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March 3, 2021

Dear Friends,

Last week, we finished our joint Assembly- Senate State Budget Hearings, which began in January. On February 6th, the Assembly Westchester Delegation held our annual local state budget hearing to hear from Westchester based organizations about their priorities for the state budget. In the next two weeks, each house of the legislature will present its budget response to the Executive budget proposal and negotiations will intensify.

The testimony, letters, e-mails and phone calls I have received all help me push for the many priorities of families, institutions and businesses in Westchester.

A new mass vaccination site opens today at the [National Guard Armory](#) in downtown Yonkers. The site will have capacity to administer 1,000 doses per day. Yonkers and Mt. Vernon residents were initially given priority to make appointments. Starting today all Westchester residents are eligible to make appointments.

We are thankful that the positivity rate continues to decline in Westchester and across the state. Ninety-five percent of first doses allocated to the state have so far been administered, representing over 3 million first doses; first doses received from the federal government. See data by region and county on the State's Vaccine Tracker: [ny.gov/vaccinetracker](#).

In addition, New York will begin administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at state-run mass vaccination sites later this week. A [new pilot program begins](#) to administer the Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccine to eligible New Yorkers during overnight hours at the Yankee Stadium, Javits Center and New York State Fair mass vaccination sites. Yankee Stadium will begin administering the vaccine starting Thursday, March 4, and the Javits Center and New York State Fair sites will begin administering the vaccine Friday, March 5.

For a list of local pharmacies click [here](#). Please note, pharmacies can only vaccinate people 65 and older. Individuals with [comorbidities and underlying conditions](#) must visit a State vaccine site available [HERE](#).

I share the frustration that many have faced in trying to make an appointment. The options are to try the pharmacy link listed above for a location near you, use 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829) or try the state website [Am I Eligible](#). As more vaccination centers and increased vaccine supply are made available access will improve.

Other reopening updates:

- Movie theaters in many areas of the state, are permitted to reopen March 5 at 25 percent capacity, with no more than 50 people per screen at a time. Other safety protocols, including assigned seating and social distancing, will be in place.
- New regulations on nursing home visitations will go into effect Friday, February 26. These [full guidelines](#) depend on a county's COVID risk level. For counties with COVID-19 positivity rates below 5 percent, visitor testing is strongly encouraged. Compassionate care visits are always permitted.
- Beginning March 15, weddings and catered events can resume statewide. Venues are restricted to 50 percent capacity, with no more than 150 people.

Below you will find:

- Covid-19 Westchester Resources
- Free Tax Filing Resource
- Preserve New York grant opportunity
- Support for Small Businesses
- Envirothon Competition for HS students

As always, if I can be of any assistance as we navigate changing developments related to Covid-19, please do not hesitate to contact me at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,

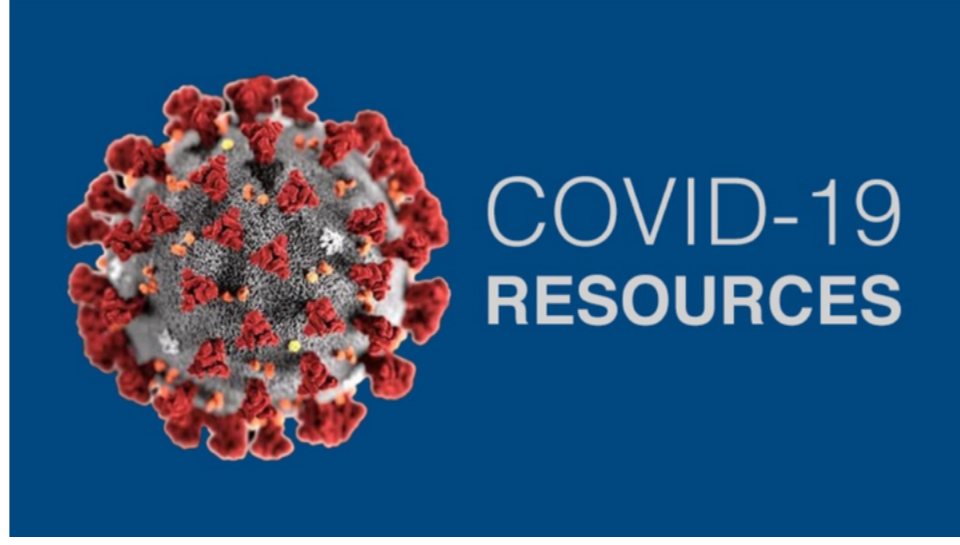


NY State Covid-19 Vaccine Appointments

[Am I Eligible](#)

or by calling NYS Vaccination Hotline:
1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).

Westchester Vaccine Allocation Week 12 [HERE](#)



Westchester County Resources

Statewide guidelines for businesses and gatherings [HERE](#)

Covid-19 Testing:

To find a testing site and make an appointment, visit: [NYS Health Department](#) or call the **NYS Covid-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065**.

For help with quarantine and isolation: 866-588-0195

Find a Test Site Near You

(Testing is free at all NY run test sites)

Local Covid-19 Statistics:

NYS Covid Vaccine Tracker dashboard [HERE](#)
Westchester Covid-19 Stats by Municipality [HERE](#)
School and University Covid-19 Statewide Tracker [HERE](#)

New York State Tax Department Offers Free Tax Filing Resources

New York State taxpayers with an income of \$72,000 or less in 2020 can complete and submit their federal and New York State income tax returns online for free. There is no need to pay for software or a tax preparer. Nearly 255,000 taxpayers used the State Tax Department's Free File software last year, saving themselves an estimated \$51 million in the process. To be directed to the free filing options, click here: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/bit/efile/>. You must use the tax department website in order to not be charged a fee.

Preserve New York Grant Opportunities

The Preservation League is excited to announce that Preserve New York grants are now available to eligible not-for-profits and municipalities. Preserve New York is a signature grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and Preservation League of New York State, with additional support from The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation. Preserve New York provides support to identify, document, and preserve New York's cultural and historic buildings, structures, and landscapes.

Begun in 1993, Preserve New York makes grants for historic structure reports, building condition reports, cultural landscape reports, and cultural resource surveys. The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation has provided generous additional support for projects in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. This program will not fund capital construction costs, only consulting reports.

The pre-application and a list of frequently asked questions are available on the League's website at <https://www.preservenys.org/preserve-new-york>. **The application deadline is April 12, 2021.**

Support for Small Businesses

Paycheck Protection Program Prioritizes Smallest of Small Businesses

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) are taking steps with the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) to further promote equitable relief for America's mom-and-pop businesses. The latest round of Paycheck Protection Program funding opened one month ago and already the Biden Administration has made major improvements to the program's implementation.

The SBA will:

- Establish a 14-day, exclusive PPP loan application period for businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees
- Allow sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals to receive more financial support by revising the PPP's funding formula for these categories of applicants
- Eliminate an exclusionary restriction on PPP access for small business owners with prior non-fraud felony convictions, consistent with a bipartisan congressional proposal
- Eliminate PPP access restrictions on small business owners who have struggled to make federal student loan payments by eliminating federal student loan debt delinquency and default as disqualifiers for participating in the PPP; and
- Ensure access for non-citizen small business owners who are lawful U.S. residents by clarifying that they may use Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to apply for the PPP.

The 14-day exclusivity period will start on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9 a.m., while the other four changes will be implemented by the first week of March. The SBA is working on the program changes and will communicate details throughout this week. Borrowers can apply for the Paycheck Protection Program by downloading the [First Draw PPP loan application](#) or [Second Draw PPP loan application](#) and working with a participating PPP lender through the [SBA Lender Match tool](#).

New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)

The New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF) is a new economic recovery loan program aimed at supporting New York State small businesses, nonprofits and small residential landlords as they reopen after the COVID-19 outbreak and NYS on PAUSE. The NYFLF targets the state's small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) employees (90% of all businesses), nonprofits and small residential landlords that have seen a loss of rental income. The NYFLF is specifically timed to support businesses and organizations as they proceed to reopen and have upfront expenses to comply with guidelines (e.g., inventory, marketing, refitting for new social distancing guidelines) under the New York Forward Plan.

Access to loans for small residential landlords will be targeted to owners with residential buildings of 50 units or less, and will prioritize loans for residential landlords whose properties are in low and moderate income census tracts or who serve low to moderate income tenants.

[Pre-applications for the New York Forward Loan Fund are now open. This is not a first-come, first-served loan program. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.](#)

For small businesses and, you are encouraged to prepare your pre-application in advance by taking advantage of the application preparation resources available [here](#).

- Small businesses and nonprofits must employ 50 or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) employees;
- Small businesses must have gross revenues of less than \$5 million per year;
- Nonprofits must provide direct services and have an annual operating budget of less than \$5 million per year; and
- An eligible small business or nonprofit must not have received a U.S. Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program of greater than \$500,000 or an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) for COVID-19 of greater than \$150,000.

[Click here for more information on how to apply to the New York Forward Loan Fund.](#)

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program

Provides small businesses and nonprofits with low-interest loans of up to \$2 million to help overcome other financial losses due to COVID-19.

[Click here for more information on how to apply to the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan \(EIDL\) Program.](#)

Annual Envirothon Competition for HS Students Goes Virtual

The 2021 New York State Envirothon, an annual environmental education competition for high school teams, will be held virtually this year, from Tuesday, May 25 through Friday, May 28. Teams compete for recognition by demonstrating their knowledge of environmental science and natural resource management.

In order to compete in the state event, a team must have competed in a regional event. The Hudson Valley 2021 Hudson Valley Regional Envirothon qualifying competition will take place online during the first week of May. The highest scoring high school team from each county will represent its county in the state event. Team registrations will take place from March 15 through April 1, 2021. For more information please visit www.nysenvirothon.org.

DMV PHISHING SCAMS

Recently, many New Yorkers have received text messages and other communications from senders claiming to represent the New York State DMV.

DO NOT respond to unsolicited texts or emails or access links, files or attachments from unverified sources.

DO NOT give out personal information by phone or email, or enter your information in a pop-up screen.

HELPFUL TIPS

Be cautious of all communications you receive, even those that appear to be from a trusted or verified source.

Use anti-virus and anti-spyware software on all your devices and consider adding phishing filters on your email and web browser.

If you believe you've been scammed, change your passwords, check your devices for viruses and notify your bank, credit card company and credit reporting agencies.



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