While this is helpful on many fronts, it is still excludes undocumented folks, does not sufficiently protect airport workers who lost their jobs, it provides more money to large corporations and not enough to small businesses, and finally, it does not provide enough

funds for low income families in need. We will continue to work with our federal colleagues to get more for the most vulnerable among us.

Small Business Resources

If you own or work for a small business impacted by the outbreak: The City will provide relief for small businesses experiencing a reduction in revenue because of COVID-19. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees who have seen sales decreases of 25% or greater will be eligible for zero interest loans of up to \$75,000. Businesses with fewer than 5 employees are eligible for a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months to help retain employees. You can apply at www.nyc.gov/covid19biz

Remaining Safe While Isolated

The Manhattan Family Justice Center is closed, but victims and survivors can reach them at each of their MFJC staff virtually over the phone from Mondays to Fridays, 9 a.m. through 5 p.m. by calling its main line: 212-602-2800

They are providing case management, advocacy, criminal legal support, counseling and civil legal consultation to survivors via phone and video conference. There is still support during these uncertain times.

Here is the contact information for all the other Family Justice Centers as well:

NYC Family Justice Center, Queens: 718-575-4545

NYC Family Justice Center, Brooklyn: 718-250-5113

NYC Family Justice Center, Bronx: 718-508-1220

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island: 718-697-4300

During off-hours and weekends, victims and survivors can access help and resources by:

Calling NYC's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline (800-621-4673);

The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), their website also has an online chat option <https://www.thehotline.org/what-is-live-chat/> (chatting only available in English and Spanish); or

Visiting the NYC HOPE Resource Directory online at www.nyc.gov/NYCHOPE

Check Unclaimed Funds!

While you're at home, you should check to see if you have any unclaimed funds from the State Comptroller's office. In 2020 alone, the Comptroller has returned almost one billion dollars. Click here to check if you have any!

Volunteer Opportunities

Today, I went to Baruch Houses to help deliver meals to families in need. It is important to remember to help out if you are able and healthy during these times. If you want to help out but aren't sure how, NYCares is a great resource for volunteer opportunities across the city.

You can also reach out to our office directly to help us check in on constituents, deliver food, anything helps. If you want to volunteer locally, email epsteinh@nyassembly.gov.

Free Mental Health Services

Two mental health hotlines are available to New Yorkers who need it.

As always New Yorkers can also reach out to Thrive NYC, which offers a number of mental health services that New Yorkers can access while staying home. You can start by calling 1-888-NYC-Well (692-9355), or texting "Well" to 65173.

We can't underestimate the impact this pandemic is having on mental health. Over 6,000 mental health professionals have volunteered their time to help with New York State's Coronavirus response.

For free emotional support, consultation and referral to a provider, call 1-844-863-9314.

Increased Hospital Beds

On Monday, March 23rd, the Governor announced the initial delivery of equipment and supplies for Javits Center temporary Hospital. The Federal Government shipped hundreds of thousands of masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields to New York. The Governor also signed an Executive Order mandating hospitals increase capacity by at least 50% with a goal of 100% increase in capacity.

While we are still short supplies, we are preparing for the increase in outbreak.

The State is still calling for help from companies of any kind who can help manufacture medical supplies (masks, gloves, cover-alls, etc.). The state is offering to "pay a premium" and is asking companies to get creative to help. Companies who also have extra masks, gloves, etc. can also opt to donate. Companies can reach out to the state at COVID19supplies@esd.ny.gov.

I was able to assist yesterday when I learned that Doctors and Residents at Bellevue did not have enough masks. With the support of the East End Temple and Rabbi Stanton, we were able to bring over additional well needed masks to people on the front lines.

Governor stops construction in occupied buildings

On Wednesday, I wrote a letter with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, State Senator Liz Krueger, and Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer urging Governor Cuomo to stop all non-essential residential construction that was placing residents, construction workers, and other members of the public in danger. Today, I am proud to announce that Governor Cuomo issued an executive order to halt all non-essential construction work keeping residents and construction workers safe! You can read the letter [here](#).

Find time to take of yourself - Free activities

Watch Movies with Friends Virtually Netflix Party is a new Chrome extension that allows you to watch any Netflix show you want with loved ones while you're social distancing.

Learn at Home With Scholastic Keep kids reading, thinking, and growing with Scholastic's Learn at Home program. Kids can do them on their own, with their families, or with their teachers. Just find your grade level and let the learning begin.

Support Local Businesses - Local restaurants may have had to shut their doors, but many of them still offer takeout or delivery.

Share Books Online If you love your books, let them go. Kindle and BEE Book Exchange are great apps that allow you to share and lend books online with readers you don't necessarily know.

Keep Calm with Meditation Apps Ease your mind and reduce stress with a little help from Headspace. Right now, the meditation app is offering all US healthcare professionals who work in public health settings free access to Headspace Plus through 2020. All other new users can have access to a two-week free trial and access to meditations, sleep, and movement exercises.

Stay Connected With UpHabit. UpHabit is a contact relationship app for your important contacts that helps users stay connected and strengthen relationships with important people in their lives. You and those close to you can use UpHabit for free during the next 3 months.

Stay Fit at Home Fitness Blender is offering free full length workout videos, workout routines, healthy recipes and more -- for every fitness level. Or check out this at-home yoga routine to reduce stress. For those interested in more strength based yoga, try these Yoga to the People free videos.

Find online virtual events to participate in: <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/online/events/> and <https://www.eventbrite.com/c/the-best-online-events-to-attend-right-from-your-home-cwwqhp/>

If you have kids trapped at home, you might be interested in the online "History at Home" online classes that the N.Y. Historical Society is offering.

First Hang with Harvey on Zoom

Today, we hosted our first virtual Hang with Harvey. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene joined us to talk about the impact of COVID-19 on our community, and helped to answer questions. It was great to be able to connect with you during this time to discuss ways our office can be helpful.

Don't Forget the Census!

It is imperative that we do not lose sight of the billions of dollars in funding at stake for places like our schools and hospitals. We need to ensure our community is not forgotten and remains funded so that in crises like these, we know that New York is well equipped. Please take the time to fill it out [here](#).